

WINDHAM MASTER PLAN 2005



Windham Planning Board
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Goals, Objectives, and Strategies
Implementation Plan

VOLUME II of II

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Introduction

This document presents the core of Windham's 2005 Master Plan, a set of goals, objectives, and strategies that together describe a direction for the Town over the next ten years. The Master Plan has been developed through extensive participation by the Town's residents and public officials.

In addition to this document, the Master Plan includes an *Existing Conditions and Analysis* report (Volume I) which compiles the most current available data on the topics covered in the Master Plan; presents growth projections; and identifies key issues that the Town must address in the coming years.

The current document consists of three parts. The first part, "Old Value New Horizons - Vision Statement," presents a concise statement summarizing residents' aspirations for the Town's future, arising out of the public sessions held from May-September 2004. The next section, "Priorities for Action," presents several major themes that arose from the public participation process and cross over the Master Plan's individual topic areas. These two elements are repeated from the *Existing Conditions and Analysis* in order to provide an immediate context for the recommendation which follow.

The third section presents goals, objectives, and strategies organized under the following headings: Land Use; Housing; Economic Development; Community Facilities; Utilities; Natural Resources and Open Space; Recreation and Cultural Resources; and Transportation and Circulation. These goals, objectives, and strategies are the core of the Master Plan.

The last chapter of this document is the Implementation Plan. This section organizes the Master Plan strategies into a table where follow up actions, priorities, and responsibilities are further outlined.

Old Values New Horizons Vision Statement



Source: www.windhamnewhampshire.com

One of the first observations Windham residents will make when asked to describe the town is that Windham is a great place to live. Embodying the best of old-fashioned Yankee conservatism, residents enjoy a strong sense of community, complimented by a volunteer spirit that prompts neighbors to lend helping hands to each other and to civic government. Above all, the people of Windham value this shared sense of responsibility, cooperation, and friendship, and seek to ensure this ethic continues to define the Town amid future changes in population and land use. Windham's recently adopted motto of "Old Values, New Horizons" celebrates the community's respect for the past, and its optimistic outlook towards the future.



Source: www.windhambaseball.org

Windham residents also retain a close relationship to the land, its open spaces, lakes, ponds, streams, and forests. Although recent growth may cause some to observe that Windham is no longer "rural" in nature, the Town takes pride in conserving its environmental resources and natural beauty. Future development should be shaped to preserve scenic landscapes, allow for contiguous habitats and recreational trails, and protect water quality.



Source: www.windhamcommunityband.org

Growth has brought a major challenge to town in the form of traffic congestion. Relatively few of Windham's paved streets pre-date the 1950's, when a rural pattern of development still characterized land uses. Subdivision development since then has resulted in many new cul de sacs without the paralleled construction of through routes to provide alternatives to the Town's main arterials. There is currently no public transit available to residents. Consequently, traffic congestion is a serious threat to the community's quality of life, and is an obstacle to the Town's emergency response capabilities. The Interstate 93 widening project promises to exacerbate conditions in the near term, and permanent relief of Route 111 traffic will require creative solutions in order to avoid negatively impacting the Town's character. Improving overall circulation to, from, and across Town is critical to Windham's future.

Economic development is another key issue brought into sharp focus by growth. Although residents are grateful that strip development has been successfully discouraged thus far, there is a desire for additional retail options to be conveniently located in Town, such as a drug store or grocery store¹. The primary thrust, however, behind the clarion call for an increase in commercial uses relates to the town's tax base, and the strong will to moderate the tax burden on residents while meeting the community's growing needs for high quality public services. Attracting new and expanded commercial enterprise, encouraging uses

¹ Subsequent to the visioning session, final approval has been given to a new Shaw's supermarket to be located in Windham.

that fulfill local needs, managing their contribution to the built environment through complementary siting and design, and fostering long-term business investment that is in Windham's best interest are important components of the town's vision. At a minimum, some of these new uses should promote the evolution of a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly village center, a widely supported amenity.

Natives and newcomers alike support excellence in Windham's schools, and are interested in meeting the challenge of educating the Town's high school students as they pursue an alternative to their expiring Authorized Regional Enrollment Area (AREA) agreement with Salem High. Continued support for top notch educational institutions is integral to sustaining the community's prosperity.

Recreational programs and facilities enjoy heavy participation by Windham residents, and play an important role in knitting the community together. Griffin Park hosts much of this activity, and has recently undergone major improvements. Trails and access to lakes and ponds are extremely popular recreational outlets as well. Ensuring that Windham's recreational programs address users of all ages and abilities, managing the use and proper maintenance of existing facilities, and planning for expanded future capacity is of high priority.

Residents are generally pleased with the Town's high property values, and seek to maintain this standard. Providing appropriate housing options and continuing care facilities for the town's senior citizens and allowing for the market-driven provision of multifamily housing affordable to people of mixed incomes are key components of the town's housing planning activity. In addition, the trend in conversion of seasonal homes to year-round occupancy provides both a unique avenue into the Windham market, as well an opportunity for the Town to work cooperatively with home owners to address environmental and infrastructure issues.

Preserving the Town's historical resources, including homes, landscapes, cemeteries, and archaeological sites is vital. Local historical districts should be augmented as necessary to protect pieces of Windham's heritage that exist outside district boundaries. Continuing to share the stories that make up the town's legacy is another way residents build and sustain their sense of place and community.

Windham to date has struck a prudent balance between fiscal restraint and a commitment to providing excellent public services and infrastructure that are forward-thinking, efficient, and responsive. Windham will meet the increasing demands of its growing population by supporting the work of its dedicated administrators, and ensuring that public investment continues to be guided by long range planning, innovation, and fiscal conservatism.

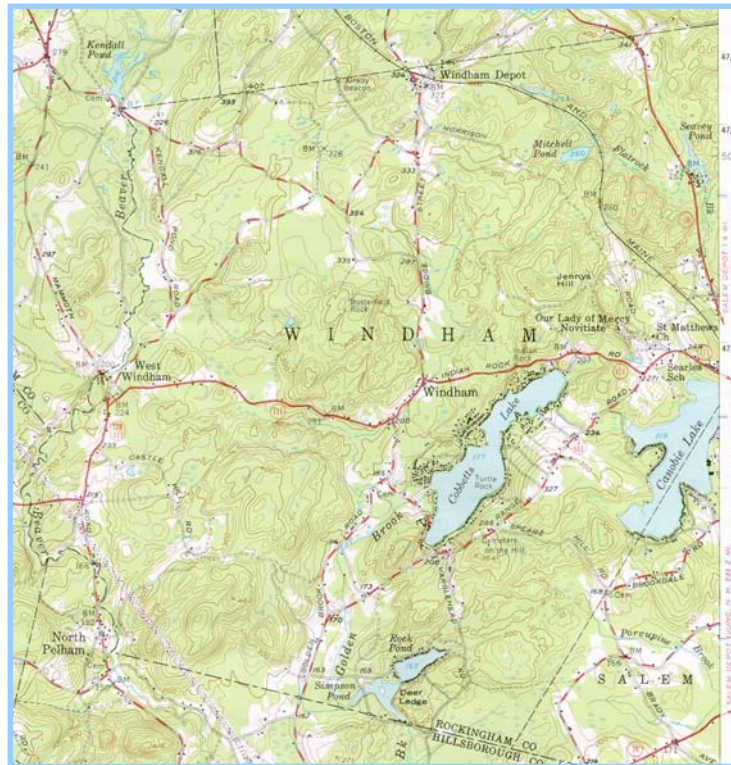
Priorities for Action

Although the Windham Master Plan is a comprehensive guidance document for Town policies and actions, there are clearly a few specific issues that have the potential to substantially affect the community's ability to realize its vision for the future. Public discussion that took place during the visioning process repeatedly centered around these inter-related topics, which represent the major challenges Windham will face during the next several years. In an effort to frame the pages to follow, these themes are presented at the start of this document.

Alleviating Traffic and Improving Transportation Options

Without question, traffic congestion in Windham is a serious threat to the quality of life enjoyed by residents of this formerly rural community. Roadway construction that has occurred since the completion of Interstate 93 in 1962 has fundamentally altered the Town's character, from one with few country roads cutting across town (see Figure 1) to a more complex system of collectors, subdivision streets and cul de sacs, all ultimately feeding in to these historic roadways.

Figure 1: Topographic Map of Windham, 1953



Source: USGS, 1953

Route 111

As further detailed in the Transportation chapter, peak hour delays experienced on Route 111 are causing widespread discontent among Windham commuters, and have resulted in unacceptable emergency response times in certain areas of town. Few alternative east-west routes exist, with only 3 opportunities (Route 111, 111A, and Lowell Road) to cross Interstate 93. The perpetuation of cul de sacs exacerbates pressure on existing collector roads that lead to Route 111 access, such as Lowell/North Lowell Road.

A fundamental question facing Windham involves how Route 111, west of the Interstate 93 interchange, will move people through Town into the future. Presently a two-lane layout with turning lanes, Route 111 is designed to serve vehicular traffic, without sidewalks or bicycles lanes. Its wide pavement lends the roadway an expansive appearance that divides Town in half. It is relatively difficult to travel across Route 111 unless in a car. When discussing congestion on this roadway, the question asked repeatedly is “to widen or not to widen?” As part of the Master Planning process, however, answers to the broader questions of how the Town envisions a future Route 111 fitting into the community’s character, and how future land use along the corridor will affect Route 111, should be considered as a precursor to decision-making regarding potential solutions to traffic backups.

Windham’s 2000 Master Plan recommended that the Town strongly advocate for the road to remain a Limited Access route, and that existing access points be consolidated to achieve the goal of no more than 7 or 8 signalized intersections along its length in Windham. This certainly continues to be an appropriate recommendation, but may be enhanced by several additional factors, for example:

- Continued encouragement of the creation of a Village Center, which may provide some services which are presently only accessible by traveling to Salem or Derry via Routes 111 and 28;
- Consideration of bicycle lanes, parallel travel paths between developments, and/or sidewalks in targeted locations to allow for non-vehicular travel between destinations;
- Introduction of street trees with all new development;
- Strict control/discouragement of additional roadside signage.

Route 111 will continue to serve as Windham’s main east-west travel corridor, and for this reason, planning for its future should remain a top priority. Though Route 111 is ultimately under the State of New Hampshire’s control, the Town may want to explore with the DOT a future vision for the roadway corridor prior to addressing any obvious defects. This type of pre-planning effort is becoming more common in recognition of the larger role such prominent roadway corridors play in relation to community character and economic development, as well as transportation. Londonderry, for

example, has applied a Performance Overlay District to Route 102 (and Route 28) in an attempt to minimize traffic impacts, preserve rural character, and promote high quality economic development.

Windham has similarly enacted an Access Management Overlay to Route 28, and is advanced in its thinking about the role corridors play in the community. It has already implemented village center zoning along 111, and seeks to encourage parallel service roads where appropriate. Given the degree to which Route 111 continues to be debated in public discussions, and the high likelihood of it undergoing construction in the not too distant future, it is important that the Town build consensus for this corridor's future profile.

Interstate 93

The proposed expansion of Interstate 93 promises to have both short and long term implications for Windham. Town officials have been consulting with the State Department of Transportation regarding this project since 2000, and will remain involved as it is scheduled to move towards a 2010 completion date.

The estimated \$440 million project is expected to be 6 years in construction. Traffic congestion on Interstate 93 at present causes regular cut through traffic on Windham roadways, which is expected to worsen as construction commences. Anticipated pressure on Routes 111 and Route 28 is the subject of pre-planning efforts, particularly with regard to emergency response strategies. At a minimum, Windham should continue to communicate with Salem and Derry to maximize traffic management opportunities.

Windham will experience a wide range of direct and secondary impacts from the project. Regular monitoring of water resources within the project impact area will be needed to ensure that planned detention basins and grassed swales are operating as intended to filter runoff and prevent flooding. Although construction of wetlands and the purchase of additional land for conservation will help to lessen impacts overall, the loss of approximately \$6-8 million in Windham properties, mainly commercial, will be an issue that the Town will be left to address with private developers as the reconstruction of Exit 3 proceeds forward.

Town leaders have re-zoned this gateway area to entice projects that will redefine this primary entry point with well-designed commercial uses that incorporate multi-modal transit into their facilities (bike paths and racks, sidewalks, etc.). Guarding against uses such as fast food chains, drive-through establishments, and large-scale, free-standing signage will be critical to preventing this exit from resembling any other along the Interstate. In addition, the landscaping and site plans of these future uses can signal to drivers the need to slow their speed as they exit the highway environment and enter into Town. Consideration of design and use at gateway areas should remain at the forefront of Town officials' minds as they seek to replace the lost tax base at this location.

Expanding
Transportation
Options

In order to realize improvements to its traffic condition, Windham needs to remain mindful that roadway widening alone is unlikely to yield desirable results, and that expanding its options for travel to, from, and throughout Town is critical to achieving long term success.

Windham's 2000 Master Plan called for several strategies to encourage both non-vehicular travel and improved automobile circulation. These recommendations included:

- Expansion of bicycle and walking routes on heavily traveled corridors;
- Active support of mass transit and public transportation, especially for elderly and handicapped persons;
- Requiring key connector streets be constructed in conjunction with subdivision and site plan approvals, without traversing large tracts of open space.

While progress on these items is on-going, this Master Plan must set forth specific steps, define measurable goals, and assign responsible parties to accelerate the achievement of the advisable, yet at times elusive, goal of expanding non-vehicular travel options.

Growth Management: Maintaining High Quality Public Services and Facilities

The Vision Statement reflects a strong appreciation in the Windham community for living amid the Town's scenic natural areas, its high quality public services and facilities, and fairly stable tax rate. A repeated theme from the 2000 Master Plan highlighted the need to protect conservation land of high value, and the Town's Conservation Commission has responded to this need through outright purchases, attracting gifts, and working with the Planning Board to support open space subdivisions. And, to a large extent, Windham seems to be fairly satisfied with the quality and appearance of its new developments. As a result, the term "growth management" is used here to reference the relationship between growth and public services – as NH Statutes would state, it is a matter of avoiding "scattered and premature" development by planning for staff, programs, and facilities that will meet the needs of a growing community.

One of the main thrusts of this plan will be to address how the Town can continue to be highly responsive to the needs of its residents and businesses while avoiding burdensome residential tax bills. To a large degree, this question is central to all fast-growing communities, and easy answers are non-existent.

In simple terms, the Town has two fundamental options to address a growing gap between services and the ability to pay for them: raise revenue or cut costs. Complex, however, are the myriad of consequences associated with both options, and acceptable solutions may ultimately require constant assessment and adjustment. While this happens annually during preparation of the Town's budget, the Master Plan must take a longer view and provide both information and direction for future decision-makers.

Town officials appear to stretch resources, staff, and facilities wherever possible – an in-depth analysis of operational practices is being discussed by the Board of Selectmen. The intent of such a study would be, in part, to maximize efficiencies and identify any cost recovery opportunities.

From a land use perspective, cutting costs that result from particular uses is a challenge. Commonly-held notions suggest that residential uses typically result in net losses to town budgets, as home owner taxes do not fully cover the costs to serve families (especially those with children who attend public school). In contrast, non-residential uses are typically regarded as net benefits to the tax base. Open space, as some studies assert, can be tax base neutral, or can be indirectly positive, as the intrinsic value of open land may raise the value of properties throughout the community. All of these assumptions, however, warrant rigorous testing should Windham desire to further explore a true "cost of community services" study. And, this type of study can never stand alone without the context of existing reality to ground it – in other words, there is no optimal proportion of land uses that are present in most desirable communities with reasonable tax rates. Extreme scenarios prove that cost/benefit analyses must weigh their conclusions carefully – e.g. in a community that is 100% residential, homes do "pay for themselves."

That said, however, the public discussion that has centered on the option of raising revenues through additional economic development is an important one. Residents who support additional commercial use do so with an understanding that the Town will benefit from new tax revenue. Those who question the need to attract new business are suspect that the new revenue will outweigh the potential impacts (environmental, traffic, aesthetic, etc.) that may accompany the uses. The Economic Development chapter of the plan thoroughly explores both sides of this issue. In addition, new businesses can enhance Windham's overall desirability, providing convenient stores, employment, and public gathering spaces. Properly located, they also hold the potential of improving traffic congestion by reducing the distances traveled in pursuit of goods and services.

Ironically, phased development/building permit cap ordinances, while aimed at slowing the rate of increasing demand for public services, would have the unintended consequence of slowing the collection of new tax revenues. The recent years of high residential growth have enabled the Town to fund needed improvements to several of its public facilities; there seems to be an overall sense, however, that there is a demand for services that needs to be addressed before additional growth can be accommodated. This services gap appears to apply to several areas, from highway maintenance to recreation, and from affordable housing to the transfer/recycling operation.

Ensuring Long-term Water Quality and Supply Protection and Wastewater Treatment

Windham's water resources are important considerations for community planning. There are numerous lakes, ponds, brooks and streams as well as freshwater wetlands. There are also substantial groundwater resources particularly associated with the Windham-Cobbetts Pond Aquifer.

Cognizant of the value of these resources, the town has undertaken a program of water resource protection involving land use regulation, water quality monitoring and conservation land acquisition. Specific efforts, such as the Wetland and Watershed Protection and Aquifer Protection districts to the Board of Health Regulations and water quality monitoring are discussed in detail in the Utilities and Natural Resources elements. Master Plan discussions have placed high priority on the need for the Town and its residents to be vigilant and creative as they work to protect Windham's water resources in step with a shared desire to support both residential and commercial development. Ultimately, Windham seeks to ensure that it can rely on its own water resources to provide private drinking water supplies into the foreseeable future.

Like many New Hampshire communities, the town provides neither municipal water nor sewer to the community, opting instead to accommodate development through the use of soil-based lot sizing, and private and community wells. As residential development continues to increase and seasonal homes are converted to year round occupancy, Master Plan discussions have raised the question as to whether the Town's policy should be modified to respond to a) the desire to attract additional commercial uses in order to offset rising tax rates and b) potential water quality issues, especially in the Cobbetts Pond and Canobie Lake areas. Based on such hydrogeological studies as the 1992 US Geologic Survey, the community has concluded that adequate groundwater resources exist, and in a number of instances, the Town has allowed for Pennichuck to provide water to homes that are unable to sufficiently draw upon groundwater resources on their properties. Windham could continue to rely on local water resources for community supplies or reach agreement with Salem to allow it to expand into Windham. At present, the Town has been reluctant to pursue the latter course because of the potential expense.

The issue of allowing or providing for sewage to targeted areas to support commercial development has frequently been raised as large-scale septic can be both expensive and requires active monitoring to ensure against groundwater contamination. It has been Windham's experience that lack of sewer availability can be a major obstacle to attracting desirable business uses to town.

Windham has a standing agreement with the Greater Lawrence Sanitary District which would allow the Town to send approximately 300,000 gallons of wastewater/day via pipes that would connect through Salem. This availability makes the possibility of limited sewer a reality, even though the construction of a connection to Salem would

involve substantial investment². In addition, if water is withdrawn from Windham and discharged into a regional sewer system, a source of groundwater recharge to Windham's aquifers will be eliminated. Alternatives to this traditional approach exist as well, including the use of shared systems and small waste water treatment plants. These issues keep the debate open as to whether Windham should consider municipal sewer.

To another degree, water quality protection in Windham's densest neighborhoods is an on-going concern. While testing has not indicated serious long term problems stemming from residential septic system failures, the conversion of seasonal to year-round homes in these areas pose questions as to whether the cumulative effect of multiple septic systems on fairly small lot sizes will provide safe separation from the wells for on-going use. The Town of Salem has concluded that it is not sustainable to continue to allow septic systems in the areas around Canobie Lake, Millville Lake, and Arlington Pond; consequently it is implementing a \$71 million infrastructure program to deliver sewer service to these property owners, with an optional connection to public water as well. As Salem designed this project, they planned for the possibility of connecting Windham residents near Canobie Lake to their system.

Windham has valid, practical concerns about how to properly and justifiably make a public policy decision to allow for limited sewage. Its concerns relate to the loss of its rural heritage in the face of potentially unleashed development, establishing a fair process to decide which areas would and would not be able to connect into any new system, what the financial investment would be, and whether there would be a long-term impact on water supply. At a minimum, it may be advisable for the Town to consider forming a committee of residents and Town officials to further investigate these issues and make recommendations.

² In past discussions with the Planning Board, developers have expressed interest in the idea of an upgrade to the current system along Route 28 as well as construction of a new system to support commercial development in the Exit 3 area. No commitment, however, has been made.

Goals, Objectives, & Strategies

The following pages present the goals, objectives, and strategies of the Master Plan organized in eight topical *elements*. The Master Plan's *goals* are overarching statements describing the general direction that the Town wishes to pursue. The *objectives* define the Town's positions on individual issues and can be used to guide public and private decision-making. Finally, the *strategies* are specific measures that the Town will take to further the goals and objectives. For some of the strategies, more detailed action steps are described.

Land Use

According to New Hampshire state law, the land use chapter of any Master Plan is the one *upon which all the following sections shall be based*. Using the plan's overall vision as a guide, this element directs the size, shape, and location of future land uses, working within the context of existing land use.

Windham's rapid growth has caused the Town to be vigilant in its planning efforts to adequately provide public services and facilities for its growing population. In some instances, the Town has been hard-pressed to keep pace with increasing demands, which have been the result of direct growth compounded by indirect consequences of growth, regulatory mandates, and changing public expectations.

Windham's Planning and Development Department, alongside its Planning Board, have been active in fine tuning the Town's Zoning Ordinance in response to changing conditions. The 2000 Master Plan land use chapter primarily focused on supporting existing policies that have served the Town well – e.g. open space subdivisions, soil based lot sizing, wetland protection, etc. This plan likewise promotes the preservation of well-regarded policies, but will also address several fundamental issues with regard to future land use:

- Planning for the development of a village center in Windham, and shaping its development to foster a vibrant place that connects to the existing, nearby built environment (the historic town center, Fellows Road, the post office, the Town Commons);
- Fostering economic development, especially around Exit 3, the PBT district, and Route 28 areas;
- Ensuring that the future of Route 111 will complement the community's character; and
- Managing growth in a manner that will address the need for expanded community facilities and services in a timely manner

Goal LU-1

Continue to shape land development in a manner that preserves Windham's scenic character, and allows the Town to expand its public facilities and services in anticipation of growth.

Objectives

- *Manage the amount and rate of residential growth.*
- *Continue to manage growth through soil-based lot sizing and support of the established system of privately-furnished water and sewer services.*
- *Ensure that development impacts (e.g. infrastructure and public facility needs) are adequately mitigated through the approval process.*

Strategies

- LU-1.1 *Continue to employ soil-based lot sizing for development.*
- LU-1.2 *Continue to update the School Facility Impact fee as necessary.*
- LU-1.3 *Review the Planning Board's procedures to accept impact fees and exactions and amend as necessary. Ensure impact fees are proportional to the needs assessed.*
- LU-1.4 *Review subdivision roadway standards to complement community character (e.g. minimize pavement, provide street trees, require sidewalks where appropriate, address traffic calming, and foster neighborhood connectivity).*
- LU-1.5 *Review noise standards for non-residential use that minimizes noise levels to surrounding properties by establishing appropriate decibel levels at the property line of the proposed activity. Such levels may vary by the time of day with lower decibel levels required during night time hours.*

Goal LU-2

Shape development in a manner that protects Windham's natural resources.

Strategies

- LU-2.1 *Study the effect of requiring all subdivision and site plans to provide soil maps and information in accordance with the Site Specific Soil Maps for New Hampshire and Vermont, SSSNNE Special Publication No. 3, June, 1997.*
 - This provision is consistent with the NH DES Site Specific permits. This provision would supercede the current provision for HISS mapping that is inconsistent with current NRCS standards.
- LU-2.2 *Develop new landscaping regulations to:*
 - Require additional use of low-maintenance landscaping treatments, native landscape materials and minimize lawn areas.
 - Specify the amount of ground cover, shrubs, and trees required under various circumstances, e.g. front yards, parking areas.

LU-2.3 *Encourage conservation-design development by adopting regulations that require inventory and analysis of natural resources (e.g. habitats, specimen trees, fields, woodlands, wetlands, views, steep slopes, etc.) be completed and incorporated into the site plans.*

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.*

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.*

Goal LU-4

Enhance the appearance and function of Route 111.

Objectives

- *Encourage nodal, mixed use (retail, commercial, residential) development and redevelopment at appropriate locations along Route 111 to encourage transit usage and walking.*
- *Protect and beautify gateways into Town.*

Strategies

- LU-4.1 *Carry out a corridor study for Route 111*
- *Corridor studies should address land use, urban design, vehicular, bicycle, transit, and pedestrian circulation, and natural resources, and should consider opportunities for development and redevelopment that promote economic development and housing, and help build and strengthen community.*
 - *Continue to seek public input from representatives of the business community, residents, and other major stakeholders.*
- LU-4.2 *Identify strategic locations for landscaping improvements along Route 111 to improve the aesthetics and increase pedestrian-friendliness of the corridor.*

Goal LU-5

Promote development that enhances connections between destinations and neighborhoods.

Objectives

- *Encourage development to incorporate public transportation and pedestrian access and mobility, especially at the new Exit 3 area.*
- *Encourage development to incorporate public access to amenities and natural areas.*
- *Promote development that minimizes demands for new infrastructure and services.*

Strategies

- LU-5.1 *Encourage roadway connections that facilitate neighborhood connectivity. Discourage residential development that incorporates additional cul de sac streets.*
- LU-5.2 *Require new commercial development and redevelopment to provide direct and high quality pedestrian connections from street frontage to entrances.*
- LU-5.3 *Revise subdivision regulations to require new commercial and residential development to contain a more interconnected street network to facilitate vehicular and non-vehicular movement to and through development.*

Housing

The challenge for Windham in coming years is to provide housing opportunities for residents who are being squeezed by rising housing costs. A close look at homeowner and renter affordability revealed that the seniors (above 65) and younger people (25-34) tend to shoulder the highest cost burdens for housing. While the latter group's incomes can be reasonably expected to rise with time, about 1-in-4 senior homeowners pay more than 35% of their gross incomes towards housing. Like many other communities whose housing prices are rising at a rapid rate, Windham is challenged to find ways to enable its long-time residents to remain in town. While the Elderly Housing Overlay District has encouraged 55+ housing, consideration should be given to extending the upper limit of the number of allowable units, and to the possibility of the Housing Authority developing senior units.

As Windham seeks to maintain its sense of community, it should take care to maintain and expand the diversity of housing options it currently offers. While single family homes comprise 92% of its housing, Windham's rental units, cottages, and condos serve to accommodate households of varying sizes and incomes. At a minimum, the town's zoning ordinance should continue to provide for some flexibility of design and layout for residential developments.

Master Plan meetings considered the topic of workforce housing and the need to support regional "fair housing" initiatives. At this time, the State of New Hampshire has yet to promulgate regulations which would force communities to take affirmative steps towards providing housing to support the regional economy. Still, Windham would be advised to remain abreast of the legislative deliberations on this issue, and be prepared to respond to future mandates associated with affordable housing.

Goal H-1:

Ensure that Windham's long-time residents and seniors are able to continue living in Town by encouraging the creation of housing appropriate to their needs.

Objectives

- *Continue to encourage the development of additional senior residential developments and expand housing options for seniors.*

Strategies

- H-1.1 *Monitor and evaluate the limit on the production of units under the Elderly Housing Overlay District.*
- H-1.2 *Investigate the possibility of the Town working with the Housing Authority to use Town-owned land near the Village Center to construct affordable senior housing units.*

Goal H-2

Maintain and expand the existing range of housing options in order to sustain neighborhoods and to accommodate households with varying needs.

Objectives

- *Maintain housing options that include a range of structure types, tenure types, and cost levels.*
- *Promote village center rental housing options on upper floors for small (one and two person) households.*
- *Enhance the ability of residents on a limited income (including seniors) to remain in Windham.*

Strategies

- H-2.1 *Consider innovative wastewater collection and treatment methods in areas of high densities such as Cobbetts Pond, Shadow Lake, Rock Pond, and Canobie Lake.*
- H-2.2 *Investigate public financing (e.g. NH Housing Finance Authority) opportunities to support development of affordable housing in the village center.*

Goal H-3

Participate in a coordinated regional approach to meeting shared housing needs.

Objectives

- *Support education and advocacy about regional housing issues.*

Strategies

- H-3.1 *Participate in the development and updating of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment prepared by the Rockingham Planning Commission.*
- H-3.2 *Communicate regularly with Windham's representatives to State government to stay informed about regulatory reforms related to housing.*

Economic Development

Promoting economic development can be a fundamental means of ensuring the health and vitality of places by creating **jobs**, providing needed **goods and services**, contributing to municipal **tax revenue**, and generally supporting quality of life through prosperity. In addition, local businesses are often central to a community's social environment, and can play a large role in defining a community's identity.

Jobs. The unemployment rate in the region around Windham has typically been somewhat higher than the statewide averages for New Hampshire and Massachusetts, and Windham has felt the effect of this regional trend. Although Windham has the highest median household income in New Hampshire, the local unemployment rate averages one to two percentage points higher than the State's unemployment rate.

Ensuring an adequate number of job opportunities for Windham residents is therefore an important local economic development goal. This does not mean trying to provide a job for every working Windham resident, because people choose where to live and work based on a variety of considerations and often trade off longer commuting times for other quality of life factors. Taking into account projected population growth and the percentage of local jobs held by Windham residents (31%), this Plan recommends a modest increase in the ratio of local jobs to the local labor force (from 34% to 40%).

Goods and services. Windham is surrounded by larger communities with a broader array of available consumer goods and services. As a result, Windham residents are used to traveling out of town for the majority of their shopping and service needs. However, in recent years, as the town's population has grown and regional traffic volumes have increased, more residents have expressed a desire for more local shopping opportunities.

These opportunities are indeed expanding: several shopping centers have been developed along Route 111 in the 1980s and 1990s, a large hardware and home improvement center has been established on Route 28, and the Town is about to welcome a new supermarket. Development of the proposed Village Center will accommodate a range of smaller shops and services in a walkable environment close to schools and municipal offices. This Plan recommends continuing this growth so that the ratio of retail floor area to population will increase by about 50 percent over the next decade.

Taxes. Only 8 percent of Windham's total property valuation is attributable to non-residential uses (commercial, industrial, and public utilities). This means that the local tax burden is felt primarily by residential property owners. The Town is facing the need for significant capital expenditures in the near future, which will add to this burden. Thus, there is a continuing need for growth in valuation that generates tax revenues that exceed service demands. This means focusing on office and industrial uses (retail uses are not strong generators of net revenues).

Economic Development Goals, Benchmarks, Objectives, and Strategies

The economic development goals and objectives presented below are of two types. The first goal expresses the *scale* of desired economic growth in terms of its impact on tax base diversification, job creation, and availability of local services. The objectives under this goal are numerical *benchmarks* against which future progress can be measured.

The next four goals (ED-2 through ED-5) address specific locations for economic development, and together constitute a geographic strategy for economic growth in Windham. The concepts expressed in these goals 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) promoting appropriate commercial development in neighborhood business areas.

Finally, the last goal (ED-6) expresses support for independent small businesses, including home-based businesses, as an important component of the Town's overall economic development future. While larger facilities such as manufacturing buildings and multi-tenant office buildings provide significant benefits, it is also important to recognize the contribution of individual small businesses and micro-enterprises: three-quarters of the private businesses in Windham have fewer than 10 employees, and these businesses provide 37 percent of the private sector jobs and generate 40 percent of the business income in the Town.

Goal ED-1

Expand Windham's economic base in order to provide jobs and services for Town residents and to reduce the tax burden on residential property owners.

Objectives (Benchmarks)

- *Increase the number of local private sector jobs to 40 percent of the resident labor force by 2015.*
 - The current ratio of local private jobs to resident labor force is 34 percent.
 - This objective represents an absolute increase of about 770 private sector jobs in the next 10 years.
- *Increase retail floor area to 30 square feet per resident by 2015.*
 - The current ratio is about 20 square feet of retail floor area per resident.
 - This objective represents an absolute increase of about 200,000 square feet of retail floor area in the next 10 years (including the planned supermarket).
 - Average retail growth since 1970 has been 86,000 square feet per decade.
- *Increase the commercial and industrial tax base to 10 percent of Windham's total taxable valuation by 2015.*
 - The current commercial/industrial share of the tax base is 7 percent.
 - This objective represents an absolute increase in commercial and industrial valuation of about \$64 million (in 2004 dollars) over the next 10 years.

- The current total valuation of developed commercial and industrial property is estimated to be approximately \$110 million; thus, attaining the benchmark will require increasing the amount of nonresidential development in Windham by around 60 percent over the next decade.

Strategies

- ED-1.1 *Carry out a build-out analysis for the Town's business areas, incorporating environmental constraints and infrastructure alternatives, in order to assess the Town's ability to attract the benchmark levels of development.*
- ED-1.2 *Establish an Economic Development Committee charged with identifying and attracting businesses that will help move the Town toward its economic development benchmarks, consistent with the Town's land use plan and desired community character.*

Goal ED-2

Create a Village Center encompassing the municipal complex and including community shopping areas and new residential options.

Objectives

- *Promote coordinated development of a walkable village center containing a mix of businesses and residences, including mixed-use structures.*

Strategies

- ED-2.1 *Within the Village Center, encourage the establishment of businesses providing basic consumer goods and services.*
- ED-2.2 *Through the site plan review process, ensure that development in the Village Center district is of a scale and form that encourages pedestrian circulation.*
- Site planning standards should minimize building setbacks from the street; establish parking areas to the rear of buildings; and include sidewalks, plazas, landscaping, bicycle racks, and pedestrian-scale lighting.
 - Consider including on-street parking.
- ED-2.3 *Plan for infrastructure investments to promote the desired character and functioning of the Village Center.*
- Plan for improved vehicular and pedestrian connections across Route 111 to enhance movement within the Village Center.
 - Consider design alternatives for Route 111 in the Village Center to strengthen the cohesion of the Center and reduce the barrier between its north and south portions.
 - Explore opportunities for shared wastewater collection and treatment systems to support concentrated development.
- ED-2.4 *Ensure that functional and attractive public spaces are incorporated throughout the Village Center and municipal complex, including outdoor areas for individual seating and small gatherings as well as public assembly and recreation areas.*

Goal ED-3

Promote economic development around Exit 3 of Interstate 93 that provides significant job growth and tax base expansion.

Objectives

- *Implement land use controls to promote uses that generate high taxable property values and employment levels.*
 - *This area should provide up to 40 percent of the Town's planned ten-year growth in commercial valuation and employment, i.e., \$40 million net increase in valuation and 300 net new jobs.*
- *Ensure that development at the gateway to the Town supports a positive image of Windham while taking advantage of regional highway access.*

Strategies

- ED-3.1 *Plan and implement coordinated access to all properties in the Professional, Business and Technology district north of relocated Route 111 and west of I-93.*
- ED-3.2 *Consider establishing a Tax Increment Financing district to fund access improvements in the PBT district.*
- ED-3.3 *Review the boundaries of the Gateway Commercial district and adjacent nonresidential zoning districts (PBT, Commercial A, Commercial B) in the context of planned improvements to I-93 and Exit 3 and the realignment of Route 111.*
- ED-3.4 *Review the use regulations and development standards for the Gateway Commercial district to promote high value uses and high quality of design, and to discourage generic commercial strip development.*

Goal ED-4

Promote office, industrial and retail development on Route 28 south of Flat Rock Brook.

Objectives

- *Promote office and industrial development in the PBT districts off Roulston Road and Governor Dinsmore Road.*
- *Promote redevelopment and infill along the Route 28 frontage to generate a mix of office and retail uses.*

Strategies

- ED-4.1 *Carry out an analysis of nonresidential development potential (and associated water/ sewer demands) in the Route 28 corridor based on zoning and environmental constraints.*
- ED-4.2 *Review existing zoning district boundaries on Route 28 in the context of the realignment of Route 111.*
- ED-4.3 *Plan for access improvements to land in the Professional, Business, and Technology districts, to support growth in these districts.*

Goal ED-5

Accommodate limited growth of neighborhood businesses in designated areas of the Town.

Objectives

- *Strengthen existing Neighborhood Business areas as locations for convenience retail and services.*
- *Support the development of complementary uses where appropriate to reduce off-site traffic impacts, without undermining the vitality of the Village Center.*

Strategies

- ED-5.1 *Review existing Neighborhood Business districts in West Windham and the Depot area, and refine or expand as appropriate.*
- ED-5.2 *Review nonresidential zoning on Lowell Road near Cobbetts Pond Road (Commercial A and Limited Industrial) and amend as needed to promote appropriate uses.*
- ED-5.3 *Consider the desirability of village center-type of zoning districts in other areas of Windham (Depot area, West Windham, etc.).*

Goal ED-6

Support independent small businesses as a significant component of the Town's overall business mix.

Objectives

- *Support home-based businesses.*
- *Encourage the creation and growth of startup and early-stage businesses.*
- *Provide appropriate locations and spaces in the Town for various stages of business growth and retention.*

Strategies

- ED-6.1 *Review zoning ordinance provisions for home-based businesses and provide additional flexibility where possible without impacting on neighborhood residential character.*
- ED-6.2 *Promote the creation of flexible building space that can be adapted for small business startups and expansions.*

Community Facilities

For over a decade, Windham has been planning for new and upgraded community facilities and services through its Capital Improvement Program (CIP), updated annually by the Planning Board. The CIP budgets for improvements to take place over six years, and is a strong tool the Town uses to manage growth. In most instance, the Master Plan does not identify any needs not being discussed regularly via the CIP process, but can put these items into a broader context of the community existing conditions, trends, and needs.

Inevitably, the new high school will dominate Windham's community facility planning the next several years. Bonding for the facility alone is currently projected to comprise 60-80% of the CIP budgets from 2007 onward, and as construction of a new elementary school proceeds as planned, these two school projects will combine to approach 90% of the CIP budget based on current estimates. At a minimum, it will be critical to:

- Identify opportunities where programming for new school facilities might also fulfill community needs (e.g. playing fields, community meeting space, etc.)
- Begin planning for long-term operational costs associated with new facilities, including increased staffing.
- Consolidating Town Hall functions in a single structure has been actively discussed in Master Plan meetings, but is not yet part of CIP planning. Proposed as part of a 1995 municipal center design plan, this idea also included the prospect of the Town working with the Housing Authority to provide some affordable senior housing units. With the recent sale of land in the village center zone, it appears likely that development of a pedestrian-friendly, mixed use center will begin in the not-too-distant future. This may be an impetus for the Town to re-open its long range thinking about how its land, historic structures, and its buildings on Fellows Road, can best support village center activity and house Town functions into the future.
- Likewise, the Transfer Station and Highway Department both anticipate significant investments are necessary in order to keep pace with community needs (expansion, equipment, salt shed, highway operations center). While each has submitted individual requests to the CIP Committee, discussions have raised the possibility of consolidated facilities, and even a unified department of public works as the Town strives to be efficient in its spending and its use of land. Both departments maintain their current resources are stretched thin, and on-going growth will result in increased stress on existing facilities and staff. Long term planning should begin for these functions.
- In September 2004, the Nesmith Library completed a Needs Assessment and Proposed Building Program that serves as an excellent example of planning for future demands. As Windham seeks to prioritize expansion of the Library in relationship to all other community needs, it is fortunate to have a thorough picture of how Library functions can be enhanced by facility improvements, as well as the consequences of inaction. Additional planning for library expansion

should be informed by construction of the high school and the community amenities that are offered by that facility.

- Finally, examination of the need to reduce emergency response times should be considered. However, the need for a substation as a means of addressing response times was thrown into question as the methodology used in measuring response times was challenged. As such, the need for a substation or alternative means of improving emergency response needs further study, with a clear methodology in measuring response times.

The goals and objectives of this Plan are meant to enhance, not replace, the recommendations of other Town reports and plans. Only those CIP requests that are expected to have a direct impact on land use have been included here.

Goal CF-1

Continue to provide quality facilities that promote excellence in public education.

Objectives

- *Design and construct a new high school.*
- *Work with the School Board to explore the need for a new elementary school and the potential for public kindergarten.*
- *Continue the integration of our schools with the greater community.*

Strategies

- CF-1.1 *Consider community needs (e.g. recreation facilities, meeting space, relationship with public library, potential for adult education) during design process for the new high school, and complete construction.*
- CF-1.2 *Begin a planning process to consider the need for a new elementary school.*
- CF-1.3 *Continue to estimate long-term operational costs of each facility and project impact on future Town budgets.*
- CF-1.4 *Consider town-wide needs when planning school recreational facilities, and promote shared resources and programs, especially field scheduling and use.*
- CF-1.5 *Explore the option of a public process (via the School Board or other volunteer group) to study the feasibility of public kindergarten.*

Goal CF-2

Ensure that the Town's public safety facilities and equipment enable prompt, professional responses to the community's needs.

Objectives

- *Continue to provide Police and Fire facilities and equipment that are well-maintained and up-to-date.*

Strategies

- CF-2.1 *Conduct a feasibility study and safety needs analysis to determine adequate response times and address emergency response (e.g. roadway connectors, land use, and facilities) as deemed necessary.*
- CF-2.2 *Plan for and construct additional parking spaces at the Police station as required.*

Goal CF-3

Ensure that Windham is well positioned to address roadway, solid waste transfer, and public facility maintenance as the Town continues to grow.

Objectives

- *Evaluate and address Highway Department capital improvement requests.*
- *Evaluate and address proposed facility upgrades to the Transfer Station in conjunction with an evaluation of Transfer Station operations.*
- *Plan to comply with State and Federal regulations for salt storage.*

Strategies

- CF-3.1 *Conduct a feasibility study for a future highway department facility, including consideration of Transfer Station needs and the possibility of efficient consolidation of space. Identify site for salt shed.*
- CF-3.2 *Explore alternative road surface (e.g. use of brine solution) treatments.*

Goal CF-4

Provide the community with a public library that meets its needs for reading, information, culture, and activities.

Objectives

- *Enhance the operational capacity of library services by planning for the facility's expansion to meet current standards for programming and level of service.*

Strategies

- CF-4.1 *Design and construct expanded library space that meets community needs and supports best practices. Revise Needs Assessment in response to high school construction where appropriate.*

Goal CF-5

Optimize Town Hall administrative functions and coordinate how municipal facilities can best complement the future development of a village center.

Objective

- *Enhance residents' access to Town Hall services.*
- *Provide adequate working space and environment for Town Hall employees.*
- *Support village center activity.*

Strategies

- CF-5.1 Plan to expand Town Hall administrative space, possibly in a new consolidated facility. If a new facility is determined to be advisable, determine new uses for existing historic structures.*
- CF-5.2 Provide better signage for Town facilities on Fellows Road vs. the historic Town Hall complex.*
- CF-5.3 Enhance the connection between Fellows Road facilities and Town Hall complex by providing a safe, attractive pedestrian crossing.*

Utilities

Administration and coordination of all utilities is the responsibility of several Town departments and officials. Planning and Development, the Board of Health, the Transfer Station Manager, the Highway Department, Maintenance, and even the Town Administrator may be involved in this activity. Together, they function to fulfill the Town's "public works" needs.

Goal U-1:

Provide a high quality, well-maintained system of public and private utilities that accommodates future development and is consistent with the Town's growth policies.

Objectives

- *Maintain a high level of quality of the town's ground and surface waters through the proper management of wastewater from residential, commercial, and community sources.*
- *Ensure that Windham's water supply meets the needs for existing and projected residential, commercial, and light industrial uses.*
- *Program public utility improvements and investments through a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that is based upon the policies and actions from this Master Plan and an appropriate system of community priorities.*
- *Work cooperatively with private utility companies in the planning and development of facilities to ensure that Windham's residents are properly serviced.*
- *Where practical and feasible, continue to require the placement of utilities underground that allow for future expansion and long-term capacity.*

Strategies

- U-1.1 *Maintain the aquifer protection district and augment it with provision to limit commercial extraction of groundwater supplies.*
- U-1.2 *Consider the purchase of land or development rights for key parcels to protect future water supply and wellhead locations. This effort should be coordinated with general open space protection efforts.*
- U-1.3 *Support the NH Department of Environmental Services in identifying potential sources of water pollution and actively monitoring and correcting those sources.*
- U-1.4 *Amend the town's Health Regulations for septic system permitting when a change, or expansion, of use occurs.*
- U-1.5 *Consider amending the Subdivision and Site Plan Review Regulations to allow the option to require the installation of groundwater monitoring wells for larger developments (commercial or industrial), especially those in or adjacent to sensitive water resource areas.*
- U-1.6 *Monitor FCC rules implementing the federal Telecommunications Act and make adjustments to local regulations as needed.*

- U-1.7 *On an annual basis, communicate with each of the private utilities to determine if there will be any changes in service or changes to the existing infrastructure to ensure that such changes are consistent with this master plan. At the same time, the town can provide appropriate information to the utilities about any changes to its plans or other issues of concern.*

Goal U-2

Create and enforce storm water management policies that employ Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Objectives

- *Protect Windham's natural resources from unfiltered storm water run off*
- *Ensure Windham is in compliance with EPA regulations.*

Strategies

- U-2.1 *Incorporate the following storm water management principles into Windham's ordinances, wherever possible:*
- Storm water should be managed to minimize impact to wetlands, aquifers or other environmentally sensitive areas. Incorporating structural and non-structural devices should be considered. Non-structural devices include bioretention areas and vegetated filter strips.
 - Design residential streets for the minimum pavement required to handle the required traffic.
 - Minimize the number and size of cul-de-sacs and include landscaped areas to reduce impervious cover.
 - Where soils, slope, topography, and safety permit, incorporate vegetated open channels to convey and treat storm water.
 - Consider reducing parking ratios in order to minimize the parking space construction.
 - Encourage shared parking where possible
 - Encourage flexible design standards to maximize open space and reduce impervious cover while providing opportunity for pedestrian areas.
- U-2.2 *Consider the incorporation of the Office of Energy and Planning's Model Storm water and Erosion Control Regulation (latest edition) into the town's land use regulations.*
- U-2.3 *Consider incorporating the following language and/or standards into the storm water section of the Site Plan Review Regulations.*
- Require that any additional peak storm water runoff created by the proposed development be retained on site and that minimal degradation of water quality shall occur.

- For projects with impervious surfaces consider requiring the use of catch basins or other similar devices that trap oil, grease and sediments. In addition, require the submission of a long-term maintenance/monitoring plan for these devices as well as a requirement for reporting the monitoring activities to the town.

Goal U-3:

Ensure all utilities meet the needs of the Windham community into the future.

Objectives

- *Design and construct utility infrastructure so as to be unobtrusive.*
- *Provide Windham residents with up-to-date telecommunications service.*

Strategies

- U-3.1 *Continue to require utility infrastructure be placed underground wherever practical. Coordinate utility upgrades with roadway construction and maintenance project to minimize road openings.*
- U-3.2 *Continue to work with electricity, telephone, and cable providers to best serve residents.*

Natural Resources and Open Space

In all towns including Windham, it is necessary to preserve key open space areas in order to manage development, protect natural resources, and maintain the community's rural character. There are two ways to accomplish this. One involves the use of regulatory means such as zoning ordinances. The second way is through non-regulatory means such as land acquisition and conservation easements.

Open Space Protection

One of the major resource protection issues facing the town is due to increasing residential development that results in a diminishing supply of valuable open space. Open space can be protected through acquisition, but in many cases, protection can be attained by guiding development to appropriate locations while avoiding sensitive resource areas. Protection may also be achieved by working with private landowners to maintain large tracts of land that contribute to the character of the community.

The Windham's Zoning Ordinance provides some opportunity for open space protection in the Open Space Residential Overlay District. One of the purposes of this district is to preserve open space, forests, orchards and wetlands. In essence, this regulation provides an opportunity to create more compact development in the Residential and Rural Districts by allowing greater densities on the condition that a minimum of the 65% of the development parcel is dedicated to open space.

The town needs to assess the relative importance of various parcels for acquisition and preservation; otherwise, it is likely to be placed in the position of reacting to individual parcels as they become available for acquisition and/or development. In addition, it is equally important to assess the most appropriate use for each parcel, which is currently owned by the town.

Strategies for Open Space Protection

One of the primary needs for open space protection is a comprehensive management plan that evaluates the use of existing town-owned properties as well as guides decision making for future acquisitions and improvements. This section will address some of the strategies that will be necessary in order for Windham to meet its open space goals in a strategic manner.

Although this Master Plan may be a starting point for open space protection, a specific acquisition plan that clearly defines the qualities and general areas for open space acquisition should be created for future decision-making. The criteria for selecting parcels for acquisition and protection should be based on the needs, goals, and priorities of the town of Windham. Suggested criteria are described below.

- Environmental sensitivity and importance of the parcel such as the presence of aquifers, rivers, wetlands, wildlife, and scenic qualities. This includes wildlife corridors, unique habitat, and endangered, threatened, and rare species.
- Potential linkages to existing open space, to recreation facilities, and to similar areas in adjacent communities.

- Location in areas that do not have enough public open space or are threatened by continued development. Will the acquisition of the parcel provide additional recreational opportunities in an area of the town that is in need of such facilities? Does the purchase of the parcel encourage town-wide distribution of open space and recreation?
- Town-wide versus special group benefit. Would the acquisition of this parcel benefit the town as a whole or a select group of residents in need of additional opportunities? The importance of addressing each need will depend on the specific goals of the town.
- Outdoor recreation potential. This is related to providing additional athletic fields as well as providing areas for greenways and trails that provide opportunities for hiking, walking, running, skiing, and biking.
- Cost and availability of the parcel. This should account for the amount residents are willing to pay to purchase open space (in the form of increased taxes) and the availability of funding sources that would be available if a particular property were targeted for acquisition.
- The financial cost or benefit that removing that parcel from development will have on the town.
- Aesthetic benefits to the general public and the preservation of the town character.

Open Space Committee

An Open Space Committee consisting of representatives from such groups as the Conservation Commission and Planning Board, and others with specific areas of relevant expertise in open space and recreation planning should be created to perform the following:

- Identify and evaluate parcels for acquisition and protection.
- Develop an overall management plan for existing town-owned property.
- Revise subdivision regulations and other regulatory mechanisms that give the town more authority to create permanent, useable open space, and recreation areas in and near new subdivisions.

In addition to the specific responsibilities mentioned above, the Open Space Committee could serve as an advocate for the creation and implementation of a comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Inventory of Parcels

One of the most important actions in order to secure open space and recreation lands is to assess the inventory of properties which are currently under town-ownership and inventory those properties which should be targeted for acquisition or protection. This Plan provides the inventory of existing open space parcels.

This inventory and assessment process will allow the town to have a baseline for determining short-term and long-range strategies for expansion and maintenance of open space and recreation areas. This effort should identify open space lands and recreation facilities that are not protected in order to examine potential connections and strategic planning for facility investments.

Management Plan

The Open Space Committee should be responsible for periodically reviewing and updating the inventory. The inventory should serve as a resource when determining changes in use of a particular town-owned parcel and for determining appropriate locations for meeting the open space objectives described above.

Any town department or board that has interest in the parcels included in the inventory should consult with the Open Space Committee before action is taken. The Open Space Committee should evaluate the request in order to assess how the parcel and proposed use fits within the overall open space and recreation objectives of the town. Priorities for open space and recreation should be on providing additional playing fields, acquiring upland open space for preservation, improving accessibility, and the existing condition of recreation and open space areas.

In order to make the review process most useful to the town, the Open Space Committee should prepare an acquisition plan that clearly defines the qualities and general areas for open space acquisitions on both a neighborhood and a town-wide basis. The inventory process described above will play a critical role in this process.

Funding Sources

Windham's current program of using the Current Use penalty tax to provide funding for open space land should be continued. Such funds allow the town to move quickly on opportunities which may otherwise be lost if there is a delay due to assembling funds. Other funding options should also be considered. These include the use of grants, working with non-profit organizations such as land trusts, setting aside general fund monies, and issuing bonds to purchase open space. Potential funding sources are discussed below.

Windham Conservation Fund

Although the town has been successfully using the Current Use penalty assessment for open space acquisition, there may be other mechanisms for ensuring long-term funding for open space acquisition. A number of New Hampshire communities are now setting aside funds in a conservation fund through annual budget requests using the Conservation Commission as the local agency for acquisition.

New Hampshire RSA Title 3 Section 36-A:4 enables Conservation Commissions to receive gifts of money and property in the name of the town and the town may appropriate money as deemed necessary for the purposes of open space protection. Money may be placed in a conservation fund and allowed to accumulate from year to year. The Conservation Commission is required to hold a public hearing prior to the use of the funds for the purchase of any interest in property.

The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF)

The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests helps private landowners conserve land through two primary methods. The first is through easements and the second is through

land donations. Easements leave the land in private hands for forest management and other conservation purposes while permanently prohibiting mining, subdivision, and development. Land donations become part of the Society's reservation system and are managed for recreation, timber, wildlife habitat, watershed protection, and scenery. Most of the reservations are open to the public.

New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Commission

The New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Commission (LCHC) manages a new program that establishes a public/private partnership to protect natural, cultural, and historic resources. Established in May of 2000, this program provides matching grants to municipalities and non-profit organizations to help save locally determined open spaces and historic sites. The LCHIP can assist the town of Windham in purchasing land for conservation purposes, protect land with conservation easements, or support the stewardship of already protected resources.

One of the criteria used to judge projects is the imminence of threat to the land or property such that the preservation of endangered structures and land conservation projects that are in densely developed or rapidly developing areas of the state. These types of areas shall receive a higher ranking.

The private sector role in the partnership would include providing at least a forty percent match for all project funding; identification of potential projects; preparation of project applications and supporting materials; volunteer time on the public board through providing staffing to the effort; stewardship of resources and contributions to private endowment created for the program, among other responsibilities.

River and Trails Conservation Assistance Program

The National Park Service provides this program and twenty percent to thirty-three percent of a staff person's time for one year in order to assist a community in developing a trail. The application for funding consists of a letter, which describes how the project will meet the following five criteria: 1) Resource significance, 2) Tangible conservation, 3) Public support, 4) Project goals, and 5) Broad cooperation.

The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy was founded in 1951 and its mission is to preserve the plants, animals, and natural communities by protecting the habitats. The Conservancy accomplishes this by purchasing the threatened land and supporting the fragile ecosystems and endangered species. It is funded by individuals, foundations and grants, and corporate partners.

The Nature Conservancy accepts two types of land: natural area, which is preserves and "tradelands" (properties of no ecological value, which would acquire funds for the purchase of ecologically significant areas).

Public-Private Partnerships and Other Creative Funding Mechanisms

Creative funding approaches, such as coordinating efforts with school PTA organizations for fundraising and selling small portions of existing property can provide some resources for improvements in Windham. The difference between tax-based revenue and total needed revenue has generated many new fund raising techniques such as corporate promotions, donations, and an increased reliance on user fees.

Donations

Gifts and donations are additional methods of receiving funding that may not be associated with the town, public recognition, or advertising. Many individuals and some corporations are willing to make contributions to park agencies and programs simply to improve the community in which they live or operate. Non-profit and volunteer organizations can provide assistance in generating funds by seeking gifts and donations from individuals and corporations, and organizing fund raising events.

Goal NROS-1

Protect and enhance environmentally sensitive natural resources areas in order to maintain their ecological integrity and/or to promote public health and safety.

Objectives

- *Ensure a safe and adequate water supply for all citizens through proper management of the use of land adjacent to the Town's potential water supply sources and potentially valuable aquifer recharge areas.*
- *Protect and maintain the valuable functions of wetlands by minimizing the impact of development and allowing appropriate multiple use of these resources for recreation, wildlife habitat and limited timber harvest.*
- *Encourage only those uses of the 100-year floodplain that are enhanced or unharmed by flooding.*
- *Protect surface and ground-water resources by minimizing non-point source pollution storm water discharge and properly managing sub-surface sewage disposal systems.*
- *Protect unique or unusual natural resource features or communities.*
- *Encourage the maintenance and proper management of the Town's remaining farm and forestry resources.*
- *Increase public awareness of Windham's unusual and rare plant and animal species.*

Strategies

- NROS-1.1 *Consider establishing buffers from lakes and ponds under particular circumstances based on slope, wetlands of high value or other critical resource values such as wildlife habitat.*
- NROS-1.2 *Incorporate by reference to Town's regulation the state Shoreline Protection Statute and consider whether or not the state standards are stringent enough. Consider adoption of the Model Riparian Buffer Conservation Ordinance prepared by the Office of Energy and Planning.*
- NROS-1.3 *Consider initiating a process for designation of Prime Wetlands as provided for in RSA 483--A:7, that is based upon the Guide to the Designation of Prime Wetlands in New Hampshire, 1983.*
- NROS-1.4 *Consider having structures above the 100-year elevation rather than at or below such elevation. (Section 607.7.2.1).*
- NROS-1.5 *Adopt the recently published FIRM maps that delineate an update of Windham's 100-year floodplain and consider adopting revised floodplain ordinance language prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).*

- NROS-1.6 *Include vehicular storage areas that are not currently included as a prohibited use in the Aquifer Protection District section of the Zoning Ordinance.*
- NROS-1.7 *Consider including performance standards for specific pollutants such as nitrogen and/or phosphorous based on already established models, e.g. Cape Cod Commission.*
- NROS-1.8 *Require owner to be responsible for periodic inspection and maintenance of sites within the Aquifer Protection District to ensure compliance with site plan permits and other local, state and federal permits. These reports should be submitted to the town. The town should audit such reports and make inspections on periodic basis.*
- NROS-1.9 *Require all uses within a development parcel to be subject to aquifer district standards if any part of the parcel is within the district.*
- NROS-1.10 *Monitor future I-93 and Route 111 construction for rescue of unique flora and fauna (e.g. orchids along I-93).*

Goal NROS-2

Protect and manage Windham's valuable open space resources.

Objectives

- *Provide an integrated network of open space areas and recreation facilities.*
- *Improve, protect, and encourage public access to Windham's surface waters.*
- *Encourage new developments to protect and, where possible, enhance valuable natural and open space resources.*
- *Preserve natural features such as ponds, streams, rivers, prime agricultural land, valuable woodlands, quality viewscapes, wetlands, and other valuable open space areas that contribute to Windham's character.*
- *Support regional open space initiatives.*
- *Ensure protection of wildlife corridors and habitats.*

Strategies

- NROS-2.1 *Consider establishing an Open Space Committee.*
- NROS-2.2 *Develop clear criteria for open space acquisition and protection.*
- NROS-2.3 *Prepare an acquisition plan that defines the qualities and general areas for open space acquisition on a town wide basis.*
- NROS-2.4 *Develop an open space management plan that evaluates the use of existing town-owned properties as well as guides decision making for future acquisitions and improvements.*
- NROS-2.5 *Work with non-profit and volunteer organizations to improve recreational opportunities and enhance existing open space areas.*
- NROS-2.6 *Create a maintenance/management plan for open space properties and recreational facilities owned by the town.*
- NROS-2.7 *Monitor and manage open space properties and recreational facilities owned by the town.*

- NROS-2.8 Support regional open space initiatives.*
- NROS-2.9 Complete an accurate inventory of currently protected open space parcels—both descriptive and graphic.*
- NROS-2.10 Continue to allocate current use funding to the Windham Conservation Land Fund on an annual basis.*
- NROS-2.11 Apply for grants and technical assistance available through non-profit state and federal agencies for open space protection and development of recreational facilities.*
- NROS-2.12 Continue to implement a multi-purpose trail system (walking, biking) that links the village area with water bodies and high value natural resource areas and other areas in the community trail system including the public schools and other large town-owned lands.*
- NROS-2.13 Examine the potential for providing useable open space for recreational activities or other appropriate uses in the 65% open space set aside in the Open Space Residential Overlay District.*

Recreation & Cultural Resources

Recreational facilities and programs, and the management thereof is a hot topic in Windham. Residents of all ages participate in a wide variety of active and passive recreation, and the demand for additional and expanded facilities, new programs, better maintenance, and improved organization has been publicly expressed by the community for the past several years.

Master plan discussions focused on a few key issues:

The urgent need for the coordinated scheduling and management of playing fields (those on Town and School property) and programs by a paid professional who is dedicated to this task and accessible during work hours. A recreation coordinator position, whether full or part time, has been proposed in recent Town budgets and rejected. According to the Town Administrator's 2003 annual report, there is a "continued need for a staff member to coordinate the various recreational programs offered by the Town, including the Town beach, assist in the oversight of the maintenance of Town sportsfields, coordinate with vendors regarding bid solicitation and billing concerns, while assisting in the oversight of the budget." Community members and Recreation Board volunteers who participated in Master Planning workshops echoed the continued need for a staff person to address these needs.

- Better coordinated scheduling notwithstanding, there is demand for additional playing fields in Windham. Improvements to Griffin Park have helped to alleviate some of this pent up demand, but organized teams continue to compete for field time, and constant use makes proper maintenance difficult to achieve.
- The community suggested several potential opportunities for new fields: to identify whether planning for the new high school might be able to include community fields; to inventory and assess whether any Town-owned land (e.g. land off Serod Road, conservation lands) might be suitable for field use; and if developers might be asked to include community fields as part of residential projects.
- Enhancing, improving access to, and management of the Town's trails and conservation lands is important. There is a general sense that these areas could better serve the community's needs if a trails map existed, and signage were evident. This is especially true of public spaces and trails designated as part of the open space subdivisions. Trails can be constructed and managed to accommodate multiple uses (walking, jogging, roller blading, biking, etc.), and can serve to make the Town more accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists by connecting places.
- Emerging demands for new facilities and programs must be addressed by the community. Windham should create an organized way to plan for its future needs – elderly and disabled recreational opportunities, an outdoor skating rink, a synthetic field, a pool, a community amphitheatre, lighted playing fields, an expanded Town beach, non-athletic programs for younger children, hunting, and snowmobiling have all been cited as desirable by some residents. These ideas and

others, however, have a difficult time receiving attention by the overworked volunteer Recreation Committee due to an obvious lack of funding resources, information, and a process for their thoughtful consideration.

- Recreation is fundamental to Windham residents' sense of community – whether walking at Griffin Park or swimming at the Town Beach, people meet each other through these activities. For this reason, recreation must continue to play an integral role in planning for Windham's future.

Cultural resources that are fitting to the purpose of the Master Plan are focused on the town's historic sites and structures, the town's museum, public art, and the need to provide space for community groups to organize, meet, and in some instances, perform.

Goal RC-1

Provide quality public recreation facilities and programs that are accessible to all.

Objectives

- *Expand capacity and improve existing parks, athletic fields, and other facilities to meet demand for recreational services.*
- *Develop new parks, athletic fields, and other appropriate facilities at available sites around the Town.*
- *Expand and strengthen the Town's recreational organization and school athletic partnership.*

Strategies

- RC-1.1 *Prepare a Recreation Master Plan that will, at a minimum a) inventory and assess existing facilities, b) estimate current and future programmatic needs, c) estimate the need for additional facilities, and d) estimate long-term maintenance costs.*
- RC-1.2 *Identify available land for expansion of existing recreation facilities and for development of additional facilities to serve school and broader community needs.*
- *In consult with the Conservation Commission, consider whether any of Windham's conservation lands may be appropriate for active recreation.*
- RC-1.3 *Improve scheduling of recreational facilities and coordinate with School-owned fields.*
- RC-1.4 *Identify and construct safe, accessible pedestrian routes for Griffin Park and the Nashua Road Recreation Area.*
- RC-1.5 *Work in partnership with developers to identify opportunities to provide new facilities. Consider modifying subdivision regulations to accept recreational facilities as mitigation for development impacts where appropriate.*
- RC-1.6 *Continue to support the public's enjoyment of the Rockingham Rail Trail pedestrian/bicycle/equestrian corridor and improvements to it. Work with NH DOT and DRED to connect rail trail with rail corridor west of I-93 as part of widening project.*
- RC-1.7 *Improve management of parking at Griffin Park, through the creation of new spaces on site or designation of a nearby area with pedestrian connections.*

Goal RC-2

Maintain and enhance public recreation areas and programs for the enjoyment of all users.

Objectives

- *Provide passive and active recreational opportunities and access for all ages and capability levels.*
- *Improve accessibility for users with differing abilities.*

Strategies

- RC-2.1 *Create and install signage at all trail areas. Improve visibility of entrances and parking areas. Provide brochure w/ map and description of trails, conservation lands, and pathways.*
- RC-2.2 *Expand programs and activities suitable for seniors and youth.*
- *Actively pursue offering non-athletic program opportunities.*
- RC-2.3 *Explore the development of walking trails and programs for all ages.*
- RC-2.4 *Upgrade and enhance parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, trails and other recreational facilities, including compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. When choosing trail material options, consider users of all abilities.*
- RC-2.5 *When considering public neighborhood parks, ensure that use, access and parking policies are planned to serve the entire community. Explore the possibility of additional neighborhood parks or satellite parks.*

Goal RC-3

Preserve buildings and sites that contribute to the unique character and cultural assets of Windham.

Objectives

- *Engage the community in preservation and cultural issues and raise awareness.*
- *In addition to buildings and streetscapes, protect other historic resources such as cemeteries and archaeological resources.*

Strategies

- RC-3.1 *Develop a Historic Preservation Plan for the entire Town that prioritizes issues of inventory, regulatory protection, and identified structures under threat of neglect.*
- RC-3.2 *Plan for the eventual restoration and reuse of the Windham Depot buildings.*
- RC-3.3 *Monitor future I-93 and Route 111 construction for retrieval of artifacts.*
- RC-3.4 *In consultation with the Historic District Commission, preserve elements of the Town's historic past, such as stone walls and cellar holes.*
- RC-3.5 *Create incentives for the preservation of the economic viability of historic structures.*

Goal RC-4

Preserve and enhance the Town's cultural landscapes and traditions.

Objectives

- *Preserve scenic views of historic farmlands visible from Windham's roadways.*
- *Support community groups that foster cultural activities and events.*

Strategies

- RC-4.1 *Inventory and study how to best protect scenic roads. Consider designating Scenic Roads.*
- RC-4.2 *Consider adding a viewshed protection regulation to the Planning Board's subdivision regulations, which would give developers flexibility in the layout of their projects in order to preserve important cultural landscapes.*
- RC-4.3 *In planning for new and expanded public facilities, such as the high school and library, capitalize on opportunities to create multifunctional space that could serve the town's community groups.*
- RC-4.4 *Consider designing and constructing a community amphitheater where groups such as the Community Band can perform.*

Transportation and Circulation

Windham's transportation network has been primarily focused on accommodating automobile traffic over the past three decades of growth. Although development has increased the number of paved roadways in Windham, traffic congestion has nevertheless increased as residential streets have primarily been designed to serve small numbers of households and not carry any through traffic. At present, significant backups are experienced on Route 111, and travelers needing to cross town are frustrated very limited options due to Interstate 93 which cuts through the middle of Town.

There are no immediate solutions to Windham's traffic congestion problem. Just as traffic has increased to the point of being problematic over several years, it will likely take as long to alleviate congestion. In addition, the Town is unable to act on its own with regard to problems on State-owned roadways, lacking the needed authority, resources, and control over sources of regional traffic growth. The following goals, objectives, and strategies recognize this fundamental restriction.

Windham can, nevertheless, take a wide variety of actions to improve its transportation network over the long term. Since there are few instances where new roadway creation appears to offer the potential for substantial improvement to traffic conditions, the majority of the recommendations are directed towards reducing volume by providing for alternative modes of transit.

In addition to making progress on long term strategies, Windham must remain vigilant in its monitoring of the I-93 widening project. As construction commences, careful planning for traffic diversion and emergency response will be critical to the community's quality of life during this disruption.

Goal TC-1:

Reduce automobile volumes on Windham's roadways by lessening dependence on the automobile.

Objectives:

- *Reduce commute times and volumes by supporting opportunities for residents to work and live in Windham.*
- *Offer additional cost effective and convenient public transportation options especially for the elderly and transit dependent.*
- *Reduce automobile trips outside of Windham by supporting existing businesses and attracting new businesses that seek to fulfill residents' demand for goods and services.*
- *Enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of local and regional public transportation facilities and services.*

Strategies:

- TC-1.1 Work with the Rockingham Planning Commission, the Salem-Plaistow-Windham MPO and NH DOT on studies to identify possible links to existing regional transit services and programs.*

TC-1.2 *Review the past effectiveness of ordinances, and policies and their applications with regard to land use, economic development, and transportation.*

TC-1.3 *Expand and promote fixed route van service to meet the demands and needs of elderly and transit-dependent residents.*

Goal TC-2:

Balance transportation infrastructure needs with the desire to maintain rural character.

Objectives:

- *Ensure that improvements to Route 111 do not detract from Windham's country character.*
- *Review Town land use plans and other policies, ordinances and standards to incorporate community transportation goals, objectives and strategies.*
- *Require that all proposed transportation projects consider effects on auto, truck, pedestrian, bicycle and transit access as well as visual and scenic quality.*
- *Require that streets provide bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in village center and other key destination areas.*
- *Communicate priority transportation infrastructure needs and fiscal constraints to the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, Rockingham Planning Commission, Salem-Plaistow-Windham MPO, Town residents and business community.*

Strategies:

TC-2.1 *Work with the Rockingham Planning Commission, Salem-Plaistow-Windham MPO and New Hampshire Department of Transportation to identify and prioritize major infrastructure needs.*

TC-2.2 *Study and designate scenic roads and corridors and establish management and development guidelines.*

TC-2.3 *Sign and map designated scenic roads.*

Goal TC-3:

Maintain and improve vehicular traffic flow on roadways and at intersections.

Objectives:

- *Identify new transportation links to improve intra-community and regional connectivity, especially across I-93.*
- *Work with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to identify and remedy problems on Route 111 in the short term.*
- *Work with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to minimize cut-through traffic from Interstate 93 on local roadways.*

Strategies:

- TC-3.1 Maintain funding to ensure adequate preservation of public roadway pavement, bridge and sidewalk conditions throughout the Town.*
- TC-3.2 Review the past effectiveness of ordinances and policies and their applications with regard to street width, street interconnections in residential subdivisions and inter-parcel connections between adjacent developments.*
- TC-3.3 Undertake a study of the Town's intersections and pursue operational improvements at key intersections specifically the intersections of North Lowell Road and Route 111 and Route 111 and Route 111A.*
- TC-3.4 Establish a Task Force to work with the Town on a detailed study of possible connection corridors to ease existing congestion on major roadways including but not limited to:*
- Wall Street to Londonderry Road
 - Range Road to Brookdale Road, Salem
 - Ledge Road to Meetinghouse Road
 - Roulston Road to Governor Dinsmore Road
 - Timberlane Road to Pelham
 - London Bridge Road to Route 111
 - Northland Road to Derry
 - Longmeadow Road to Route 28

Goal TC-4

Evaluate long-term issues on state roads and develop strategies to preserve and enhance the quality of life in Windham.

Objectives:

- *Continue to work with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and other agencies on the design of the Interstate 93 widening and new Exit 3 interchange to maximize benefits and mitigation opportunities to the Town. Minimize impacts to Canobie Lake and Cobbetts Pond.*
- *Pursue funding opportunities to improve key intersections on Routes 111, 111A and 28, such as using Interstate 93 widening mitigation to accomplish these projects.*

Strategies:

- TC-4.1 *Work with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and other agencies to discuss the impacts of roadway changes, surface road treatments (e.g. salt), and roadway construction materials for Route 111, Route 28 and Interstate 93.*
- TC-4.2 *Coordinate regional traffic issues with Derry, Salem, Pelham, Hudson, and Londonderry through the Rockingham Planning Commission or a new sub- regional task force of Town leaders.*
- TC-4.3 *Monitor and strengthen the Route 28 Access Management Overlay District if necessary to address land use, access, and capacity problems.*

Goal TC-5:

Promote the use of alternative modes of transportation to work, shopping, and recreation.

Objectives:

- *Provide safe and convenient ways for residents and workers to bicycle and walk for recreation and transportation.*
- *Provide education and incentives to encourage cycling and walking.*

Strategies:

- TC-5.1 *Review site plan, zoning and subdivision ordinances to make them more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly including bicycle parking requirements, roadway design standards, and easements/ right-of-way for bicycle and pathway projects.*
- TC-5.2 *Consider requiring sidewalks along public streets and add sidewalks along existing streets where possible.*
- TC-5.3 *Develop a Town-wide bicycle and pedestrian plan to create a system of paths, lanes, and trails that connect destinations and networks with other communities.*

The Plan should be fully integrated with traffic, roadway planning, and transit by the Town, and should:

- identify bicycle and pedestrian needs and deficiencies,
- develop standards for bicycle signage on roadways such as Share the Road,
- provide estimated implementation costs and identify funding sources, responsibilities, and phasing.

TC-5.4 Teach cycling safety and skills in the public elementary schools.

TC-5.5 Continue to seek state and private funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects.

- Pursue federal funding through the reauthorized TEA-21 and Clean Air Act Amendments.

TC-5.6 Develop and distribute informational materials throughout the Town to educate and motivate residents about transportation alternatives to the automobile.

TC-5.7 Work with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to preserve the utility of existing rail rights of way.

TC-5.8 Establish a local advisory committee to evaluate the potential use of rail beds.

TC-5.9 Continue to support the public's enjoyment of the Rockingham Rail Trail, and improvement of the trail as a pedestrian/bicycle/equestrian corridor. Work with NH DOT and DRED to connect rail trail with rail corridor west of I-93 as part of widening project.

TC-5.10 Continue to support the development of the Lowell Road bike lanes and work to establish connections to and from Lowell Road to build a network of bicycle lanes.

TC-5.11 Establish pathway connections from neighborhoods to all school sites.

Implementation Plan

The collective input and energy of the many Town constituents, staff, and officials which updated Master Plan is reflected in the ambitious agenda set forth in this chapter. Ensuring that the Plan's extensive recommendations and vision are carried out will require vigilant attention, long-term commitment, and strong public-private partnerships.

Action Table

As a means of organizing implementation efforts, this element is focused on a stand-alone table of strategies, accompanied by further detailed actions (where applicable), assignments of responsibility, and additional notes indicating the status, funding, or any other information that may be relevant to the task. This table may be used as a checklist of sorts, an easy to use reference for monitoring progress on the plan.

Some items contained in the Plan will be directly implemented through the Planning Board – as a public entity, its meetings are all open to the public. Progress on items for which the Board is responsible can be easily tracked by interested parties.

Items beyond the Planning Board's jurisdiction will likely be pursued through a variety of channels which are also open to the public. In many instances, progress may be linked to obtaining funding for a project, and venues such as the Town's annual budget deliberations, the creation of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the forming of public-private partnerships, and a variety of grant making opportunities can all be places where Master Plan strategies are realized.

Priorities & Time Table

As public discussion on the Master Plan took place, a number of priorities clearly emerged – these are summarized in the “Priorities for Action” section of the Plan.

The final public hearing on the plan asked participants (among whom were several Town officials) to designate what they thought were the most important strategies to address. As a result, each strategy has been assigned a “priority ranking” from 1-3. Top priorities received more than 20% of the total number of votes, while those featuring a #2 priority received over 6-19%, and #3 priorities received under 5%. Those in the top category are:

- LU-4.1 Carry out a corridor study for Route 111
- ED-1.1 Carry out a build-out analysis for the Town's business areas, incorporating environmental constraints and infrastructure alternatives, in order to assess the Town's ability to attract the benchmark levels of development.
- RC-1.1 Prepare a Recreation Master Plan that will, at a minimum a) inventory and assess existing facilities, b) estimate current and future programmatic needs, c) estimate the need for additional facilities, and d) estimate long-term maintenance costs.
- CF-1.1 Consider community needs (e.g. recreation facilities, meeting space, relationship with public library, potential for adult education) during design process for the new high school, and complete construction.

- LU-1.3 Review the Planning Board’s procedures to accept impact fees and exactions and amend as necessary. Ensure impact fees are proportional to the needs assessed.
- NROS-2.4 Develop an open space management plan that evaluates the use of existing town-owned properties as well as guides decision making for future acquisitions and improvements.
- LU-1.1 Continue to employ soil-based lot sizing for development.
- NROS-1.3 Consider initiating a process for designation of Prime Wetlands as provided for in RSA 483--A:7, that is based upon the Guide to the Designation of Prime Wetlands in New Hampshire, 1983.
- TC-5.3 Develop a town-wide bicycle and pedestrian plan to create a system of paths, lanes, and trails that connect destinations.
- CF-4.1 Design and construct expanded library space that meets community needs and supports best practices. Revise Needs Assessment in response to high school construction where appropriate.

Time table assignments reflect target start dates for strategy implementation and are intended to correlate with the priority ranking, as follows:

Priority 1	2005-2006
Priority 2	2006-2008
Priority 3	2008-2010

A few of the Plan’s recommendations were actually completed as part of the March Town Meeting. Several of the recommendations are noted as on-going efforts. These include policies regularly promoted by the Town (e.g. soil based lot sizing), and some recent initiatives begun during the Master Plan process (design of the new high school). Those which are already planning for funding under the CIP are so indicated in the notes column.

ACTIONS LISTED BY STRATEGY

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
LAND USE						
LU-1.1	Continue to employ soil-based lot sizing for development.	[same as strategy]	1	On-going	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
LU-1.2	Continue to update the School Facility Impact fee as necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise to reflect cost of new facilities • Adopt new fee 	3	On-going	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
LU-1.3	Review the Planning Board's procedures to accept impact fees and exactions and amend as necessary. Ensure impact fees are proportional to the needs assessed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare recommended changes • Review and recommend changes • Adopt revised ordinance 	1	2005-2006	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
LU-1.4	Review subdivision roadway standards to complement community character (e.g. minimize pavement, provide street trees, require sidewalks where appropriate, address traffic calming, and foster neighborhood connectivity).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare recommended changes • Review and recommend changes • Adopt revised regulations 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
LU-1.5	Review noise standards for non-residential use that minimizes noise levels to surrounding properties by establishing appropriate decibel levels at the property line of the proposed activity. Such levels may vary by the time of day with lower decibel levels required during night time hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare recommended changes • Review and recommend changes • Adopt revised ordinance 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
LU-2.1	Study the effect of requiring all subdivision and site plans to provide soil maps and information in accordance with the Site Specific Soil Maps for New Hampshire and Vermont, SSSNNE Special Publication No. 3, June, 1997.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare recommended changes • Review and recommend changes • Adopt revised regulations 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
LU-2.2	Develop new landscaping regulations to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require additional use of low-maintenance landscaping treatments, native landscape materials and minimize lawn areas. • Specify the amount of ground cover, shrubs, and trees required under various circumstances, e.g. front yards, parking areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare recommended changes • Review and recommend changes • Adopt revised regulations 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
LU-2.3	Encourage conservation-design development by adopting regulations that require inventory and analysis of natural resources (e.g. habitats, specimen trees, fields, woodlands, wetlands, views, steep slopes, etc.) be completed and incorporated into the site plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare recommended changes • Review and recommend changes 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Conservation Commission	Consult <i>Conservation Design for Subdivisions</i> , by Randall G. Arendt, 1996.
LU-3.1	Design and construct pedestrian connections between Fellows Road and Town Hall, the Senior Center, Town Museum, Library, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify funding source • Design and construct connections 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board NH DOT Highway Dept. Historic District Commission Board of Selectmen	
LU-3.2	Review Village Center regulations to encourage placement of parking areas behind or beside buildings rather than between buildings and the street.	[same as strategy]	3	2005-2006	Planning Dept. Planning Board	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
LU-3.3	Adopt Village Center development standards as part of Site Plan regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare recommended changes • Review and recommend changes • Adopt revised regulations 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	Completed April 13, 2005.
LU-4.1	Carry out a corridor study for Route 111	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare scope of work and estimate cost for study or determine if possible to complete in-house. • Hire consultant/or assign task to staff • Perform study. Implement recommendations, make zoning changes. 	1	2005-2006	Planning Dept. Planning Board	Coordinate with NH DOT
LU-4.2	Identify strategic locations for landscaping improvements along Route 111 to improve the aesthetics and increase pedestrian-friendliness of the corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey corridor for target sites & make recommendations • Use survey when reviewing new land use applications • Use survey to work with NH DOT for future of corridor 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
LU-5.1	Encourage roadway connections that facilitate neighborhood connectivity. Discourage residential development that incorporates additional cul de sac streets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise subdivision regulations to emphasize roadway connections. 	2	2006-2008	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
LU-5.2	Require new commercial development and redevelopment to provide direct and high quality pedestrian connections from street frontage to entrances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise site plan recommendations to incorporate this recommendation. 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
LU-5.3	Revise subdivision regulations to require new commercial and residential development to contain a more interconnected street network to facilitate vehicular and non-vehicular movement to and through development.	[same as strategy]	2	2006-2008	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
HOUSING						
H-1.1	Monitor and evaluate the limit on the production of units under the Elderly Housing Overlay District.	[same as strategy]	2	2006-2008	Planning Dept. Planning Board	Regional Elderly Housing Market Information
H-1.2	Investigate the possibility of the Town working with the Housing Authority to use Town-owned land near the Village Center to construct affordable senior housing units.	[same as strategy]	2	2006-2008	Planning Dept. Town Administrator Housing Authority Board of Selectmen	
H-2.1	Consider innovative wastewater collection and treatment methods in areas of high densities such as Cobbetts Pond, Shadow Lake, Rock Pond, and Canobie Lake.	[same as strategy]	2	2006-2008	Planning Dept. Planning Board Board of Health Board of Selectmen	
H-2.2	Investigate public financing (e.g. NH Housing Finance Authority) opportunities to support development of affordable housing in the village center.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. NHFA Board of Selectmen	
H-3.1	Participate in the development and updating of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment prepared by the Rockingham Planning Commission.	[same as strategy]	3	On-going	Planning Dept.	
H-3.2	Communicate regularly with Windham's representatives to State government to stay informed about regulatory reforms related to housing.	[same as strategy]	3	On-going	Planning Dept. State Representatives	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
ED-1.1	Carry out a build-out analysis for the Town's business areas, incorporating environmental constraints and infrastructure alternatives, in order to assess the Town's ability to attract the benchmark levels of development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare scope of work and estimate cost for study or determine if possible to complete in-house. • Hire consultant/or assign task to staff • Perform study. Implement recommendations, make zoning changes. 		1	2005-2006	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
ED-1.2	Establish an Economic Development Committee charged with identifying and attracting businesses that will help move the Town toward its economic development benchmarks, consistent with the Town's land use plan and desired community character.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicit volunteers • Appoint Committee 	2	2006-2008	Planning Dept. Board of Selectmen	Regional Economic Development Commission
ED-2.1	Within the Village Center, encourage the establishment of businesses providing basic consumer goods and services.	[same as strategy]	3	On-going	Planning Dept. Planning Board Economic Development Committee	
ED-2.2	Through the site plan review process, ensure that development in the Village Center district is of a scale and form that encourages pedestrian circulation.	[same as strategy]	2	On-going	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
ED-2.3	Plan for infrastructure investments to promote the desired character and functioning of the Village Center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities for public-private partnerships as development proposals are submitted • Plan design and estimate costs for improvements • Identify funding source(s) 	2	2006-2008	Planning Dept. Planning Board Board of Selectmen Highway Dept.	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
ED-2.4	Ensure that functional and attractive public spaces are incorporated throughout the Village Center and municipal complex, including outdoor areas for individual seating and small gatherings as well as public assembly and recreation areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities for public-private partnerships as development proposals are submitted 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
ED-3.1	Plan and implement coordinated access to all properties in the Professional, Business and Technology district north of relocated Route 111 and west of I-93.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
ED-3.2	Consider establishing a Tax Increment Financing district to fund access improvements in the PBT district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study scope of desirable access improvements Estimate cost of improvements Consider TIF among funding sources 	2	2006-2008	Planning Dept. Planning Board Board of Selectmen Town Meeting	
ED-3.3	Review the boundaries of the Gateway Commercial district and adjacent nonresidential zoning districts (PBT, Commercial A, Commercial B) in the context of planned improvements to I-93 and Exit 3 and the realignment of Route 111.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	NH DOT
ED-3.4	Review the use regulations and development standards for the Gateway Commercial district to promote high value uses and high quality of design, and to discourage generic commercial strip development.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
ED-4.1	Carry out an analysis of nonresidential development potential (and associated water/sewer demands) in the Route 28 corridor based on zoning and environmental constraints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare scope of work and estimate cost for study or determine if possible to complete in-house. Hire consultant/or assign task to staff Perform study. Implement recommendations, make zoning changes. 	2	2006-2008	Planning Dept. Planning Board Board of Selectmen	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
ED-4.2	Review existing zoning district boundaries on Route 28 in the context of the realignment of Route 111.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Town Meeting	
ED-4.3	Plan for access improvements to land in the Professional, Business, and Technology districts, to support growth in these districts.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Board of Selectmen	
ED-5.1	Review existing Neighborhood Business districts in West Windham and the Depot area, and refine or expand as appropriate.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Town Meeting	
ED-5.2	Review nonresidential zoning on Lowell Road near Cobbetts Pond Road (Commercial A and Limited Industrial) and amend as needed to promote appropriate uses.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	Cobbetts Pond Improvement Association
ED-5.3	Consider the desirability of village center-type of zoning districts in other areas of Windham (Depot area, West Windham, etc.).	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Town Meeting	
ED-6.1	Review zoning ordinance provisions for home-based businesses and provide additional flexibility where possible without impacting on neighborhood residential character.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
ED-6.2	Promote the creation of flexible building space that can be adapted for small business startups and expansions.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Economic Development Committee	
COMMUNITY FACILITIES						
CF-1.1	Consider community needs (e.g. recreation facilities, meeting space, relationship with public library, potential for adult education) during design process for the new high school, and complete construction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solicit input from Recreation Committee, Library Trustees, Capital Improvement Committee and others. 	1	2005-2006	High School Building Committee	
CF-1.2	Begin a planning process to consider the need for a new elementary school.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	School Board	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
CF-1.3	Continue to estimate long-term operational costs of each facility and project impact on future Town budgets.	[same as strategy]	3	On-going	Board of Selectmen	
CF-1.4	Consider town-wide needs when planning school recreational facilities, and promote shared resources and programs, especially field scheduling and use.	[same as strategy]	3	On-going	School Board Recreation Committee Board of Selectmen	
CF-1.5	Explore the option of a public process to study the feasibility of public kindergarten.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	School Board	
CF-2.1	Conduct a feasibility study and safety needs analysis to determine adequate response times and address emergency response (e.g. roadway connectors, land use, and facilities) as deemed necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare scope of work and estimate cost for study or determine if possible to complete in-house. • Hire consultant/or assign task to staff • Perform study. Implement recommendations. 	2	2006-2008	Planning Dept. Fire Dept. Police Dept. Board of Selectmen	
CF-2.2	Plan for and construct additional parking spaces at the Police station as required.	[same as strategy]	3	On-going	Police Dept. Planning Dept. Board of Selectmen	
CF-3.1	Conduct a feasibility study for a future highway department facility, including consideration of Transfer Station needs and the possibility of efficient consolidation of space. Identify site for salt shed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare scope of work and estimate cost for study or determine if possible to complete in-house. • Hire consultant/or assign task to staff • Perform study. Implement recommendations. 	3	2008-2010	Board of Selectmen Highway Dept. Transfer Station Planning Dept.	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
CF-3.2	Explore alternative road surface (e.g. use of brine solution) treatments	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Highway Dept. Conservation Commission	
CF-4.1	Design and construct expanded library space that meets community needs and supports best practices. Revise Needs Assessment in response to high school construction where appropriate.	[same as strategy]	1	2005-2006	Library School Board Board of Selectmen	CIP proposal
CF-5.1	Plan to expand Town Hall administrative space, possibly in a new consolidated facility. If a new facility is determined to be advisable, determine new uses for existing historic structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct space needs analysis Implement recommendations 	3	2008-2010	Town Administrator Board of Selectmen Planning Dept. Historic District Commission	
CF-5.2	Provide better signage for Town facilities on Fellows Road vs. the historic Town Hall complex.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine locations, sizes, and type of signage needed Order and erect signage 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Maintenance Dept. Board of Selectmen	
CF-5.3	Enhance the connection between Fellows Road facilities and Town Hall complex by providing a safe, attractive pedestrian crossing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design pedestrian connection in conjunction with development of the Village Center Construct connection 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Highway Dept. Board of Selectmen Historic District Commission Trail Committee	
UTILITIES						

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
U-1.1	Maintain the aquifer protection district and augment it with provision to limit commercial extraction of groundwater supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare recommended zoning changes • Review and recommend changes • Adopt revised ordinance 	3	On-going/ 2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Conservation Commission Board of Selectmen	
U-1.2	Consider the purchase of land or development rights for key parcels to protect future water supply and wellhead locations. This effort should be coordinated with general open space protection efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Open Space Acquisition Plan 	3	2008-2010	Conservation Commission Planning Dept.	
U-1.3	Support the NH Department of Environmental Services in identifying potential sources of water pollution and actively monitoring and correcting those sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure coordination among Town staff, NH DES, and lake water quality monitoring associations 	2	2006-2008	Planning Dept. Conservation Commission Stormwater Committee	
U-1.4	Amend the town's Health Regulations for septic system permitting when a change, or expansion, of use occurs.	[same as strategy]	2	2006-2008	Board of Health Building Dept.	
U-1.5	Consider amending the Subdivision and Site Plan Review Regulations to allow the option to require the installation of groundwater monitoring wells for larger developments (commercial or industrial), especially those in or adjacent to sensitive water resource areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare recommended changes • Review and recommend changes • Adopt revised regulations 	2	2006-2008	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
U-1.6	Monitor FCC rules implementing the federal Telecommunications Act and make adjustments to local regulations as needed.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Technical Advisory Committee	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
U-1.7	On an annual basis, communicate with each of the private utilities to determine if there will be any changes in service or changes to the existing infrastructure to ensure that such changes are consistent with this master plan. At the same time, the town can provide appropriate information to the utilities about any changes to its plans or other issues of concern.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Technical Advisory Committee Board of Selectmen Town Administrator	
U-2.1	<p>Incorporate the following storm water management principles into Windham's ordinances, wherever possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storm water should be managed to minimize impact to wetlands, aquifers or other environmentally sensitive areas. Incorporating structural and non-structural devices should be considered. Non-structural devices include bioretention areas and vegetated filter strips. Design residential streets for the minimum pavement required to handle the required traffic. Minimize the number and size of cul-de-sacs and include landscaped areas to reduce impervious cover. Where soils, slope, topography, and safety permit, incorporate vegetated open channels to convey and treat storm water. Consider reducing parking ratios in order to minimize the parking space construction. Encourage shared parking where possible. Encourage flexible design standards to maximize open space and reduce impervious cover while providing opportunity for pedestrian areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add to site plan and subdivision regulations, incorporating these principles to allow flexible design standards 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Highway Dept. Stormwater Committee	
U-2.2	Consider the incorporation of the Office of Energy and Planning's Model Storm water and Erosion Control Regulation (latest edition) into the town's land use regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt updated Storm Water and Erosion Control regulations 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
U-2.3	<p>Consider incorporating the following language and/or standards into the storm water section of the Site Plan Review Regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require that any additional peak storm water runoff created by the proposed development be retained on site and that minimal degradation of water quality shall occur. For projects with impervious surfaces consider requiring the use of catch basins or other similar devices that trap oil, grease and sediments. In addition, require the submission of a long-term maintenance/monitoring plan for these devices as well as a requirement for reporting the monitoring activities to the town. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt these standards into Site Plan review regulations 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Highway Dept.	
U-3.1	Continue to require utility infrastructure be placed underground wherever practical. Coordinate utility upgrades with roadway construction and maintenance project to minimize road openings.	[same as strategy]	3	On-going	Planning Dept. Planning Board Highway Dept.	
U-3.2	Continue to work with electricity, telephone, and cable providers to best serve residents.	[same as strategy]	3	On-going	Planning Dept. Board of Selectmen Cable Commission Technical Advisory Committee	
NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE						
NROS-1.1	Consider establishing buffers from lakes and ponds under particular circumstances based on slope, wetlands of high value or other critical resource values such as wildlife habitat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend Site Plan review regulations 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Conservation Commission	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
NROS-1.2	Incorporate by reference to Town's regulation the state Shoreline Protection Statute and consider whether or not the state standards are stringent enough. Consider adoption of the Model Riparian Buffer Conservation Ordinance prepared by the Office of Energy and Planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare recommended zoning changes • Review and recommend changes Adopt revised ordinance	2	2006-2008	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
NROS-1.3	Consider initiating a process for designation of Prime Wetlands as provided for in RSA 483-A:7, that is based upon the Guide to the Designation of Prime Wetlands in New Hampshire, 1983.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake Town-wide wetland evaluation to identify and designate prime wetlands 	1	2005-2006	Conservation Commission; Planning Board Planning Dept.	
NROS-1.4	Consider having structures above the 100-year elevation rather than at or below such elevation. (Section 607.7.2.1).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend Flood Plain ordinance 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
NROS-1.5	Adopt the recently published FIRM maps that delineate an update of Windham's 100-year floodplain and consider adopting revised floodplain ordinance language prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).	None required.	3	2008-2010		Complete. Town Meeting March, 2005.
NROS-1.6	Include vehicular storage areas that are not currently included as a prohibited use in the Aquifer Protection District section of the Zoning Ordinance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare recommended zoning changes • Review and recommend changes • Adopt revised ordinance 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
NROS-1.7	Consider including performance standards for specific pollutants such as nitrogen and/or phosphorous based on already established models, e.g. Cape Cod Commission.	Undertake a study to determine if such an approach would work for Windham.	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Conservation Commission	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
NROS-1.8	Require owner to be responsible for periodic inspection and maintenance of septic systems within the Aquifer Protection District to ensure compliance with site plan permits and other local, state and federal permits. These reports should be submitted to the town. The town should audit such reports and make inspections on periodic basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake pilot program in specific neighborhoods; evaluate to determine whether to expand to other areas. 	3	2008-2010	Planning Board Conservation Commission Planning Dept. Board of Health	
NROS-1.9	Require all uses within a development parcel to be subject to aquifer district standards if any part of the parcel is within the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare recommended zoning changes Review and recommend changes Adopt revised ordinance 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
NROS-1.10	Monitor future I-93 and Route 111 construction for rescue of unique flora and fauna (e.g. orchids along I-93).	[same as strategy]	3	On-going	Conservation Commission	
NROS-2.1	Consider establishing an Open Space Committee.	See also U-1.2.	3	2008-2010	Planning Board Conservation Commission	Subsequent actions are charge of committee.
NROS-2.2	Develop clear criteria for open space acquisition and protection.	[same as strategy]	2	2006-2008	Open Space Committee or Conservation Commission Planning Board	
NROS-2.3	Prepare an acquisition plan that defines the qualities and general areas for open space acquisition on a town wide basis.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Open Space Committee or Conservation Commission	
NROS-2.4	Develop an open space management plan that evaluates the use of existing town-owned properties as well as guides decision making for future acquisitions and improvements.	[same as strategy]	1	2005-2006	Open Space Committee or Conservation Commission	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
NROS-2.5	Work with non-profit and volunteer organizations to improve recreational opportunities and enhance existing open space areas.	[same as strategy]	3	On-going/ 2008-2010	Recreation Committee Conservation Commission Board of Selectmen	
NROS-2.6	Create a maintenance/management plan for open space properties and recreational facilities owned by the town.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Open Space Committee or Conservation Commission; Recreation Committee Board of Selectmen	
NROS-2.7	Monitor and manage open space properties and recreational facilities owned by the town	[same as strategy]	3	On-going	Open Space Committee or Conservation Commission; Recreation Committee	
NROS-2.8	Support regional open space initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish contacts with regional open space organizations (e.g. RPC). 	3	On-going	Open Space Committee or Conservation Commission	
NROS-2.9	Complete an accurate inventory of currently protected open space parcels—both descriptive and graphic.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Open Space Committee or Conservation Commission	
NROS-2.10	Continue to allocate current use funding to the Windham Conservation Land Fund on an annual basis.	[same as strategy]	2	2006-2008	Open Space Committee or Conservation Commission	
NROS-2.11	Apply for grants and technical assistance available through non-profit state and federal agencies for open space protection and development of recreational facilities.	[same as strategy]	3	On-going	Planning Dept. Recreation Committee Trails Committee	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
NROS-2.12	Continue to implement a multi-purpose trail system (walking, biking) that links the village area with water bodies and high value natural resource areas and other areas in the community trail system including the public schools and other large town-owned lands	[same as strategy]	3	On-going/ 2008-2010	Planning Dept. Recreation Committee Trails Committee	
NROS-2.13	Examine the potential for providing useable open space for recreational activities or other appropriate uses in the 65% open space set aside in the Open Space Residential Overlay District	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Conservation Commission	
RECREATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						
RC-1.1	Prepare a Recreation Master Plan that will, at a minimum a) inventory and assess existing facilities, b) estimate current and future programmatic needs, c) estimate the need for additional facilities, and d) estimate long-term maintenance costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare scope of work and estimate cost for study or determine if possible to complete in-house. • Hire consultant/or assign task to staff • Perform study. Implement recommendations. 	1	2005-2006	Recreation Committee Planning Dept. Board of Selectmen	
RC-1.2	Identify available land for expansion of existing recreation facilities and for development of additional facilities to serve school and broader community needs. In consult with the Conservation Commission, consider whether any of Windham's conservation lands may be appropriate for active recreation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include in the creation of a Recreation Master Plan 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Recreation Committee Board of Selectmen	
RC-1.3	Improve scheduling of recreational facilities and coordinate with School-owned fields.	[same as strategy]	3	On-going/ 2008-2010	Recreation Committee School Committee	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
RC-1.4	Identify and construct safe, accessible pedestrian routes for Griffin Park and the Nashua Road Recreation Area	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Recreation Committee Highway Dept. Trails Committee	
RC-1.5	Work in partnership with developers to identify opportunities to provide new facilities. Consider modifying subdivision regulations to accept recreational facilities as mitigation for development impacts where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine subdivision regulations to identify opportunities Amend regulations as appropriate. 	3	On-going/ 2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
RC-1.6	Continue to support the public's enjoyment and development of the Rockingham Rail Trail pedestrian/bicycle/equestrian corridor and improvements to it. Work with NH DOT and DRED to connect rail trail with rail corridor west of I-93 as part of widening project	[same as strategy]	2	On-going	Windham Rail Trail Alliance Board of Selectmen Planning Dept. Planning Board Trails Committee	
RC-1.7	Improve management of parking at Griffin Park, through the creation of new spaces on site or designation of a nearby area with pedestrian connections.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Recreation Committee Highway Dept.	
RC-2.1	Create and install signage at all trail areas. Improve visibility of entrances and parking areas. Provide brochure w/map and description of trails, conservation lands, and pathways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify locations and design signage Order and install signage Develop and distribute brochures 	3	2008-2010	Recreation Commission Conservation Commission Trails Committee Planning Dept.	
RC-2.2	Expand programs and activities suitable for seniors and youth. Actively pursue offering non-athletic program opportunities.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Recreation Commission	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
RC-2.3	Explore the development of walking trails and programs for all ages.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Recreation Commission Trails Committee	
RC-2.4	Upgrade and enhance parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, trails and other recreational facilities, including compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. When choosing trail material options, consider users of all abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory facilities for ADA compliance • Design and construct improvements 	3	On-going/ 2008-2010	Recreation Commission Planning Dept.	
RC-2.5	When considering public neighborhood parks, ensure that use, access and parking policies are planned to serve the entire community. Explore the possibility of additional neighborhood parks or satellite parks.	<p>[same as strategy]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore as part of Recreation Master Plan 	3	On-going/ 2008-2010	Recreation Commission Planning Dept. Planning Board	
RC-3.1	Develop a Historic Preservation Plan for the entire Town that prioritizes issues of inventory, regulatory protection, and identified structures under threat of neglect.	[same as strategy]	2	2006-2008	Historic District Commission	
RC-3.2	Plan for the eventual restoration and reuse of the Windham Depot buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate planning among all interested parties 	2	2006-2008	Historic District Commission Planning Dept. Highway Dept. NH DOT (owner) Board of Selectmen	
RC-3.3	Monitor future I-93 and Route 111 construction for retrieval of artifacts.	[same as strategy]	3	On-going/ 2008-2010	Historic District Commission Planning Dept.	
RC-3.4	In consultation with the Historic District Commission, preserve elements of the Town's historic past, such as stone walls and cellar holes.	[same as strategy]	3	On-going	Historic District Commission Planning Board	
RC-3.5	Create incentives for the preservation of the economic viability of historic structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore how land use regulations may be amended to provide preservation incentives 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
RC-4.1	Inventory and study how to best protect scenic roads. Consider designating Scenic Roads.	[same as strategy]	2	2006-2008	Planning Dept. Planning Board Board of Selectmen	
RC-4.2	Consider adding a viewshed protection regulation to the Planning Board's subdivision regulations, which would give developers flexibility in the layout of their projects in order to preserve important cultural landscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare recommended changes • Review and recommend changes • Adopt revised regulation 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
RC-4.3	In planning for new and expanded public facilities, such as the high school and library, capitalize on opportunities to create multifunctional space that could serve the town's community groups.	[same as strategy]	2	2006-2008	Planning Dept. Planning Board Library School Dept.	
RC-4.4	Consider designing and constructing a community amphitheater where groups such as the Community Band can perform.	[same as strategy]	3	On-going/ 2008-2010	Board of Selectmen	See CIP.
TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION						
TC-1.1	Work with the Rockingham Planning Commission, the Salem-Plaistow-Windham MPO and NH DOT on studies to identify possible links to existing regional transit services and programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine data needs and draft a list of proposed studies by RPC to identify possible links to existing and proposed transit services 	2	On-going	Planning Dept. Planning Board Trails Committee Board of Selectmen	
TC-1.2	Review the past effectiveness of ordinances, and policies and their applications with regard to land use, economic development, and transportation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify policies and ordinances that do not integrate transportation and land use 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
TC-1.3	Expand and promote fixed route van service to meet the demands and needs of elderly and transit-dependent residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold focus group meetings with transit dependent and others to assess transit needs <p>Pursue new routes with RPC</p>	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Board of Selectmen	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
TC-2.1	Work with the Rockingham Planning Commission, Salem-Plaistow-Windham MPO and New Hampshire Department of Transportation to identify and prioritize major infrastructure needs.	[same as strategy]	3	On-going	Planning Dept. Highway Dept. Board of Selectmen	
TC-2.2	Study and designate scenic roads and corridors and establish management and development guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with residents and to identify potential scenic roads and criteria for designation Hire consultant to work with Town on management guidelines 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
TC-2.3	Sign and map designated scenic roads.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Board of Selectmen	
TC-3.1	Maintain funding to ensure adequate preservation of public roadway pavement, bridge and sidewalk conditions throughout the Town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare pavement and infrastructure budget and expenditures to those of comparable towns. Adjust if needed. 	3	On-going/ 2008-2010	Planning Dept. Highway Dept. Capital Improvement Program	
TC-3.2	Review the past effectiveness of ordinances and policies and their applications with regard to street width, street interconnections in residential subdivisions and inter-parcel connections between adjacent developments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify policies and ordinances that have worked against promoting neighborhood interconnections 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Highway Dept.	
TC-3.3	Undertake a study of the Town's intersections and pursue operational improvements at key intersections specifically the intersections of North Lowell Road and Route 111 and Route 111 and Route 111A.	[same as strategy]	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Board of Selectmen NH DOT	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
TC-3.4	<p>Establish a Task Force to work with the Town on a detailed study of possible connection corridors to ease existing congestion on major roadways including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wall Street to Londonderry Road • Range Road to Brookdale Road, Salem • Ledge Road to Meetinghouse Road • Roulston Road to Governor Dinsmore Road • Timberlane Road to Pelham • London Bridge Road to Route 111 • Northland Road to Derry • Longmeadow Road to Route 28 	[same as strategy]	2	2006-2008	Planning Dept. Planning Board Board of Selectmen	
T-4.1	Work with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and other agencies to discuss the impacts of roadway changes, surface road treatments (e.g. salt), and roadway construction materials for Route 111, Route 28 and Interstate 93.	[same as strategy]	3	On-going	Planning Dept. Conservation Commission Highway Dept. NH DOT	
T-4.2	Coordinate regional traffic issues with Derry, Salem, Pelham, Hudson, and Londonderry through the Rockingham Planning Commission or a new sub-regional task force of Town leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore concept of sub-regional task force with town leaders in adjoining communities. Discuss with RPC 	3	On-going	Planning Dept. Planning Board Highway Dept. Board of Selectmen	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
TC-4.3	Monitor and strengthen the Route 28 Access Management Overlay District if necessary to address land use, access, and capacity problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Route 28 capacity, intersection operation, conflict points, etc. and assess the impact of development on safety and mobility Adopt revised overlay district 	3	On-going	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
TC-5.1	Review site plan, zoning and subdivision ordinances to make them more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly including bicycle parking requirements, roadway design standards, and easements/right-of-way for bicycle and pathway projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare recommended changes Review and recommended changes Adopt revised ordinance 	2	2006-2008	Planning Dept. Planning Board Trails Committee	
TC-5.2	Consider requiring sidewalks along public streets and add sidewalks along existing streets where possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current ordinances Prepare recommended changes Adopt revised ordinance 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
TC-5.3	Develop a Town-wide bicycle and pedestrian plan to create a system of paths, lanes, and trails that connect destinations and networks with other communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Committee Develop a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Adopt the Plan 	1	2005-2006	Trails Committee Planning Dept.	
TC-5.4	Teach cycling safety and skills in the public elementary schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop educational materials and activities Work with the School Department to include it in the curriculum 	3	2008-2010	Police Dept. School Board Recreation Committee	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
TC-5.5	Continue to seek state and private funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects. Pursue federal funding through the reauthorized TEA-21 and Clean Air Act Amendments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and track available funding sources Develop grant applications when funding opportunities present themselves Review and submit grant applications on behalf of the Town 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Trails Committee Board of Selectmen	
TC-5.6	Develop and distribute informational materials throughout the Town to educate and motivate residents about transportation alternatives to the automobile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop informational materials Review and revise informational materials Develop a distribution plan for materials Distribute materials 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board	
TC-5.7	Work with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to preserve the utility of existing rail rights of way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify existing rail rights of way to be preserved Review and make recommendations to NHDOT 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Trails Committee	
TC-5.8	Establish a local advisory committee to evaluate the potential use of rail beds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify citizens interested in serving on advisory committee Review and make recommendations Formally establish local advisory committee 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Trails Committee Town Meeting	

Strategy #	Strategy Description	Action	Priority (1-3)	Time Table	Responsibility	Notes
TC-5.9	Continue to support the public's enjoyment of the Rockingham Rail Trail, and improvement of the trail as a pedestrian/bicycle/equestrian corridor. Work with NH DOT and DRED to connect rail trail with rail corridor west of I-93 as part of widening project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Trails Sub-committee to identify rail trail improvements • Review and make recommendations to NHDOT and DRED • Work with NHDOT and DRED to acquire land and further recommendations 	3	On-going	Planning Dept. Planning Board Trails Committee	
TC-5.10	Continue to support the development of the Lowell Road bike lanes and work to establish connections to and from Lowell Road to build a bicycle network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify possible network of bicycle facilities • Review and make recommendations • Work with RPC to fund and acquire ROW if necessary 	3	On-going	Planning Dept. Planning Board Trails Committee Board of Selectmen NH DOT	Voted down in March 2005 elections.
TC-5.11	Establish pathway connections from neighborhoods to all school sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential connections to existing facilities. • Review policies and ordinances encouraging/discouraging pathways • Prepare recommended changes in ordinances and create new connections in existing where possible • Adopt revised ordinance 	3	2008-2010	Planning Dept. Planning Board Trails Committee	