

# I-93 CTAP Program Community Assessment Report

## Town of Windham

(revised September 2008)

### **History and Purpose:**

The I-93 Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) was established by the NH Department of Transportation to assist corridor communities projected to experience growth as a result of the I-93 Expansion project. The goal of CTAP initiative is to develop a broad and comprehensive program of assistance to meet a wide range of growth challenges.

There are 26 CTAP-designated communities from Salem to Concord for which the CTAP program is intended. Seven of these are in the Rockingham Planning Commission region and include Atkinson, Danville, Fremont, Hampstead, Salem, Sandown and Windham.

A key early component of the CTAP program is to conduct a detailed *community planning assessment*, as documented in this report, to help communities identify how best to apply the dollar and planning project resources that will be available to them over the remaining four years of the program. The primary purpose of the Community Assessments was to determine if municipalities have the planning and policies in place to effectively manage growth, and to recommend additions or modification where appropriate.

### **Process:**

The Community Assessment was conducted using a similar process in each CTAP community. A detailed survey/questionnaire was developed by the CTAP program and completed for each community. The survey tool, which consisted of more than 100 questions, centered on the four major planning themes which have been used to organize the content of the CTAP program and services:

**Theme A: Municipal Services, Regional Cooperation, Housing & Transportation**

**Theme B: Environmental Protection, Land Use, and Open Space**

**Theme C: Downtowns, Village Centers, and Community Vitality**

**Theme D: The Local Economy**

Questions designed to address common growth related issues and concerns were grouped under these four categories. In the case of Windham, RPC staff obtained and reviewed a set of current planning documents and land use relations, including the following:

- Windham Master Plan, Vol. 1 (Existing Conditions and Analysis), 2004
- Windham Master Plan, Vol. 2 (Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Implementation Plan) 2005
- Capital Improvements Program FY 2008-2014, Windham, NH, 2007
- Town of Windham Zoning Ordinance as amendment through March 2007
- Town of Windham New Hampshire Site Plan Regulations, 2005
- Windham Subdivision Control Regulations, 2004
- Windham Historic District Ordinance, as adopted, 1999
- written reports associated with OSP-lead community meeting regarding the Town Center

Following a review of the documents, an initial pass at completing the Assessment Survey was made by RPC staff; this was supplemented by information provided by the Windham Planning Director. RPC staff attended a meeting of the Planning Board to introduce the CTAP Program to the Board and to describe the Community Assessment process and attended a subsequent meeting to review and supplement the survey results and discuss, correct and elaborate on initial findings. A final meeting was held to review the Draft Assessment Report.

The following section presents the four CTAP themes. A copy of the completed Assessment Survey is located in Attachment 1 to this report.

# Theme A

## **Community Infrastructure and Regional Cooperation, Housing, Transportation**

The purpose of this theme was to determine how the CTAP community has planned for the future in terms of the provision and funding for increased municipal services. This may include new facilities and other infrastructure improvements to help meet these needs. In addition, Theme A analyzed how effective communities have been, and will be, regarding regional cooperation with other local municipalities in an effort to better serve constituents. Special attention was given to communication strategies and cooperation initiatives between communities within regions.

Theme A generated 42 questions dealing with the funding and delivery of municipal services, regional cooperation among local governments, housing, and transportation.

The Steering Committee identified a number of broad goals that CTAP-designated communities should strive to accomplish which are outlined below:

### **Goals**

- Promote the establishment of consistent funding approaches to help pay for improved and expanding public infrastructure and services. Local governments should make certain that their funding strategies are adequate to meet the new level of service provision to meet projected growth needs.
- Evaluate the need for regional cooperation between local governments. Regional approaches can often embellish the delivery of public services and environmental quality, avoid the possible duplication of services, and better allocate financial resources.
- Plan for an adequate supply of housing. The housing stock should reflect local needs and priorities and include housing for a range of income levels.
- Implement strategies to promote safe and efficient multi-modal transportation systems.

### **A-1 MUNICIPAL SERVICES AND REGIONAL COOPERATION**

#### *Findings*

1. **Municipal and regional cooperative efforts:** The Town is engaged in a number of important municipal and regional cooperative efforts and has shows appropriate interest in acting regionally when needs can be best met in that manner. Existing intermunicipal and regional participation includes:
  - SAU 28 with Pelham
  - Border Towns Mutual Aid District
  - Regional land use and transportation planning (RPC/MPO);
  - Solid Waste District (Nashua)

- Salem Chamber of Commerce
  - Waste Water Treatment reserve agreement with Salem/GLSD
  - Southeastern NH Hazardous Waste Mutual Aid
  - Regional Stormwater Management Group (Salem, Windham, Plaistow, Hampstead, Danville, Kingston)
  - CART Regional Transit System
2. **Capital Improvements Program:** The Town maintains a strong, integrated CIP process and actively uses the CIP in its capital budgeting process rather than just as a Planning Board document. A CIP Subcommittee inclusive of Planning, Selectmen and School Board members is established for the purpose of updating the CIP on an annual or semi-annual basis (Latest: Dec. 2007)
  3. **Impact Fees & Off Site Improvements:** Impacts for schools have been in place for several years; additional impact fees for recreation, police and fire were developed (utilizing CTAP Discretionary Grant funds, Town Funds and RPC funds) and adopted in 2008. The existence of these fee systems will help the Town address infrastructure needs that arise with additional growth. The Town has elected not to pursue road impact fees in part because it has been successful in negotiating significant off-site improvements for major development that provide quicker resolution of traffic mitigation needs.
  4. **Storm Water Management:** The Town operates under a Phase II NHDES “Municipal Separate Storm Water General Permit.” There is both the need and opportunity to work cooperatively with Salem, Pelham and perhaps Derry and Londonderry on joint stormwater initiatives. This need is further highlighted with the TMDL Salt Reduction Study carried out as part of the I-93 EIS process.

### *Recommendations*

- **Identify and Protect Potential Municipal Well Locations:** To preserve options for the development of future municipal water supply sources the Town should identify and protect favorable well site locations/radii for future development of municipal water sources. A good first step in this process would be to request NHDES to perform a GIS based Favorable Gravel Well Analysis.
- **Ensure Septage Disposal Agreement is in Place:** Ensure that an updated agreement is in place for septage disposal at GLSD or other wastewater disposal facility. GLSD has been historically reluctant to issue a binding written agreement for septage disposal but the Town should continue to make attempt to secure one.
- **Regional Stormwater and Flood Mitigation:** Pursue potential cooperative efforts for stormwater management and flood hazard mitigation with Salem, Pelham and other communities.
- **Investigate innovative wastewater alternatives and/or water districts to serve special areas:** the Town should investigate innovative small scale wastewater management treatment approaches and or community water systems for applicability to the Village Center District, and high density residential areas such as Cobbetts Pond, Canobie Lake and Shadow Lake. The full potential of the Village Center District will depend on development municipal services sufficient to permit high development density.

- **Address Regional Impact Criteria and Procedures:** Incorporate definitions, criteria and procedures in the Towns development regulations for governing the local review of developments with regional impact. The RPC has prepared a guidance document to assist with this.

## A-2 HOUSING

### *Findings*

1. **Master Plan Support for Housing Diversity:** Master plan and existing land use regulations support a fairly diverse range of housing types in specific districts (accessory apartments; boarding houses; multifamily units; manufactured housing; elderly housing). Additional incentives may be necessary to induce the construction of a more diverse housing stock.
2. **Inclusionary Housing:** Within the Elderly Housing Ordinance, an inclusionary housing incentive is implemented; It may be necessary to expand where inclusionary housing can be permitted in order comply with the provision of newly enacted workforce housing legislation (SB 342)
3. **Regional housing needs:** The Master Plan analyzes and addresses housing needs regionally and locally and examines issues relating to income and affordability in the rental and owner housing market
4. **Opportunities for density:** The Village Center District establishes the opportunity for higher density housing and mixed use development which will further diversify housing choice.
5. **Energy Star Program:** The Planning Department has actively worked with developers in the Town to encourage the use of Energy Star materials, appliance and building standards. Nearly all have done so.

### *Recommendations*

- **Address Workforce Housing in the Zoning Ordinance.** Recently enacted state legislation (SB-342) will require all municipalities to allow workforce housing in the majority of land zoned for residential development. The Town should review its options to comply with the new provisions and develop a zoning strategy for permitting workforce housing. One way to satisfy this requirement is to extend inclusionary zoning provisions to the majority of residential zones and to permit them by conditional use permit
- **Energy Conservation:** Research and incorporate LEED-H and LEED -ND or similar residential building construction and site design standards for energy conservation into the residential (and commercial) building code (or by reference). The NHDES/NHARPC Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques Guide contains a model Energy Efficient Development chapter and ordinance.
- **Promote “Conservation Subdivision” form of Development:** Consider modifying the Open Space Residential Overlay District to include elements of “conservation subdivisions” and to make this form of subdivision mandatory in areas with critical water

and other natural resources assets. (Such as identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan or CTAP Natural Services Network)

- **Expand Residential uses in the Village:** Consider expanding the percentage of total development in the Village Center District that can be residential from the existing 20% to a higher limit to ensure successful development of a vibrant mix of uses in the Village Center.
- **Incorporate New Regional Needs Assessment:** Incorporate an updated regional housing needs assessment in the housing chapter of the Master Plan from the RPC when available (expected September 2008)

### **A-3 TRANSPORTATION**

#### *Findings*

1. **Street Connectivity:** Master Plan stresses the need to ensure connectivity of the local street network and discourages cul-de-sacs; Planning Board is committed to policy of mandating interconnection of subdivision streets;
2. **Participant in Regional Transit System:** Town is an active participant and contributor to the new CART regional transit system; the system has achieved eligibility to receive Federal Transit Administration funds.
3. **Village District Standards:** Sidewalks/pedestrian connectivity facilities are mandated in all areas of the Village District; Pavement width waivers are specifically authorized in the Village Center District; Road design standards (ROW, sight distance and grade) are graduated by functional class;
4. **Access management:** Access management plan and regulatory provisions for Route 28 have been adopted as part of the zoning ordinance.
5. **Wall Street and Town Center Corridor Study:** Long term street connectivity and corridor planning is being actively pursued by the Town RPC and NHDOT in a multipart (NH 111, Wall Street, Town Center) corridor study.
6. **I-93 Construction:** The Town anticipates and is concerned heavy traffic diversion on local roads at some points during the I-93 Expansion construction, and resulting impact on local roads and demand on Town emergency services.

#### *Recommendations*

- **Extend provisions of RT 28 Access Management Overlay District to the NH 111 Corridor:** The Town has enacted an Access Management Overlay District on NH 28. The Town should consider extending this District to incorporate the 111 Corridor access management recommendations once the Wall Street /111 Corridor Study is complete.
- **Develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the NH Department of Transportation (DOT).** The Town should enter into a formal Memorandum of Understanding with the NHDOT. An MOU allows for a town to have greater level of

input into the location and design of curb cuts on state highways and results in better coordination of local-state permitting and review with DOT District V.

- **Subdivision Street and Trail Connectivity:** Strengthen standards to ensure connectivity of subdivision streets, cul de sac ROW reservations for future street connections, and walking/bicycling trail connectivity.
- **Village Center Sidewalk Plan:** Develop sidewalk plan for the Village Center District and include in capital improvement program; plan for CART transit stops within the District;
- **Pavement Width and Materials:** Reduce pavement width (exclusive of sidewalks) requirements for Village Center District and possible local subdivision streets where appropriate to the neighborhood design and expected traffic volume; Amend parking standards to encourage pervious surfaces and deicing application regulations where appropriate.
- **Consider adopting Local Option Fee for Transportation:** Consider adopting the Local Registration Fee for Transportation authorized by RSA 261:153 establish a dedicated fund for transportation capital needs, including roads, bridges, sidewalks, trails, and transit expenditures.
- **Support CART:** Continue to support CART with local match contributions; publicize services to the transit dependent population in Windham.
- **Intercity Bus Service at Exit 3:** Work with the NHDOT and RPC to ensure that Boston intercity transit service for I-93 include stops Exit 3 soon after implementation.

## **Theme B**

### **Environmental Protection, Land Use, and Open Space**

The purpose of this theme was to determine how the CTAP community has planned for the protection of land in a way that is consistent and compatible with future growth trends. To achieve these goals communities must focus on future land use strategies and determine how these would help to promote the preservation of natural resources, open space, and environmental protection.

Theme B generated 38 questions dealing with natural resources, green infrastructure, parks and recreational opportunities, rural character, and the preservation of agricultural lands and forests.

The Steering Committee identified a number of broad goals that CTAP-designated communities should strive to accomplish which are outlined below:

# Goals

- Promote the preservation and protection of natural resources when addressing the economic needs of the community and region.
- Protect natural resources and the environment including ground water, aquifers, wildlife, and wildlife corridors
- Establish and conserve an interconnected green infrastructure and ensure public access to open space, parks, and other recreational opportunities.
- Maintain rural character whenever possible, especially forests and farms.

## **B: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, LAND USE, AND OPEN SPACE**

### *Findings:*

1. The Town has an up-to-date Master Plan (2005) contains all required elements (including Vision and Land Use/Future Land Use sections) and which provides good basis for the Town's zoning and regulations. The Plan includes an implementation section which contains a clear summary of recommendations, actions required, timeframe and responsible party. This creates an easy, effective way to monitor implementation.
2. The Town's zoning ordinance and regulations are generally consistent with the 2005 Master Plan and its recommendations, however, implementing some the Plan's will result in or lead to modification to zoning and land use regulations.
3. Since at least 2003 (?) the Town of Windham has been actively planning and implementing the establishment of a village center, both with special purpose zoning and investment in new municipal buildings and infrastructure. Most new Community Buildings are located in the Town Center.
4. Windham has a long history of aggressively protecting natural resources, especially surface water resources and wetlands, through its ordinances and development regulations.
5. Town has comprehensive set of "environmental characteristics" zoning measures including wetlands/shoreland (WWPD); flood plain aquifer protection as well as soil based lot sizing to ensure site capability to support development.
6. The Town has developed a Village Center District is an innovative land use approach (which uses relaxed zoning dimensional and density standards) to encourage a village/town center form of development.
7. As part of a region wide identification of important conservation areas, the Town 15 defined areas of conservation interest as part of the RPC regional open space plan. At that time, these areas totaled more than 3500 acres. These areas were



identified as having importance for conservation, recreation, water supply, or ecological integrity (or combination of factors).

8. The Town has not conducted a formal Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) or Open Space Plan, although elements of both are contained in the Master Plan.

### ***Recommendations***

- **Develop a Natural Resources Inventory:** The Town, under the auspices of the Conservation Commission should develop a Natural Resources (as referenced in the enabling statute) to include a comprehensive set of GIS maps identifying key natural resources and features, as well as a narrative. This NRI can be used as the basis for an open space/conservation plan, environmental characteristics zoning and environmentally focus land use regulations. New maps, data, and regulatory tools are now available from the Wildlife Action Plan, Land Conservation Plan, and Natural Services Network Plan that may be of use to Planning Board and Conservation Commission in designating resource areas for protection.
- **Investigate Prime Wetlands Designation:** The Town should investigate the cost and benefits of pursuing Prime Wetland Designation under RSA 483A. Such designation provided greater standing and expands opportunity for local input in the State wetlands permitting process.
- **Develop and Adopt a Conservation/Open Space Plan:** Town should develop and adopt as part of the Master Plan, a local open space conservation plan to help guide and prioritize future conservation land acquisitions. The CTAP program will offer all communities assistance in preparing and open space assessment and open space plan. in 2008 and 2009.
- **Investigate Density Transfer Provisions in the Zoning Ordinance:** Consider implementing a density transfer credit provisions in the zoning ordinance whereby additional optional development density is permitted where appropriate in exchange for conservation easements (or funds to purchase them) in areas identified as of highest conservation value. (The NHDES/NHARPC Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques Guide contains a model Density Transfer Credit Ordinance)
- **Investigate Conservation Overlay District:** Investigate establishing a conservation overlay district within which conservation subdivisions would be mandatory. The overlay would consist of areas identified in the NRI and/or opens space conservation plan as having the highest conservation value (for agricultural soils, wildlife habitat, water supply/aquifer protection, etc.) (The NHDES/NHARPC Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques Guide contains a model Conservation Subdivision chapter and ordinance; the Coastal Watersheds Conservation Plan contains a model Conservation Overlay District strategy prepared by the RPC).
- **Update Local Ordinances and Regulations to reflect new Comprehensive Shoreline Protection Act (CSPA):** Update zoning and subdivision and site

regulations to account for changes in the State's shoreland protection law (RSA 483-B) effective July 1, 2008.

- **Update/Strengthen Stormwater Management Regulations:** There are existing provisions in the regulations regarding erosion and sediment control but these could be strengthened. As they are improved, measures for Low-Impact Development (LID) can be incorporated into the regulations. Bioretention facilities (ex. raingardens) and porous pavement blocks are examples of LID standards.
- **Develop an Energy Conservation Action Plan.** Three steps can be taken by Windham to reduce energy consumption and save money. 1) Conduct an energy audit and develop action plan. 2) Strengthen energy efficiency objectives in building codes. 3) Board of Selectmen considers passing tax exemptions for residential wind and wood renewable energy projects.

# Theme C

## **Downtown/Village Centers and Community Vitality**

The purpose of this theme was to determine how the CTAP community has planned for the development and preservation of vibrant community centers which would include an extensive array of cultural and recreational resources. The overall intent is to enhance public participation by establishing areas for community activities around the downtown or common community center which would add rural character and promote a sense of vitality to the village center.

Theme C generated 16 questions dealing with the development of village center districts and the promotion of walkable downtown areas in an effort to maintain the small town New England community tradition. Special emphasis was given to the development of main streets, historic preservation, and landscaping.

The Steering Committee identified a number of broad goals that CTAP-designated communities should strive to accomplish which are outlined below:

### **Goals**

- Develop or enhance downtowns and village centers through the reuse of existing infrastructure and the rehabilitation of buildings with historic value.
- Promote the development of walkable downtown areas which are consistent with historic patterns.
- Enhance Main streets and promote a small community, New England town atmosphere.

### ***Findings:***

1. In the past decade there are few towns in New Hampshire that have been more focused and purposeful than Windham in efforts to establish a strong and vibrant town center. The Town's roots are as a rural agricultural community which never developed a large commercial town center. The small village at North Lowell Road and Church Street is typical of many small town villages in New Hampshire, consisting of a church, town hall, fire station and other buildings. As a community center it is hampered by the transection of NH 111, a major east-west arterial highway. Beginning with a town-sponsored charette conducted by the Office of State Planning in about 2001, the Town began to articulate a vision to create a new and expanded Town Center, building on and adjacent to the historic center. Related actions included the creation of a Village Center zoning district intended to create the conditions that would lead to concentrated mixed development east of the historic village, and the development of new municipal buildings (police, fire and library) to the south and across NH 111. The vision for an expanded town center was reinforced by the 2005 Master Plan, and followed by the development of a sub-area vision plan for the Village Center developed in 2006-2007.
2. Public opinion in Windham strongly supports the development and expansion of the town center. The Community Visioning process held in 2004 in conjunction with the Master Plan update found that residents highly valued the sense of community and small town character of the Town but lamented the lack of a village center that was pedestrian

friendly and which functioned as a destination for local retail, and other commercial services.

3. The 2005 Master Plan specifically supports the goal of expanding a vibrant town center as articulated in Goal LU-3:

***Goal LU-3***

*Support the development of the village center (near Town Hall), where commercial, residential, social, civic, and cultural uses converge to attract and strengthen the Windham community.*

*Objectives*

- *Use site plan review to encourage desired uses and achieve public benefits.*
- *Coordinate civic structures and functions with village center planning.*

One of the specific strategies recommended in the plan, *LU-3.3 Adopt Village Center development standards as part of Site Plan regulations* has been accomplished.

4. The Village Center District has yet to simulate the kind of higher density mixed use development for which was designed. This may be in part the result of reluctance of commercial development to locate in the NH111 corridor without direct access to the highway. Passing traffic on NH111 will have limited access to businesses locating in the Village Center District, thus diminishing opportunities for high value retail development. On the other hand, the number of residences allowed under current ratios will result in an insufficient customer base to support retail businesses that locate there. To date there has far more interest expressed by developer in the retail component than in the residential component. Some local officials believe that the delay is inevitable until individual properties are consolidated into several larger blocks of ownership that will facilitate a larger planned development. Opinions appear mixed about what, if anything, needs to be done to improve the attractiveness of the zone for development.
5. NH 111 remains a major obstacle to the creation of a coherent, connected, pedestrian-oriented village center. Traffic volumes, speeds and road design, both present and future are not conducive to be successfully integrating the road into the village. The forthcoming Wall Street Connector/NH111 Corridor Study, funded by the NHDOT and MPO will specifically examine roadway design with respect to the village. The study represents an important opportunity to examine design alternatives that may facilitate implementing the Town's village center vision.

***Recommendations***

- **Implement Master Plan Recommendations for the Village District:** In conjunction with the Goals and Objectives articulated in the 2005 Master Plan relating to the Village Center, three implementation strategies were recommended:

*Strategies*

*LU-3.1 Design and construct pedestrian connections between Fellows Road and Town Hall, the Senior Center, Town Museum, Library, etc.*

*LU-3.2 Review Village Center regulations to encourage placement of parking areas behind or beside buildings rather than between buildings and the street.*

*LU-3.3 Adopt Village Center development standards as part of Site Plan regulations.*

To the extent that they have not yet been acted upon, these recommendations should be pursued.

- **Re-examine the Village District ordinance to identify unintended barriers to development:** As indicated in the findings, private development has been slow to respond to the change in Village District. The ordinance should be examined to identify and address barriers or disincentive that may be contributing to this delay. Specifically, the allowable mix of residential development should be reviewed to determine if it is too low to encourage viable village-oriented retail development.
- **Complete and adopt a Village Center sub-area plan component to the Master Plan:** Subsequent to the 2005 Master Plan the community engaged in the development of a Visioning and subarea planning exercise for the Village Center. This Plan should be formalized and adopted by the Planning Board as a component of the Master Plan. This activity should be coordinated with the conceptual roadway designs recommended in the Wall Street Extension/NH-111 Study (see below).
- **Use the Wall Street Extension/NH-111 Corridor Study to Identify long term roadway design for NH 111 through the Village Center District Area:** The engineering consulting firm selected to conduct the Wall Street Extension (McFarland Johnson) included the conceptual design of the roadway network in and around the village center as a substantial component of the project scope. The Town should utilize the forthcoming study to establish a long term roadway design solution and implementation plan to result in future roadway design and layout that are more compatible with the development and further buildout of the Village District.
- **Evaluate the application of density transfer credits to the Village Center District:** The creation of the Village Center District where higher than standard densities are allowed and encouraged creates an opportunity to generate a density transfer fee in exchange for the ability to access higher density “rights”. The fee can be used as part of the Conservation Fund to purchase conservation easements in areas target for low density development, open space, agriculture presentation or conservation. This technique is, of course, only viable when high demand for development exists in the Village District. When and if such demand develops, the evaluation of the density transfers concept should take place. A model Density Transfer Credit Ordinance is available as part of the DES/NHARPC Innovative Land Use Guide.
- **Evaluate the pros and cons of established a water service district to serve the Village Center District to allow higher density of development:** Although a controversial subject in Town, the development of public water (or sewer) service, the successful development and ultimate buildout of the Village District may be enhanced and accelerated with the development of a community or municipal water system. The idea may be less divisive if the service area is strictly limited to the village area, and if the higher densities that result could result in offsetting development in other areas.

## Theme D

### Local Economy

The purpose of this theme was to determine if the CTAP community has enacted policies that promote economic viability, foster a prosperous business environment, and support agricultural

development. The development of a strong local economy should result in increased local employment opportunities and livable wages.

Theme D generated 15 questions dealing with the development of economic development strategies, commercial and agricultural development, and tax incentives to attract new business development.

The Steering Committee identified a number of broad goals that CTAP-designated communities should strive to accomplish which are outlined below:

## Goals

- Support sustainable and balanced economic growth that reflects the current tax base.
- Strengthen local agriculture and forestry through the support of related infrastructure and economic systems.
- Support the development of new jobs and livable wages.

### *Findings:*

1. A major recurring theme in Windham is the need to balance residential growth with retail, commercial and other non-residential development. This is important both as a measure to ensure an adequate tax base but also and to improve employment opportunities within the Town and improve access to retail and commercial services to town residents. To emphasize the point: as of 2005, only 8% of the town property value was attributed to non-residential uses; there are 0.21 jobs per capital in Windham compared to 0.41 for Rockingham County as a whole.
2. The 2005 Master Plan calls for three economic development benchmarks to be achieved by 2015 regarding non-residential development.
  - increase the amount of retail floor area from 20 to 30 square feet per resident.
  - increase the ratio of private sector jobs to town labor force from 34% to 40%.
  - increase the commercial and industrial tax base from 8% to 10% of total taxable valuation.
3. The reconfiguration of the Exit 3 interchange as part of the I-93 Expansion project resulted in the loss of 7% of the existing non-residential and tax base as it was in 2002; partial recapture of this loss is hoped to be achieved within the Gateway Commercial District with the eventual reclaiming of developable land resulting from the westward shift of the northbound barrel of I-93.
4. Key economic development goals articulated in the 2005 Master Plan are: (1) the development of a walkable Village Center with retail and service uses oriented to the needs of Windham residents; (2) maximizing the economic development potential of the Interstate 93 interchange and Route 111, particularly as the State begins implementing major improvement projects on both facilities; (3) increasing the level of development along the southerly portion of the Route 28 corridor; and (4) accommodating appropriate commercial development in neighborhood business areas.

## *Recommendations*

- **Non Residential Buildout Analysis.** Complete a buildout analysis for all non-residential zones in the Town in order to assess the Town's ability to accommodate the levels of development established as benchmarks in the Master Plan. The Buildout Analysis being conducted as part of CTAP Phase 2 may be used as a starting point in this analysis.
- **Conduct Assessment of Economic Development Opportunities & Strategies:** The Town should undertake a formal self assessment of economic development opportunities, comparing zoning district permitted uses, services and opportunities against market demand. Starting from this assessment, an economic development strategy should be developed to determine cost effective actions to be taken to attract appropriate business and achieve the economic development benchmarks identified in the Master Plan.
- **Engage Economic Development Committee:** A local Economic Development Committee was established subsequent to the 2005 Master Plan. This committee should be asked to take responsibility for developing the economic assessment of strengths and weakness and the set of strategies, consistent with the Master Plan, for stimulating desired economic development.
- **Prepare an Infrastructure Plan for the Village Center District:** The Master Plan called for the development of certain public facilities specific to the Village Center including sidewalks, plazas, lighting, a pedestrian crossing over NH-111, landscaping, other amenities and possibly shared water and/or wastewater facilities. The Town should undertake a comprehensive infrastructure plan as part of its planning for the Village Center to further determine what infrastructure should be built, when, and by whom.
- **Extend Access Management Overlay Districts:** The general provisions and development standards incorporated into the Route 28 Access Management Overlay District should be extended to other areas of key highway intensive non-residential zones, especially the Gateway Commercial Zone and Commercial A and B Zones. In these areas the Town should implement a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the NH Department of Transportation (DOT) to coordinate local site plan review with State driveway permitting.
- **Consider a Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive.** RSA 79-E allows communities to create a tax relief incentive which freezes property taxes on a parcel for a set amount of time. The purpose of the tax relief is to promote the rehabilitation of historic buildings, provide affordable housing, and generally enhance downtown areas. This incentive can be used strategically by the Town to aid in the preservation and redevelopment of key properties.
- **Protect and Preserve Land for Agricultural Uses.** Windham is interested in maintaining its rural nature and the community has a strong historic connection to agriculture. The Town should explore opportunities to preserve land for agricultural uses in an effort to preserve open space as well as the agricultural aspect of the community's economy. As a first step in this initiative the Town may wish to establish an Agricultural Commission as enabled under legislation enacted in 2007 (HB293) and codified in RSA 674:44e. An additional step, possible carried out by a local Agriculture Commission

would be to conduct an agriculture inventory to map the locations of existing farms and prime agricultural soils.

## **Summary**

The goal of this CTAP initiative is to develop a broad and comprehensive program to meet a wide range of growth challenges. After evaluating and analyzing Windham's planning documents, the Rockingham Planning Commission has identified policies that would help Windham avoid a future of uncontrolled growth. As a result, thirty-one recommendations were described. These included:

### **Theme A: Municipal Services, Regional Cooperation, Housing & Transportation**

*CTAP Community Assessment – Town of Windham*



### *Regional Cooperation*

- Identify and Protect Potential Municipal Well Locations
- Ensure Septage Disposal Agreement is in Place
- Regional Stormwater and Flood Mitigation
- Investigate innovative wastewater alternatives and/or water districts to serve special areas
- Address Regional Impact Criteria and Procedures

### *Housing*

- Address Workforce Housing in the Zoning Ordinance
- Research and incorporate LEED-H and LEED -ND or similar building construction and design standards for energy conservation.
- Promote “Conservation Subdivision” form of Development
- Expand Residential use ratio in the Village Center District
- Incorporate New Regional Needs Assessment

### *Transportation*

- Extend provisions of RT 28 Access Management Overlay District to the NH 111 Corridor
- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the NH Department of Transportation (DOT)
- Subdivision Street and Trail Connectivity
- Village Center Sidewalk Plan
- Pavement Width and Materials
- Consider adopting Local Option Fee for Transportation
- Support CART
- Support Boston Commuter Bus Service at Exit 3 as component of I-93 Expanded Intercity Transit Service

## **Theme B: Environmental Protection, Land Use, and Open Space**

- Develop Natural Resources Inventory
- Investigate Prime Wetlands Designation
- Develop and Adopt a Conservation/Open Space Plan
- Investigate Density Transfer Provisions in the Zoning Ordinance
- Investigate Conservation Overlay District
- Update zoning and subdivision and site regulations to account for changes in the State’s Shoreland Protection Law (RSA 483-B) effective July 1, 2008.
- Update/Strengthen Stormwater Management Regulations
- Develop an Energy Conservation Action Plan

## **Theme C: Downtowns, Village Centers, and Community Vitality**

- Implement Master Plan Recommendations for the Village District
- Re-examine the Village District ordinance to identify unintended barriers to development
- Complete and adopt a Village Center sub-area plan component to the Master Plan
- Use the Wall Street Extension/NH-111 Corridor Study to Identify long term roadway design for NH 111 through the Village Center District Area
- Evaluate the application of density transfer credits to the Village Center District

- Evaluate the pros and cons of established a water service district to serve the Village Center District to allow higher density of development

**Theme D: The Local Economy**

- Non Residential Buildout Analysis
- Conduct Assessment of Economic Development Opportunities & Strategies
- Engage Economic Development Committee
- Prepare an Infrastructure Plan for the Village Center District
- Extend Access Management Overlay Districts
- Consider a Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive
- Protect and Preserve Land for Agricultural Uses

These recommendations will be useful to the Town in determining and prioritizing how to make effective use of the technical assistance, analyses and grant resources that will be made available through the CTAP program.

**Summary of Recommendations - CTAP Community Assessment**

**Town of Windham**

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>PRIORITY</b> (1- LOW; 3- HIGH)	<b>APPLICABLE TO CTAP?</b> (1- LOW; 3- HIGH)
<b>Theme A: Municipal Services, Regional Cooperation, Housing &amp; Transportation</b>		
<b><i>Regional Cooperation</i></b>		
Identify and Protect Potential Municipal Well Locations		
Ensure Septage Disposal Agreement is in Place		
Participate in Regional Stormwater and Flood Mitigation		
Investigate innovative wastewater alternatives and/or water districts to serve special areas		
Address Regional Impact Criteria and Procedures		
<b><i>Housing</i></b>		
Address Workforce Housing in the Zoning Ordinance (per SB342)		
Research and incorporate LEED-H and LEED -ND or similar building construction and design standards for energy conservation.		
Promote “Conservation Subdivision” form of Development		
Expand Residential use ratio in the Village Center District		
Incorporate New Regional Housing Needs Assessment		
<b><i>Transportation</i></b>		
Extend provisions of RT 28 Access Management Overlay District to the NH 111 Corridor		
Develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Access Management with the NH Department of Transportation (DOT)		
Subdivision Street and Trail Connectivity		
Village Center Sidewalk Plan		
Pavement Width and Materials		
Consider adopting Local Option Fee for Transportation		
Support CART		
Support Boston Commuter Bus Service at Exit 3 as component of I-93 Expanded Intercity Transit Service		
<b>Theme B: Environmental Protection, Land Use, and Open Space</b>		

Develop Natural Resources Inventory		
Investigate Prime Wetlands Designation		
Develop and Adopt a Conservation/Open Space Plan		
Investigate Density Transfer Provisions in the Zoning Ordinance		
Investigate Conservation Overlay District		
Update zoning and subdivision and site regulations to account for changes in the State’s Shoreland Protection Law (RSA 483-B) effective July 1, 2008.		
Update/Strengthen Stormwater Management Regulations		
Develop an Energy Conservation Action Plan		
<b>Theme C: Downtowns, Village Centers, and Community Vitality</b>		
Implement Master Plan Recommendations for the Village District		
Re-examine the Village District ordinance to identify unintended barriers to development		
Complete and adopt a Village Center sub-area plan component to the Master Plan		
Use the Wall Street Extension/NH-111 Corridor Study to Identify long term roadway design for NH 111 through the Village Center District Area		
Evaluate the application of density transfer credits to the Village Center District		
Evaluate the pros and cons of established a water service district to serve the Village Center District to allow higher density of development		
<b>Theme D: The Local Economy</b>		
Complete a Non Residential Buildout Analysis		
Conduct Assessment of Economic Development Opportunities & Strategies		
Engage Economic Development Committee		
Prepare or Expand on an Infrastructure Plan for the Village Center District		
Extend Access Management Overlay Districts to NH 111		
Consider a Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive		
Protect and Preserve Land for Agricultural Uses		