

# Town of Northfield, NH 2014 Master Plan



***Cover photo courtesy of Scott Rogers, resident of Northfield, NH***

# **Town of Northfield, NH 2003 Master Plan**

**Updated 2014 by  
2014 Northfield Planning Board**

**Jason Durgin, Chairman, Wayne Crowley, Glen  
Brown, Douglas Read, Kim Robichaud and Michael  
Murphy**

## **2003 Northfield Planning Board**

Christopher Hunt, Chairman, Francis LaBranche, Glen Brown,  
Richard Cullen, William Dawson, George Flanders, Douglas Read,  
Richard Maher, Michelle Bonsteel and Gloria Pickering.

**Prepared in 2003 with Technical Assistance from:**

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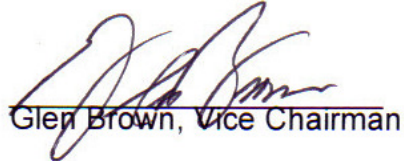


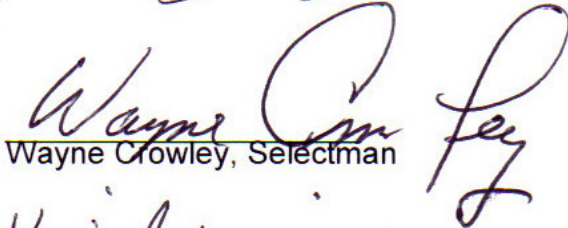


**Certification of Adoption and Filing**

In Accordance with New Hampshire RSA 674:4, Master Plan Adoption and Amendment and New Hampshire RSA 675:6, Method of Adoption, the Northfield, New Hampshire Planning Board conducted a public hearing on Nov. 3, 2014. The Planning Board hereby adopts and certifies this updated Master Plan by an affirmative vote of the Board on December 1, 2014.

  
Jason Durgin, Chairman

  
Glen Brown, Vice Chairman

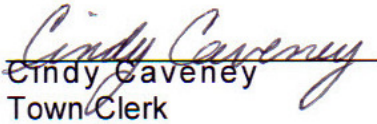
  
Wayne Crowley, Selectman

  
Douglas Read

  
Kim Robichaud

  
Mike Murphy

I do hereby certify that on December 1, 2014 the Northfield Master Plan with original signatures was filed with the Town Clerk, 21 Summer Street, Northfield, New Hampshire.

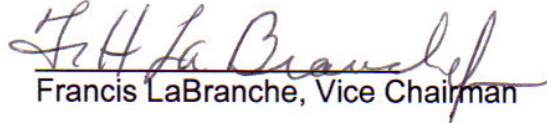
  
Cindy Caveney  
Town Clerk




Certification of Adoption and Filing

In Accordance with New Hampshire RSA 674:4, Master Plan Adoption and Amendment and New Hampshire RSA 675:6, Method of Adoption, the Northfield, New Hampshire Planning Board conducted a public hearing on September 25, 2003. The Planning Board hereby adopts and certifies this Master Plan by an affirmative vote of the Board on September 25, 2003.

  
Christopher Hunt, Chairman


  
Francis LaBranche, Vice Chairman

  
Glen Brown, Selectman

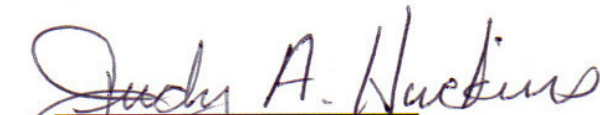
  
Richard Cullen

  
William Dawson

  
George Flanders

  
Douglas Read

I do hereby certify that on Oct. 27, 2003 the Northfield Master Plan with original signatures was filed with the Town Clerk, 21 Summer Street, Northfield, New Hampshire.

  
Judy Huckins  
Town Clerk





**NORTHFIELD MASTER PLAN – 2003**  
**UPDATED 2014**  
**All updates in each chapter are in red.**

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**UPDATED 2014**

All updates in each chapter are in red.

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## INTRODUCTION

**In 2012, the Planning Board began updating the 2003 Master Plan, beginning with a new survey which was conducted on the Town's website with 256 respondents. The survey questions were very similar to those in the 2002 survey which allows comparison between the answers 10 years later. The differences in responses were minimal. All charts and graphs that could be updated have been updated by the Planning Board. All changes/additions/comments added in 2013-2014 are in red print.**

### PLAN PURPOSE

The purpose of this Master Plan is threefold. First, the Plan serves as the guiding document for future development in Northfield. As such, it establishes the key principles that the town of Northfield holds related to land use change, and articulates them in a clear and practical manner. Second, the Master Plan serves as the guiding document to assist the Planning Board as it updates the Town Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision and Site Plan Review Regulations, and other appropriate ordinances and regulations that fall under its jurisdiction. Finally, the Master Plan serves as the basis for other responsibilities of the Board as it strives to preserve and enhance the quality of life of all residents in Northfield.

Ultimately, this plan articulates the values and vision that the people of Northfield hold dear. The Plan identifies many of the key issues facing the community, and the concerns that residents have about the future of the town related to land use change and development. With the values and vision of the community clearly defined, this Plan also establishes priorities for the Planning Board to consider as it continues its work towards the smart management of growth, sound planning, and wise resource conservation.

### AUTHORITY

According to NH RSA 674:1, the Planning Board has the explicit duty to prepare and amend a Master Plan on a regular basis. In Northfield, the Planning Board consists of a seven member board, with three alternate members, as appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The Northfield Planning Board has prepared and adopted this Master Plan in accordance with the content requirements and adoption procedures outlined in NH RSA 674:2-4.

### PLANNING PROCESS

In July 2002 the Northfield Planning Board began the update of the 1991 Master Plan. The town contracted with the Lakes Region Planning Commission for guidance and

technical assistance through the process. It was decided at the outset that the Master Plan would be developed in two separate phases. The contents of this Plan represent Phase 1 of the update and include the following sections: Values, Vision, and Priorities; Community Characteristics; Transportation; Community Services and Facilities; and Land Use. Phase 2 of the Plan, to be developed in the near future, will add additional sections to the Master Plan which may include: Housing; Recreation; Natural Resources; and Construction Materials.

The Planning Board decided that in order for the Master Plan to be a success, and truly represent the desires and ambitions of the residents of Northfield, an extensive public involvement process was needed. In September 2002, after months of preparation, the Planning Board hosted two community forums designed to solicit input from the people of Northfield on a range of issues, including transportation, land use, natural resource preservation, community facilities, and historic and cultural preservation. The community forums were well attended and an enormous amount of information was collected. This information not only served as information to help shape the Master Plan, but also identified some key questions that would be asked in the next step of the public involvement process - the Community Survey.

In October 2002 the Planning Board distributed a Community Survey to all home owner households, as well as to all households in the larger multi-family rental complexes in Northfield. Of the 1,702 surveys that were distributed, 586 were returned, resulting in a relatively high response rate of 34%. The results of both the Community Forums and the Community Survey are summarized in the appendix.

Following the public participation process in the autumn of 2002, the Planning Board began to develop this first phase of the 2003 Northfield Master Plan. From November 2002 through August 2003, the Planning Board, Town Officials, and Department Heads met countless times to review background data and information, and develop the goals, objectives, and recommendations found within this Plan.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Planning Board would like to thank all those who participated in the development of this Master Plan. Involvement in the process ranged from Town Officials and Department Heads, to members of other volunteer boards such as the Conservation Commission, and the Zoning Board of Adjustment, to most importantly, the citizens of Northfield. Without their considerable participation, this plan would not have been possible.

## VALUES, VISION, AND PRIORITIES

### INTRODUCTION

The development of this Master Plan began in July 2002 when the Planning Board created a public involvement strategy for the planning process. The goal at the outset was to design ways in which to engage the public and solicit input to shape this Plan. The information received in the autumn of 2002 through the community forums and the community survey, was invaluable. Ultimately, this Master Plan is an expression of the values and vision held by the community at large. This section provides a summary of the principal values held by the community, the general vision as shaped by those values, and the overarching priorities for implementation that will help the community achieve its vision and preserve those things valued most.

### STRONG COMMUNITY IDENTITY

**Values.** The Town of Northfield is a “people place”, where neighbors know each other and the people care about one another. The historic nature of the village area is looked at with pride, as are the rolling farms and open spaces. The people of Northfield also value community events very highly. When asked in the community survey to comment on some of the best things in Northfield, one person replied: “Old Home Day and its growing popularity and participation is a good example of the sense of community we have”.

**Vision.** Northfield will remain a close-knit, rural community which puts people first. Those things that people cherish will be better protected, and the history of the community will be preserved. Children will better understand and respect the history of Northfield, including the importance of agriculture both in the past and the present. Community facilities such as the Pines Community Center and the Hall Memorial Library will continue to instill pride in the town among residents. Community events such as Old Home Day will continue to draw large crowds, and will remind people that Northfield is a great place to live.

**Priorities.** Strengthen community identity through the improvement of communication between town officials and residents. Continue the Northfield newsletter and website in order to educate more people about important happenings in town, and will encourage more people to get involved in the community on boards, commissions, and other volunteer groups. Continue to promote and preserve the natural and historic treasures of Northfield, such as old agricultural properties and the Tilton Arch. These resources are critical in maintaining community pride and the feeling that Northfield is a truly special place to live and play.

### PRESERVATION OF RURAL CHARACTER

**Values.** Through the public involvement process, the people of Northfield repeatedly stressed that one of the most valued characteristics of Northfield was its “rural

character”, and they helped define what “rural character” meant to them. The people value a clean and quiet community, with country roads and low levels of traffic, an abundance of open space, active farms and preserved woodlands, and friendly neighbors. As one respondent to the community survey explained, the best things about living in Northfield for them were “the country atmosphere, trees, flowers, birds, and woods”.

***Vision.*** The Town of Northfield will continue to preserve the rural character that the people cherish so much. Agricultural lands and stonewalls will remain scattered throughout the countryside. Residential growth will be focused in and around the village area, as opposed to the more rural areas of town. Rural roads remain uncongested, and increased traffic will be accommodated on the larger roads located around the village as opposed to the country roads elsewhere in town.

***Priorities.*** Protect open space from adverse development in the rural areas of town. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to encourage open space/conservation subdivisions, large tracts of rural lands, and the continued existence of farming operations. Discourage strip development along the country roads in Northfield, and develop new regulations to encourage open space subdivisions that permanently preserve large areas of open space. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to create a Village Zone that encourages compact residential development in and around the existing village in Northfield.

## **PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE**

***Values.*** Open space includes farmlands, woodlands, meadows and fields, and bodies of water such as ponds, rivers, and wetlands. Many of the residents in Northfield expressed the opinion that preservation of open space is critical to ensuring that they and their families maintain a high quality of life in the future. Open space provides residents with outstanding scenic views, peace and quiet in rural areas, recreational opportunities such as those found at Sandogardy Pond, and enjoyment and interaction with wildlife and vegetation that are missing in urban areas. Linking open space with quality of life, one respondent to the community survey described one of the best things about Northfield to be “living in a country setting with space and beauty”. At the community forums in the autumn of 2002, an overwhelming number of people expressed support for increased land conservation efforts, to be spearheaded by the Town purchasing land and conservation easements for large tracts of open space.

***Vision.*** Northfield will remain a community with an abundance of open space. Forest and agricultural lands will be further protected, and new subdivisions in town will integrate open space conservation ideals into their design. Open spaces protected by the town will be open to for recreational use, to the benefit of all residents. By protecting large areas of open space in the rural areas of town, the community will retain the rural characteristics that residents value so much.

***Priorities.*** Develop an ongoing funding mechanism to allow the town to purchase property and conservation easements for the protection of open space. Identify key areas of unfragmented open space and wildlife habitat to assist the Planning Board as it reviews subdivision and site plan applications. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to direct growth and development to the village area while discouraging it in areas of town with

valuable open spaces such as farmlands, wetlands, and forest tracts.

## **PRESERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Values.** The people of Northfield have a high regard for the natural resources located throughout town. Valued highly are the surface and ground water resources that make up the ponds, rivers, streams, wetlands, and aquifers. Knowles Pond, for example, is cherished by the people of Northfield and is used as a public conservation area for hiking and other outdoor activities. Northfield has also been blessed with a significant amount of water frontage along the Winnepesaukee and Merrimack Rivers, and the people support the protection of shorelines and rivers from negative impacts caused by development. The forests of Northfield are also highly valued, as are the scattered meadows and pastures that provide valued wildlife habitat in the rural areas of the community.

**Vision.** Northfield will be a place where Town residents and the natural environment co-exist. The surface waters will receive increased protection, and Northfield will be looked at by many other communities as a model on how to protect riverfront shorelands. The quality of the water in the stratified drift aquifer under NH 140 is better protected, ensuring a long term drinking water source for residents. The shorelines along the Merrimack and Winnepesaukee Rivers will largely be free from development and accessible to the public, particularly along the Winnepesaukee where the new Multi-use Trail has been built. The rural areas of Northfield will contain low-density residential development among larger areas of forest land and wildlife corridors. **Current zoning addresses shoreland protection within setbacks and NHDES has specific regulations addressing shorelands. A Groundwater Protection Ordinance was approved by voters in 2004 and amended in 2010. A Wetlands Conservation Ordinance was also adopted in 2004 along with Conservation Zones which require larger acreage for building.**

**Priorities.** Revise the Zoning Ordinance to create shorefront protection zones along the banks of the Merrimack and Winnepesaukee Rivers. Review and revise the Groundwater Protection Overlay District to ensure commercial and residential development does not have a negative impact on the aquifer beneath NH Route 140. Actively pursue funds to allow for the permanent protection of lands in Northfield with valuable natural resources and features. Develop a wildlife corridor assessment to identify critical open spaces and to assist the Planning Board in its review of subdivision applications throughout town.

## **VIABLE VILLAGE AREA**

**At a public meeting held in 2012, residents rejected approving a grant which was intended to study the existing uses in the village and make recommended changes to the zoning ordinance to encourage the development of a “viable village area”. The general consensus was that no changes should be made.**

**Values.** The public participation process clearly identified that the people of Northfield love the town’s history and heritage. While the farmlands and rural areas of town remind

us of Northfield's agricultural past, the village area reminds residents of a community that served as a place for people to live, work, shop, rest, and play. The historic buildings in the village are cherished by Northfield's residents, as are the tree lined streets upon which those houses rest. Today the village area houses many valuable community facilities and services, including the Hall Memorial Library, the Northfield Town Hall, the Pines Community Center, Sanborn Elementary School, and the Tilton Arch and Arch Park. Commentary received through the community forums and the community survey overwhelmingly suggested that the town develop a Village Zone aimed at protecting, preserving, and enhancing the historic qualities of the village area.

***Vision.*** The village area will represent an historic district for the town of Northfield. The historic houses will be protected, the tree lined streets preserved. More so than today, the village will offer a mixture of uses including residential, commercial and retail, community facilities and services, and recreation areas and parks. Not only will there be a mix of uses in the village, but in some instances both residential and commercial/retail businesses will share the building. The village area will similarly promote bicycle and pedestrian friendliness, and sidewalks will be constructed where needed, and maintained as required. As one person recommended in the community forums, Northfield needs to "promote the traditional New England character in the village".

***Priorities.*** Develop a "Village Zone" to establish specific guidelines and standards for uses within the village area. Explore developing design guidelines for all new uses in the village. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to direct new growth and development away from the rural countryside of Northfield, and into the village area as is appropriate. Encourage development in a form that reflects the historic village characteristics in building and parking design, as well as general lot layout. Conduct an inventory of bicycle and pedestrian facilities and develop a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan for the village and surrounding area. Encourage all new development to conform to the plan and provide adequate pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

## **COMMERICAL AND INDUSTRIAL OPPORTUNITIES**

**At the 2006 Town Meeting, voters agreed to create a "Route 140 Corridor Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. This would allow a developer of property along the Route 140 corridor to install a sewer line and receive tax benefits from the town. To date there has been no new development on Rte 140 to take advantage of this program.**

**The Northfield Economic Development Corporation was established in 2011 and has been meeting on a regular basis with the objective of encouraging existing and potential businesses in town. With NEDC's help, Economic Revitalization Zones were created on Forrest Road, Sargent and Scribner Roads and Route 140 in 2013. These ERZ's allow new or expanded businesses with increased employment within those districts to receive state tax benefits.**

**The Groundwater Protection Overlay adopted by the town in 2004 helps to protect the aquifer which exists in the Commercial/Industrial zones.**



**Values.** Although Northfield is largely a residential community, a significant portion of the residents who participated in the community forums and the community survey identified the importance of expanding the commercial and industrial base in town. Commercial and industrial businesses generate valuable tax revenue that can offset some of the high costs of providing community facilities and town services. These businesses also provide employment opportunities for residents of all ages in town. However, commercial and industrial development should occur with proper planning. As one person explained in a response to the community survey: “I would like more commercial buildings as long as they were done tastefully. Set back off the main road with trees as a buffer zone”. Northfield residents also value the aquifer which is located underneath NH 140, and any new commercial and industrial growth that occurs in that area should do so in a way that will not have a negative impact on this drinking water resource for Northfield, Tilton, and Belmont.

**Vision.** Commercial and industrial opportunities will expand in the future, providing new levels of economic vitality. More people who live in town will also be able to work in town. Growth will occur only in those areas where it is suitable (e.g., close to major transportation routes, away from residential neighborhoods and valuable natural resources, etc.). All new commercial and industrial development will occur in a form that respects the natural landscape, and that minimizes the impact on abutting properties and landowners.

**Priorities.** Revise the Zoning Ordinance to ensure new commercial and industrial growth only occurs in appropriate areas of town. Using the Site Plan Review Regulations, the Planning Board should ensure that all new development occurs in a way that integrates it with the natural environment and does not negatively impact abutting properties and residents. Continue to promote commercial and industrial development in the NH Route 140 area, but revise the Groundwater Protection Overlay District standards to better protect the stratified drift aquifer from the potential negative impacts of such development. Investigate the feasibility and potential of expanding off-site sewer and water in areas suitable for future commercial and industrial growth. **The Zoning Ordinance and other regulations are reviewed on an ongoing basis to determine if any changes are warranted.**

## **FAIR, REALISTIC, AND AFFORDABLE COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

**Northfield now has an active Capital Improvement Plan Committee with a multiple year plan which is updated annually. The CIP includes road reconstruction, vehicle replacements as well as building and ground maintenance.**

**Values.** Community facilities and services are the support structure of any community. The quality of community services and facilities can be a reflection of the quality of life in a community. Through the public participation program, residents clearly indicated that the quality of these facilities and services is of critical importance. The police and fire services, for example, are largely considered to be of high quality, and townsfolk feel that this quality should be maintained. The Hall Memorial Library is another example of a community facility of which the people are proud. Although many feel the school system is of high quality, there is also widespread concern that the cost of maintaining the

School system is unreasonable. Other community facilities and services are considered equally as important, and should be operated and maintained to a high standard in the future, while ensuring the costs of such services do not create an unreasonable burden on Northfield taxpayers.

***Vision.*** The town of Northfield will remain a safe place to live and visit, with an excellent police department and a fire department of which the residents have the highest confidence. The roads in town are well-maintained, and the sidewalks are cleared almost immediately after a snowfall. The Library remains one of the most respected facilities in town and is used by people of all ages. The Pines Community Center has become a focal point for the community, where people come together for recreation and leisure in a variety of ways. Although community facilities and services in Northfield are at a high level of standard, they are kept that way in an affordable and realistic way. The school system will continue to provide a high quality education to the youth of Northfield. Municipal taxes will not spike as a result of unanticipated capital improvements, but rather the local tax burden remains relatively constant and predictable in the future.

***Priorities.*** Redevelop the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and update it on an annual basis. Monitor the level of service for community facilities and services based on national standards (e.g., number of police officers per thousand populations) and community input. Solicit community input on a regular basis by, for example, the distribution of community surveys aimed at measuring their perception of the quality of community facilities and services. Ensure that the provision of adequate community facilities and services is not threatened by development and land use change. Require developers to upgrade community facilities and services through off-site improvements or impact fees where warranted, to help ensure that growth and development pays its own way.

## **SAFE AND INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

**NH DOT has removed the expansion of Exit 19 from its future plans therefore eliminating the possibility of this happening for many years.**

**In 2012-13 the Town and School District received a grant to study “Safe Roads to School” to help determine the needs for appropriate sidewalks for school access. The survey determined that parents would not allow very young children to walk or ride bicycles to Union Sanborn School even if the sidewalks were improved. Parents were also concerned about the safety of older children walking or bicycling to the Southwick School because of its location.**

***Values.*** The people of Northfield hold dear the rural character of the community, with country roads and relatively low levels of traffic. Higher levels of traffic do occur on some roads, most notably NH Route 132 (Park Street), NH Route 140, Elm Street as you cross the Winnepesaukee River between Northfield and Tilton, Sargent Street, and Zion Hill Road. Although the residents of town highly value their proximity to I-93, as well as the regional retail opportunities in Tilton at Exit 20, they also value the rural nature of their community and caution against poorly planned future development at Exit 19. Many of the town-maintained roads in Northfield have a gravel surface which helps to slow

down traffic and maintains the rural feel of the countryside. Other roads have been paved where traffic levels, safety issues, and maintenance costs have warranted. On these roads, traffic tends to travel considerably faster, something of great concern to residents in the rural areas.

The residents of Northfield are very concerned about the safety of walking and bicycling throughout town, especially in the village area and around Southwick School and the Sanborn Elementary School. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities must be provided and maintained in these areas to ensure maximum safety for the children of Northfield. People and the sense of community are highly valued in Northfield. As the population ages, providing alternative transportation modes for the elderly through public transportation will be of increasing importance in the future.

***Vision.*** Automobile transportation in Northfield will remain the dominant mode of travel. Northfield will continue to ensure that roadways are as safe as possible for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. The village area will become the focal destination point in Northfield, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities will be installed and maintained to promote the village as a walkable and livable community. In rural areas, only those roads that warrant paving will be converted from gravel to asphalt. Traffic calming design characteristics will be integrated into new town road improvements, especially when paving rural town roads. The town will support and work with organizations such as the Greater Laconia Transit Agency (GLTA) to improve public transportation opportunities to meet the needs of Northfield's aging population.

***Priorities.*** Continue to use the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to plan and budget for major transportation improvements in town. Improve the communication process to involve the public in the decision-making process regarding town road improvements. Develop a bicycle and pedestrian plan for Northfield. Incorporate needed bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the Northfield CIP and apply for Federal Transportation Enhancement funding to help offset the costs to town residents. Ensure that new development, and redevelopment, in Northfield provides the necessary bicycle and pedestrian facilities, where warranted. Work with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and the Lakes Region Planning Commission to determine the future for Exit 19 at I-93. Monitor the needs of the elderly, and create and enhance partnerships with agencies such as GLTA to ensure that the needs of those unable to drive are met.

## **MANAGED GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

**The Northfield Zoning Ordinance now includes Conservation Zones that require 5 acre minimum lot sizes. The town rejected a proposal to increase those lot sizes to 20 acres in some areas. Creating a Village Plan was also rejected by residents. A Growth Management Ordinance was adopted by the town in 2004 to address rapid development occurring in the outskirts of town. This Ordinance was allowed to expire in 2013 as there has been little pressure of development.**

***Values.*** Northfield has traditionally been a small, rural community where residential growth and development has been focused in the village area. Over the past few years, demands for residential housing in rural areas have resulted in significantly increased r

residential subdivision and building activity. The result has been an erosion of what has been defined as “rural character” in Northfield. Increased development in rural areas has also stressed the ability of Northfield to provide needed services to the new homes, such as fire and police protection and road improvements. Residents of Northfield understand that residential growth may be inevitable, but they stress that it should occur in ways that minimize the impact on the community and the environment, and at a pace that is fiscally manageable.

***Vision.*** Growth will continue to occur in Northfield, but at a manageable pace. Development will be directed towards the village center and its immediate surrounding, while it is discouraged in the rural areas where agricultural lands and woodlots are increasingly protected. As growth and development pressures increase in the village area, the boundaries of the village zone will be expanded to allow for more growth, in conjunction with the expansion of sewer and water facilities. In the future, the municipal tax rate will stabilize and new community facilities and services will be anticipated and planned for based on an anticipated rate of growth.

***Priorities.*** Develop and implement a long-term Growth Management Ordinance. Monitor residential building permits and limit new construction and subdivision activity as warranted. Augment the Ordinance with a comprehensive growth management system, by creating a village zone to promote growth in the village area while discouraging development in the rural countryside. Update the Capital Improvements Program annually to plan for needed capital improvements that reflect growth and development in town.

## NORTHFIELD AND ITS REGION

**Northfield, Belmont and Tilton created a mutual Aquifer Protection Ordinance that was adopted by Northfield in 2010.**

***Values.*** Northfield does not exist on its own and residents value the proximity of the town to nearby amenities. One respondent to the community survey explained one of the best things about living in Northfield is that it provides “great proximity to Concord, Laconia, and the lakes and mountains.” Other residents expressed appreciation that they are located close to the regional retail centers found at Exit 20, but that they live far enough away from them so as not to receive the negative impacts large scale commercial and retail development brings with it, such as increased traffic, noise, and light pollution.

The town also prizes its natural resources, including the stratified drift aquifer shared between the towns of Tilton, Belmont, and Northfield. Recognizing the regional scope of this resource, the town has embraced the need to work with its neighbors on issues regarding this resource to ensure its protection for the benefit of all three towns in the future. This regional approach has been exemplified through the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services funded “Tri-town Aquifer Protection Project” involving all three communities and led by the Lakes Region Planning Commission.

Northfield shares a number of community facilities and services with neighboring towns. The Fire Department, for example, is shared with Tilton. The Hall Memorial Library and the Pines Community Center are also shared by both Northfield and Tilton. The school system is shared by Tilton, Sanbornton, and Northfield. Furthermore, the town has also been working on a multi-use trail project in cooperation with Franklin and Tilton. The sharing of these facilities and services further demonstrates the need and willingness for Northfield to cooperate with its neighbors regarding issues that are regional in scope.

The rate of recent residential growth has been of increasing local concern. The town values the freedom of mobility that people have, but is concerned that rapid residential growth could have negative impacts on the people and the community in the long-term. This is of particular concern regarding the ability of the town to provide fair, adequate, and affordable community services. Recognizing its role in the region, Northfield residents expressed a willingness to accommodate their fair-share of residential development within the surrounding region.

Residents also recognize that people from outside of Northfield travel through town to access Interstate 93 and Exit 19. Residents value Exit 19 for its efficient access to points south, but some also fear that if it is completed as a full interchange it would negatively impact the rural character of the community. In general, the community seems split regarding whether or not Exit 19 should be completed as a full interchange. If it is completed, the community believes that good planning will be required to ensure that any development at that interchange occurs in a way that does not negatively impact the town and its residents.

***Vision.*** The town of Northfield will continue to engage in activities that involve multiple municipalities. Communication between Northfield and other communities will continue to improve, and town efforts will work towards goals and objectives that not only benefit its own residents, but those who live in the greater region. The people of Northfield and local officials will increasingly consider the regional impacts that local decisions may have, and strive to improve communication and cooperation with its neighbors where practicable. In the future, Northfield will work together with its neighbors and continue to recognize that by working together everyone in the region can benefit in the future.

***Priorities.*** Maintain a good relationship with its neighboring communities. Continue involvement with the Lakes Region Planning Commission. Monitor growth and development relative to the immediate region surrounding the community. Recognize that growth and development are inevitable in Northfield and its surrounding region. Monitor change from a regional perspective to examine its impact on the community and its neighbors.



## COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

### INTRODUCTION

In any community planning activity it is important to develop an understanding of where a community has been and where it is today. This understanding can help provide predictions for where it may be tomorrow. The purpose of this section of the Master Plan is to provide information and insight into the general characteristics of the community in three main areas: 1) population trends and projections; 2) population age characteristics and trends; and 3) housing characteristics and trends. This information can be useful in understanding the potential impacts that a change in a community's characteristics may have on the need for essential community services and facilities, housing opportunities, resource preservation, and economic development. This information can also be critical in understanding land use change in a community, and how growth and development can affect a community in the future.

### POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

***Historic Population Growth.*** The historic growth and development of the town of Northfield provides the context for the present day community. In many ways, the issues and opportunities facing the town today have been shaped by this historic growth. This section will begin by highlighting the historic perspective of population growth and development in Northfield, drawing from the information presented in Figure 3-1. Much of this historic information has been gleaned from the history of Northfield written by Mr. Thomas S. Curren entitled, *A Small Town By The River; A History of Northfield, New Hampshire*, published by the Northfield Historical Society, and printed by Tylergraphics of Laconia, NH in 1997.

Unlike some other New Hampshire communities whose populations have seen a steady increase since the early 1800's, Northfield's population has fluctuated through this time period. Several key factors have played a role in these fluctuations such as war, changes in town boundaries, and economic upturns and downturns. Despite these fluctuations, Northfield has grown from 925 people in 1800, to 4,458 people in 2000.

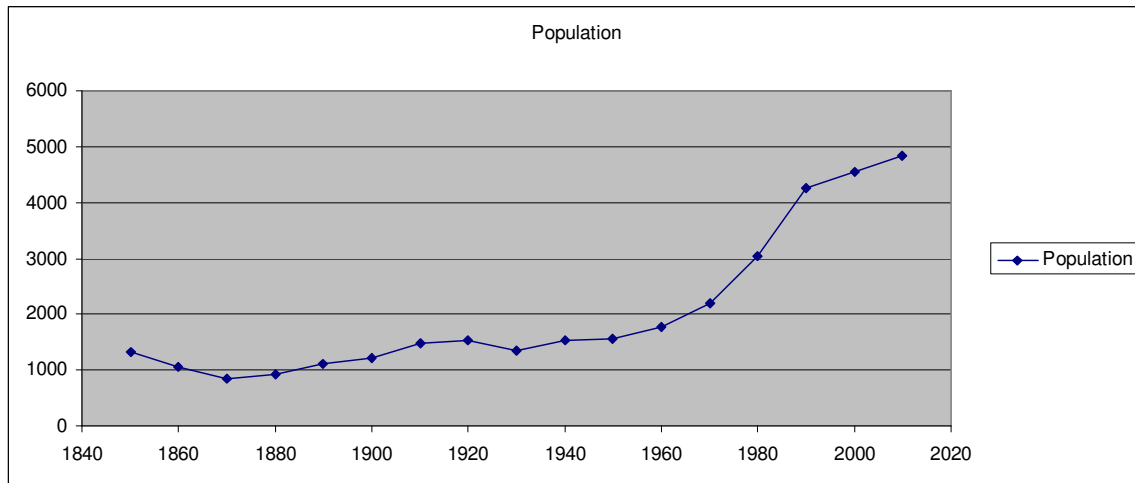
Northfield's population grew steadily from 1800 through 1820 as settlement occurred and homesteaders sought out prime plots to begin agricultural operations. In 1828 the westernmost part of Northfield was given to the newly created town of Franklin, and Northfield's population fell. Franklin itself was formed from parts of Northfield, Sanbornton, and Andover. The property was later returned to Northfield in 1830, causing the population to rise back to previous levels.

The population then again began to rise through to the year 1850, as the industrial age began to see the development of the mill trade and employment opportunities expanded in the area. The population then began to drop during the period of 1850-1870. During the 1850's came the arrival of the Boston, Concord, and Montreal Railroad. This gave

many residents, especially the youths, an opportunity to seek other opportunities down south or out west. In 1861, the state legislature annexed Northfield property to Franklin once again. This, along with the start of the Civil War, continued the negative growth trend. The town had 77 men enlist to the Union Army. Population numbers would rebound after the war when industrial mills once again began to thrive in the area.

Figure 3-1: Historic Population Trends for Northfield, NH, 1850 - 2010

**\*NOTE: The NH Office of Energy and Planning is no longer calculating population projections. Thus, unlike the 2003 Figure, this update does not include population projections.**



Source: United States Census Bureau, 1800-2000 (Historical), NH Office of State Planning (NHOSP) (Projected)  
 source: New Hampshire Office of State Planning, 2003

The late 1800's and early 1900's would see a population boom. Northfield began growing, as did the rest of the United States. Mills prospered, a new grammar school was constructed, telephones were introduced, and the town began laying sewer lines. The population numbers continued to rise until the beginning of 1920. During the 'Roaring Twenties', businesses throughout the region were flourishing. It is suspected that residents may have left Northfield to go to areas like Boston and Manchester to work; The allure of financial and social opportunities may have drawn some of the population elsewhere.

The Great Depression changed things for Northfield. Many of the mills in surrounding areas had major cutbacks or closed. The residents of Northfield largely returned to self-sufficient methods of living, much as their ancestors did when the community was first settled. Oddly enough, the town actually saw an increase in population during the Depression. It is possible that the residents who left town during the '20s for opportunities elsewhere, saw those opportunities dry up and returned home as a means of enduring the tough times of the Depression.

The economy would not recover fully until the post World War Two era. During this era,



the population began to climb with the baby boomers and has not dropped since. The construction of Interstate Highway 93, and the ability to commute miles away from home to work, undoubtedly had a major impact on the growth of the community from the 1960's on. Through the 1970's and 1980's, housing development increased and the population of the community grew at a fast pace. Although there was some slowing of population growth in the 1990's, by 2000, Northfield's population had reached its highest level ever, at 4,548 **and increased still further to 4829 in 2010.**

**Recent Population Change.** Long-term historical population trends can help aid in the understanding of how Northfield has evolved into what it is today. However, the more pressing issues that face a community involve recent change. As described above, Northfield experienced rapid growth through the 1980's, which tapered off in the 1990's. To place this growth in context, it can be helpful to compare population change in Northfield to that of its abutting communities. This is often referred to as a "First-Tier Region Analysis" (Table 3-1).

The First-Tier Region of a community consists of all those communities which geographically abut it. It is important to note that the First-Tier Region does not include the community for which the analysis is being done. For Northfield, the First-Tier Region consists of the municipalities of Canterbury, Boscawen, Belmont, Franklin, and Tilton.

**Table 3-1: Population Growth for Northfield, NH and Surrounding Communities, 1980 - 2010**

	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% Change 1980 to 1990</b>	<b>% Change 1990 to 2000</b>	<b>% Change 2000 to 2010</b>
<b>Northfield</b>	<b>3,051</b>	<b>4,263</b>	<b>4,548</b>	<b>4,829</b>	<b>39.70%</b>	<b>6.70%</b>	<b>6.20%</b>
Canterbury	1,410	1,687	1,979	2,352	19.60%	17.30%	18.80%
Boscawen	3,435	3,586	3,672	3,965	4.40%	2.40%	8.00%
Belmont	4,026	5,796	6,716	7,356	44.00%	15.90%	9.50%
Franklin	7,901	8,304	8,405	8,477	5.10%	1.20%	0.90%
Tilton	3,387	3,240	3,477	3,567	-4.30%	7.30%	2.60%
First-Tier Region	20,159	22,613	24,249	30,546	12.20%	7.20%	26.00%
Lakes Region	78,511	90,205	104,365	110,482	17.70%	15.70%	5.90%
New Hampshire	920,475	1,109,252	1,235,786	1,316,470	20.50%	11.40%	6.50%

Source: US Census Bureau, 1980,1990,2000,2010

When comparing population growth in Northfield to its First-Tier Region, it is apparent that Northfield experienced relatively high population growth through the 1980's (39.7%). In fact, Northfield grew faster than all communities in the First-Tier, except Belmont (44.0%). Furthermore, Northfield grew at a faster rate than both the Lakes Region (17.7%) and the State of New Hampshire (20.5%).

Through the 1990's however, Northfield's population growth slowed significantly. In

1990, the population of Northfield was 4,263. By 2000, the population of Northfield had grown by 265 people (6.7%). This represents a significantly slower growth rate than both Canterbury and Belmont, as well as the Lakes Region (15.8%) and the State of New Hampshire (11.4%). As will be discussed later in this section, the increase in building permit activity from the late 1990's to the present may indicate that Northfield will again experience increased population growth through the first part of the twenty-first century. **Due to economic conditions nationwide, Northfield has seen slower growth since the year 2000.**

***Population Projections.*** One way to help anticipate population growth, and the demands for community services and facilities which accompany such growth, is to use population projections. Population projections are often a "best guess" into the future, based on the use of a projection model. The New Hampshire Office of State Planning (NH OSP) develops population projections for communities based on a model which analyzes the age of a population and recent trends in births, deaths, survival, and fertility rates. Although population projections can be a very useful tool in planning, caution should always be taken since such projections will undoubtedly vary from actual population growth.

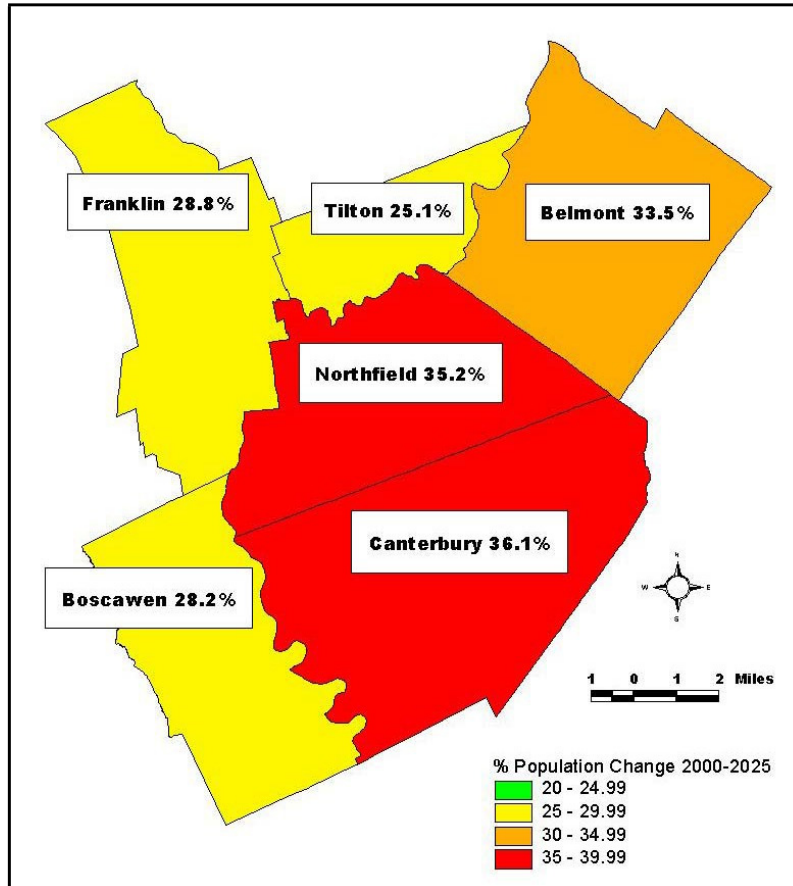
For example, in 1997 NH OSP updated their population projections to show a projected population for Northfield in 2000 as 4,662. As indicated above, the actual population for Northfield in 2000 was 4,548 according to the U.S. Census. As such, the population projections over-projected Northfield's population by 114 people, approximately 2.5%.

**The following map and table showing population projection for Northfield and the surrounding communities for 2005-2025 was for 2003 projections. This has not been updated because the Office of State Planning is no longer projecting population changes. Northfield is not seeing the higher growth projection at this time.**

Table 3-2: Population Projections for Northfield, NH and Surrounding Communities, 2005 - 2025 (Not updated in 2012 as the NH Office of Energy and Planning is no longer calculating population projections)

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Northfield</b>	<b>4,548</b>	<b>4,866</b>	<b>5,205</b>	<b>5,532</b>	<b>5,834</b>	<b>6,150</b>
Canterbury	1,979	2,136	2,283	2,425	2,556	2,693
Boscawen	3,672	3,835	4,069	4,282	4,491	4,709
Belmont	6,716	7,259	7,721	8,152	8,526	8,965
Franklin	8,405	8,850	9,380	9,860	10,333	10,827
Tilton	3,477	3,678	3,864	4,022	4,172	4,348
First-Tier Region	24,249	25,758	27,317	28,741	30,078	31,542

Map 3-2 Population projections for Northfield and surrounding communities 2005-2025  
 (Not updated in 2012 as the NH Office of Energy and Planning is no longer calculating population projections)



Source: NH Office of State Planning, 2003

Table 3-2 provides the most recently updated population projections for the Town of Northfield and its First-Tier Region through 2025. Map 3-2 illustrates the average projected growth rate for Northfield, as compared to its surrounding communities. As can be seen, the projected growth rate for Northfield is higher than the communities in the town's First-Tier Region, aside from Belmont.

**POPULATION AGE CHARACTERISTICS AND TRENDS**

**Median Age.** A common way in which to better understand the characteristics of a population is to examine median age. As seen in Table 3-3, the median age in Northfield, as well as Merrimack County and the State of New Hampshire has been steadily increasing. Undoubtedly, this increase will continue to place demands on the community in terms of providing access to facilities and services specific to an aging population, such as adult recreation and community facilities, elderly housing, and transportation services for the elderly. As a result, the community will need to reassess how it has provided these services in the past, and monitor the needs of this increasing segment of the population.

**Table 3-3: Median Age (Years), 1980 - 2010**

	1980	1990	2000	2010
Northfield	27.8	31.2	36.0	39.2
Merrimack County	30.6	33.5	37.7	41.4
New Hampshire	30.1	32.8	37.1	41.1

Source; US Census Bureau, 1980,1990, 2000,2010

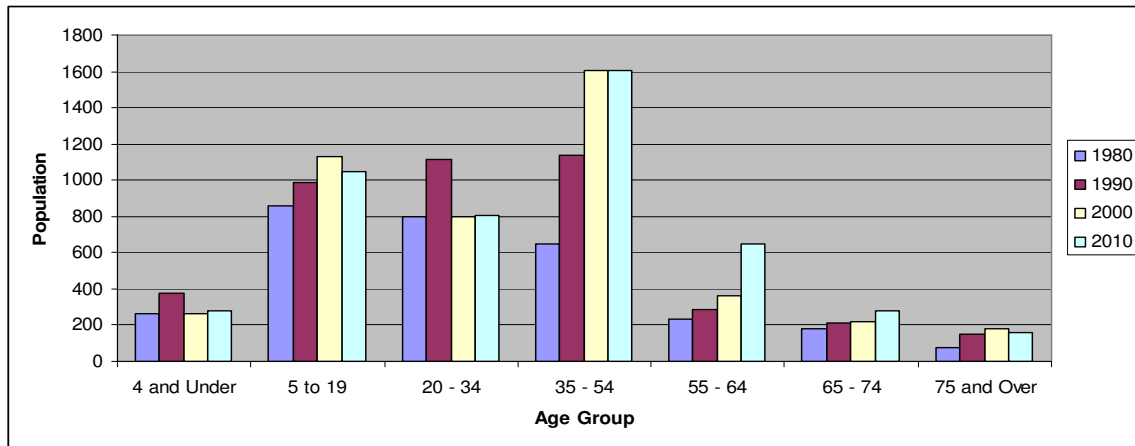
**Age Structure.** Simply looking at median age, however, does not provide the information necessary to truly understand the age structure of the population in a community. To do this, the total population can be broken down into age groups. This provides insight into the changing nature of the population, and current and future demands for community services and facilities. Northfield’s population has been broken down into several age groups, as follows:

- 1) 4 Years and Under - Identifies that portion of the population as “Preschool Age”
- 2) 5 Years to 19 Years - Identifies that portion of the population as “School Age”
- 3) 20 Years to 34 Years - Identifies that portion of the population as “Young Workers”
- 4) 35 Years to 54 Years - Identifies that portion of the population considered “Middle Age Workers”
- 5) 55 Years to 64 Years - Includes the population described as “Older Workers”
- 6) 65 Years to 75 Years - Identifies that portion of the population as “Active Retired”
- 7) 75 Years and Over - Identifies that portion of the population as “Elderly”.

Figure 3-2 provides a historical perspective on the evolution of the age of the population in Northfield. With respect to Preschool Age, the actual number of children falling into this category peaked in 1990, and by 2000 had returned to close to the 1980 total. In contrast, the number of children classified as School Age has steadily increased over the past twenty years. The 2000 data, when further broken down, shows that of the 1,126 School Age population in Northfield, 770 (68%) are between 5 and 14 years of age and generally within the Elementary and Middle School age brackets. In contrast, 356 (32%)

are in the High School age bracket, and generally between 15 and 19 years of age. The fact that more than two-thirds of the School Age population are within the Elementary School age bracket allows for a better understanding of future needs, particularly as these younger children age and enter the Middle and High School system.

Figure 3-2: Population Trends by Age Group for Northfield, NH 1980-2010



Source: US Census Bureau, 1980,1990,2000,2010

Education services and facilities, although critical to the development of Northfield's youth, should not be the only consideration here. The town should also recognize the unique demands that the younger population has on other services and facilities, such as recreation and transportation.

The general working age population in Northfield has been broken down into three categories: Young Workers, Middle Age Workers, and Older Workers. As Figure 3-2 illustrates, through the 1980's there was a relatively high growth in the number of Younger Workers (20-34 Years of Age) in Northfield. This is possibly due to several trends, including a growth and housing boom which may have brought new, younger families to the community. Through the 1990's **and 2010** however, this trend reversed and the number of Young Workers declined back to 1980 levels.

There may be several reasons for this decline, such as the general aging of the population as these Young Workers transition into the segment of the population identified as Middle Age Workers. Important to note, however, is that as this segment of the population has declined, there does not appear to be new Young Workers to take their place. This may be due to several reasons, such as the community's ability to attract and retain a younger workforce. Reduced employment opportunities may not have attracted a younger workforce, and opportunities elsewhere may have drawn what younger workers there were elsewhere.

In contrast, however, the number of Middle Age Workers has consistently grown from 1980 through 2000. **This number remained steady through 2010.** Similarly, the

number of Older Workers has also grown consistently **with a dramatic increase in 2010**. These growth patterns with respect to the working age population in Northfield reflect the general aging of the population. If trends in the median age (as discussed above) continue, it can be expected that this group of people will continue to increase in the future, which will require the community to properly address the demands placed upon it, in areas such as transportation infrastructure, ambulance and fire services, and recreation facilities.

Finally, the Active Retired and Elderly population continues to increase steadily. The number of people in these age groups will likely increase in the future, requiring the community to respond and provide those services normally in demand to these elderly people, including transportation options, access to health care facilities, and leisure and recreation opportunities.

**HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS AND TRENDS**

As explained earlier, the overall population of Northfield continues to increase, primarily in those people categorized as Middle and Older Workers. This population growth is reflected in the development of housing, and understanding the general characteristics and trends in housing in a community lays the foundation for many other planning efforts, especially the demands new housing has on the land base and the transportation

**Year-round and Seasonal Housing.** The United States Census provides perhaps the simplest way of describing trends in housing through its reporting of total housing units. Table 3-4 presents a summary of trends in both total housing and seasonal housing in Northfield from 1980 through 2000.

**Table 3-4: Total and Seasonal Housing Units for Northfield, NH, 1980 - 2010**

	1980	1990	2000	2010	Change 1980 to 1990	% Change 1990 to 2000	Change 2000 to 2010	% Change
Total Housing Units	1,135	1,671	1,782	1,969	47.20%	6.60%	10.50%	
Seasonal Housing Units	37	65	41	32	75.70%	-36.90%	-22.00%	

Source; US Census Bureau, 1980,1990,2000,2010

As the above table shows, the total number of housing units in Northfield, including those occupied and vacant, increased rapidly through the 1980's. Through the 1990's this rate of increase was significantly less. The growth in housing units reflects the same trends in population growth throughout the past two decades. **From 2000 to 2010 there has been a modest growth in housing and 11 seasonal homes have been converted to year round.** In many ways, growth in housing stock places the same demands for services as does population growth. Increased provision for fire and police services are two examples.

In Northfield, a relatively rural community, much of the housing growth has occurred in previously undeveloped areas. The development of rural areas in a community often increase the needs for many community facilities and services. Often the impacts of this

development become most visible in the deterioration of the transportation system. This often results in pressures on town officials to upgrade gravel roads which are no longer able to accommodate the new level of traffic in the area.

Through the 1990's, Northfield witnessed a decrease in number of seasonal housing units. This reflects a trend common to many other New Hampshire communities; Many seasonal homes have been converted to year-round homes. However, it is important to note that in 2000 seasonal homes only comprise approximately 2.3% of the total housing stock in Northfield.

One of the limitations of Census data is that it only provides data every ten years. From a community planning perspective, this data is not always useful. Communities are often faced with challenges that may occur over a relatively short period of time. For many New Hampshire communities, growth in housing development and the consumption of land is one phenomenon which requires data that is more timely.

The NH Office of State Planning (NHOSP) annually collects new residential building permit data from New Hampshire communities. This data is collected and used to provide housing estimates throughout the state, and the NHOSP assumes that every new residential permit issued by a community equates to one new housing unit. This provides a yearly indication of housing development growth which is useful for communities as they face the challenges of dealing with new growth, while at the same time they attempt to provide services and facilities demanded by that new growth.

The following table presents a comparison of housing unit growth for two time periods – 1990-2000 and 2000-2010. Similar to the population growth comparison near the beginning of this section, the data is presented to provide for a comparison of growth between Northfield and its First-Tier Region, defined as all communities which geographically abut it. Table 3-5 uses data reported by the US Census Bureau for 1990, 2000 and 2010.

**Table 3-5: Change in Number of Housing Units for Northfield, NH and Surrounding Communities, 1990 - 2010**

Source: US Census Bureau 1990,2000,2010

Communities	Change 1990 to 2000	% Change 1990-2000	Average Annual % Change 1990-2000	Change 2000 to 2010	% Change 2000-2010	Average Annual % Change 2000-2010
Northfield	111	6.60%	0.70%	187	10.49%	1.05%
Canterbury	114	15.70%	1.60%	164	19.57%	1.96%
Boscawen	74	6.10%	0.60%	158	12.20%	1.22%
Belmont	244	8.50%	0.90%	502	16.13%	1.61%
Franklin	-68	-1.80%	-0.20%	262	7.13%	0.71%
Tilton	19	1.20%	0.10%	214	13.12%	1.31%
<i>First-Tier Total</i>	383	3.80%	0.40%	1487	12.06%	1.21%



As Table 3-5 indicates, Northfield experienced approximately 0.7% growth in housing units throughout the 1990's **and 1.05% annual growth from 2000-2010**. This rate of increase is higher than that for the First-Tier Region as a whole **for 2000, but lower in 2010**. In comparison, between 1998 and 2001, the rate of increase for housing units was much higher than the rate for the decade as a whole. In the period between 1998 and 2001, the average annual change in building permits (new housing) for Northfield (1.3%) is also higher than that experienced by the First-Tier Region (1.0%).

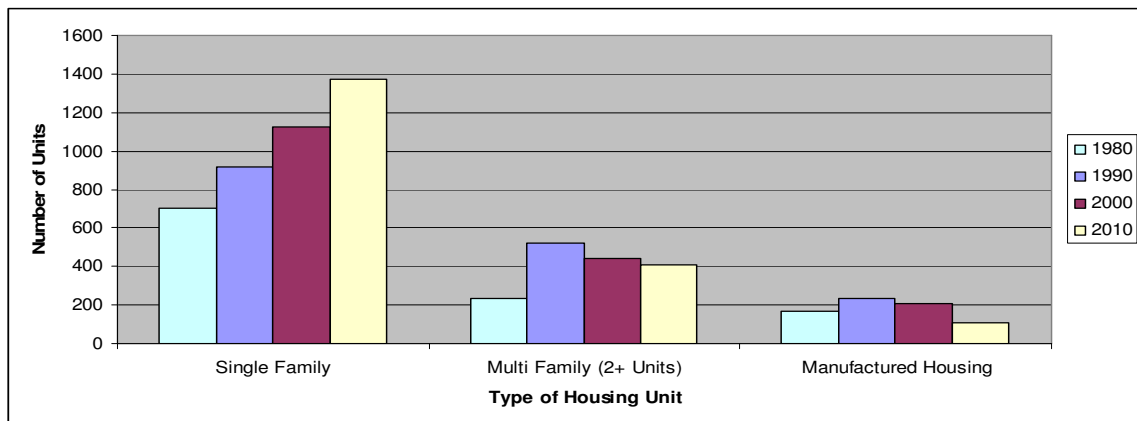
**Table 3-6: Estimated Housing Units for Northfield, NH and Surrounding Communities, 1998 – 2001 Not updated**

Communities	Change 1998 to 2001	% Change 1998-2001	Average Annual % Change 1998-2001
<b>Northfield</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
Canterbury	40	4.9%	2.5%
Boscawen	18	1.4%	0.7%
Belmont	100	3.1%	1.5%
Franklin	47	1.2%	0.6%
Tilton	16	1.0%	0.5%
<i>First-Tier Total</i>	221	2.0%	1.0%

Source: New Hampshire Office of State Planning (Estimates)

**Housing Types.** The information presented above provides an indication of housing unit trends in the town of Northfield. What it does not provide is an indication of the types of housing that is being built. The US Census Bureau collects and reports this information, as presented in Figure 3-3.

**Figure 3-3: Trends in Number of Housing Units by Type of Unit for Northfield, NH, 1990 - 2010**



As indicated above, the majority of the housing units in Northfield have historically been single-family, although there is a fair amount of multifamily housing as well. However, whereas the number of single family housing units has increased steadily over the past twenty years, the number of multi family and manufactured housing has fluctuated. Between 1980 and 2000, the number of single family housing units has increased from 701 to 1,127, approximately 62.2%.

The fact that recent trends in housing development in Northfield have been in the form of single family housing presents specific challenges for the community. This development has likely occurred in previously undeveloped areas, where minimum lot sizes may be relatively large, resulting an increased consumption of rural land. The implications of this rural development will be explored further in the Land Use Chapter of the Master Plan.

**Owner Occupied vs. Renter Occupied Housing.** The characteristics of housing in a community can also be described by examining the proportion of the total housing units that are owner occupied versus renter occupied (Table 3-7). In Northfield as of 2010, nearly one-third of the total number of housing units was renter occupied. Compared to the First-Tier Region, the proportion of renter-occupied housing units is virtually the same. Boscawen, Canterbury, and Belmont, all have a relatively low proportion of renter occupied housing, while Franklin and Tilton have relatively higher proportions.

**Table 3-7: Owner Occupied and Renter Occupied Housing Units for Northfield, NH, 2000 - 2010**

Communities	Owner Occupied Units		Renter Occupied Units		% Renter Occupied		Total Units	
	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
Northfield	1,159	1,306	547	537	32%	29%	1,706	1,843
Canterbury	674	824	75	89	10%	10%	749	913
Boscawen	946	1000	314	369	25%	27%	1,260	1,369
Belmont	2,076	2,265	565	676	21%	23%	2,641	2,941
Franklin	1,911	2,058	1,408	1,349	42%	40%	3,319	3,407
Tilton	858	990	502	472	37%	32%	1,360	1,462
<i>First-Tier Total</i>	<i>6,465</i>	<i>8,443</i>	<i>2,864</i>	<i>3,492</i>	<i>31%</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>9,329</i>	<i>11,935</i>

**Age of Housing Stock.** With an understanding that the growth in the number of housing units in Northfield is largely attributable to single family housing, it would be expected that a significant amount of the Northfield housing stock would have been constructed from 1980 onward (see Table 3-8). In fact, 39% of the housing stock was constructed in the last thirty years, with the majority of it being constructed through the

1980's, Northfield's highest population growth period in history.

**Housing Values.** As mentioned at the beginning of this section, much of the population and housing growth through the 1980's reflects a housing boom felt in many areas of the state. Concurrent with this housing boom, the 1980's saw the cost of housing increase substantially. Table 3-9 presents a First-Tier comparison of the median value of housing units from 1980 through 2010, according to the United States Census.

This data compares the median housing unit value in Northfield with those of its surrounding communities and the First-Tier Region as a whole. One of the ways in which this can be done is by stating the median housing unit value as a percentage of the First-Tier average. This method of comparison shows the median value of housing

**Table 3-8: Age of Housing Stock in Northfield, NH, 2010**

<b>Period of Construction</b>	<b>Number Units</b>	<b>of % of Total Existing Dwelling Units</b>
Built 2005 or later	47	2.5%
Built 2000 to 2004	67	3.5%
Built 1990 to 1999	183	9.7%
Built 1980 to 1989	471	24.9%
Built 1970 to 1979	364	19.2%
Built 1960 to 1969	99	5.2%
Built 1950 to 1959	100	5.3%
Built 1940 to 1949	43	2.3%
Built 1939 or earlier	519	27.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1893</b>	<b>100%</b>

units in Northfield to be 98.8% that of the First-Tier Region as a whole. In comparison, the median housing unit value in the town of Canterbury is 139.15% of that of Northfield's First-Tier Region. For both 1990 and 2010, the value of housing units in Northfield increased compared to 1980.

Of particular note is that the median value in Northfield is considerably lower than that of the two communities directly to the south, Boscawen and Canterbury. Both Boscawen and Canterbury have easy access to Interstate 93, Concord, and points south and have experienced high rates of growth and pressures for development in the recent past. Another factor that may influence the median housing value is the local land use regulations in place in a community. For example, a community with large minimum lot sizes may have inflated housing values as a result, particularly if it is a community with recent housing growth (i.e., new housing stock). On the other hand, a community with smaller lot sizes and an older housing stock may have a lower median house value.

**Table 3-9: Median Housing Unit Value for Northfield, NH and Surrounding Communities, 1990 - 2010**

	1990 (\$)	% of First-Tier Average in 1990	2000 (\$)	% of First-Tier Average in 2000	2010 (\$)	% of First-Tier Average in 2010
<b>Northfield</b>	<b>97,300</b>	<b>92.76%</b>	<b>93,100</b>	<b>91.44%</b>	<b>193,000</b>	<b>98.08%</b>
Canterbury	128,300	122.31%	132,900	130.52%	273,800	139.15%
Boscawen	103,600	98.76%	101,100	99.29%	219,400	111.50%
Belmont	107,000	102.00%	96,300	94.58%	167,500	85.12%
Franklin	89,400	85.22%	82,900	81.42%	191,400	97.27%
Tilton	96,200	91.71%	95,900	94.19%	203,600	103.47%
First-Tier Region	104,900	100.00%	101,820	100.00%	196,770	100.00%
Merrimack County	117,500	112.01%	117,900	115.79%	243,600	123.80%
New Hampshire	129,300	123.26%	133,300	130.92%	253,200	128.68%

Source: Us Census Bureau, 1990,2000,2010

### COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS SUMMARY

The population of Northfield has grown steadily since 1950. This growth was the greatest through the 1970's and 1980's, and tapered off through the 1990's. However, as building permit and housing unit estimates indicate, Northfield has experienced a resurgence of growth in the latter part of the 1990's until the present. Although Northfield continues to witness growth, the median age of the population is increasing. The segment of the population witnessing the greatest growth has been in the Middle Age Workers group (35-54 Years of Age). Although the number of School Age people (5 to 19 Years of Age) has also increased, the number of very young children (4 Years of Age and under) and Young Workers (20-34 Years of Age) are both at the levels as they were in 1980.

With respect to housing, the 1980's represented a housing boom for Northfield which mirrored population growth. The majority of the new housing built in Northfield since 1980 has been single family. Although the number of multi-family housing units has fluctuated since 1980, Northfield appears to still have a significant amount of multi-family housing stock. The amount of seasonal housing has decreased in Northfield since 1990, a trend common throughout many New Hampshire communities, and seasonal housing today accounts for only 2.3% of the total housing units. When compared to the average of those communities in the First-Tier Region surrounding it, Northfield continues to experience higher housing growth from 1990 to 2000, and for the period from 1998 to 2000. Canterbury, however, still displays the highest rate of residential housing growth, and the growth rate in Belmont has been comparable to that of Northfield. Finally, the value of housing units in Northfield has been less than the First-Tier region in each of 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010. Housing unit values have also remained significantly lower than those for Merrimack County and the State of New Hampshire.

# TRANSPORTATION

## INTRODUCTION

Northfield is the southern most town on the I-93 corridor that is still within the boundaries of the Lakes Region. It is located in Merrimack County, directly south of the Belknap/Merrimack county line. Although Northfield is largely a rural community, recent development in the town and the immediate surrounding area has resulted in increased use and demands on the transportation system.

Historically, the community has relied on both the regional and local highway network as its principal means of transportation. However, it must be recognized that vehicular travel is not the only mode of transportation used by and affecting the town of Northfield. As such, this chapter will also explore other modes of transportation such as bicycle and pedestrian, transit, and rail.

## TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The transportation network available to the Town of Northfield consists of a highways, sidewalks, railroad, bus, taxi service, and airports. The use, condition, improvements, and capital outlay to the infrastructure are all a measure of the adequacy of the network. This chapter will analyze the transportation network and discuss what Northfield needs to do in the future to ensure that the network meets the needs of the planned future of Northfield.

***The Regional Highway Network.*** Northfield's regional highway network can generally be described as that portion of the roadways within town that provide access to interstate travel and to areas in the surrounding region. The roadways that generally make up the regional highway network are classified as state highways, although state highways also serve local functions and provide access for residents to parcels of land abutting the highways. Conversely, although most locally maintained roadways serve primarily local functions, some local roads can also serve regional functions at times. The regional context of the highway network is provided in Map 4-1.

The primary regional highway network in Northfield includes Interstate 93, NH Route 140, and NH Route 132. NH Route 3, located directly north of Northfield, travels from the City of Franklin through to Exit 20 at I-93, and on to the City of Laconia. Although NH Route 3 does not actually pass through Northfield, it functions as a major transportation corridor serving the residents of Northfield. The town also contains some unnumbered state highways including Sandogardy Pond Road and Bean Hill Road, although these roads serve more of a local transportation function. **Bean Hill Road was reconstructed in 2012 with 80% state funding and has now been turned over to the town, leaving Sandogardy Pond Road as the only state owned secondary road in town. Sandogardy Pond Road is scheduled to be reconstructed in 2018.**

Although Northfield is situated close in proximity to Concord, its location along I-93 also puts it close, travel wise, to Manchester and Boston. Exit 19 on I-93 provides access to the Town, but this access is limited only to and from the south. Travel to and from points north on I-93 requires approximately two miles of travel through Tilton to Exit 20. The current New Hampshire Department of Transportation Long Range Ten Year Plan (2003-2012) identifies a construction project to complete Exit 19 as a full interchange. The issue of Exit 19 will be specifically addressed later in this chapter.

NH Route 140 slices through the north-east section of Northfield. NH Route 140 is one of the major east-west corridors in the region and state, and links I-93 to NH Route 28 in Alton, and ultimately NH Route 16, the primary north-south highway in the eastern part of New Hampshire. Although NH Route 140 passes through only a small portion of Northfield, it does provide residents access to these other parts of the region and state. More important perhaps, is the access NH 140 provides to Exit 20 in Tilton, which is a major regional commercial center, and currently the primary access for Northfield residents to points north on I-93.

NH Route 140 is also one of the limited areas in Northfield zoned Industrial/Commercial and, with access to “municipal” water supplied privately by the Tilton-Northfield Aquaduct Company. It is important to note, however, that at the present time, there is no available access to public sewer on NH 140 for the town of Northfield. There is currently limited industrial development on NH 140 in Northfield, primarily in the Riverside Business Park located between NH Route 140 and the Winnepesaukee River.

NH Route 132 traverses Northfield from the south (Canterbury) to US Route 3 in Tilton. From the south, NH 132 is largely rural until it reaches Exit 19. After passing under Exit 19 and past Summer Street, NH Route 132 becomes more urban and travels through the traditional village of Northfield. Through this stretch it is referred to as Park Street. The southern stretch of NH 132 serves more local functions, as most north-south travelers would likely use I-93 instead. The portion of NH Route 132 from Exit 19 north to Tilton, however, serves a much different function. Here it facilitates bypass travel for people traveling to and from I-93, the City of Franklin, and points west. At the same time NH Route 132 meets regional travel needs, it also serves local functions for the people of Northfield, and provides access to abutting residential and industrial lands, as well as the interior area of Northfield west of I-93.

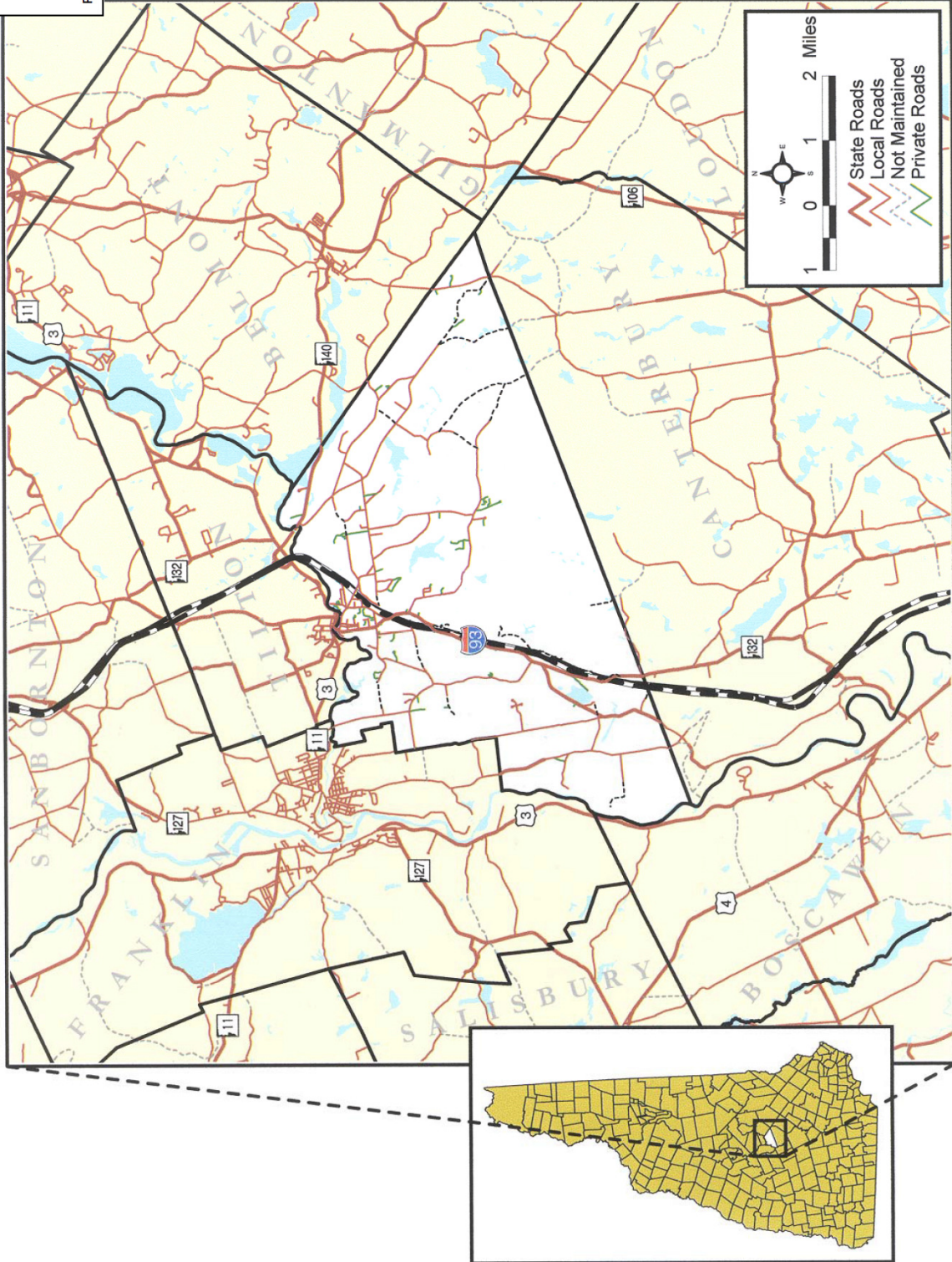
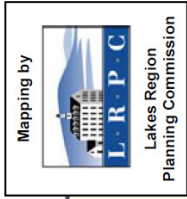
As mentioned earlier, there are several unnumbered state secondary roads in Northfield (Table 4-1). The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) has pursued transitioning these roads towards local control and maintenance. Before the NHDOT is able to turn these over to local control, the roads must first be reconstructed to state road construction standards. This transition is not expected to occur in the near future, but it is important to recognize that these roads are currently winter-maintained by the Town of Northfield through an agreement with the NHDOT, and the town will retain this responsibility in the years to come.

Table 4-1: State Secondary Unnumbered Roads in Northfield, NH2013

<b>Name</b>	<b>Miles</b>
Sandogardy Pond Road	2.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.25</b>

Reconstruction of Bean Hill Road occurred in 2012 prior to its being transitioned to town ownership, leaving Sandogardy Pond Road as the only state secondary unnumbered road in Northfield.

Map 4-1: Regional Highway System for Northfield, NH





**The Local Highway Network.** The local highway network is composed of roadways that are generally referred to as Class V or Class VI Roads. Class V Roads refers to those roads where the town has the duty to provide regular summer maintenance. Class VI roads are those roads that are town roads and have been discontinued and are no longer maintained by the town of Northfield. Northfield, like most communities in the Lakes Region, has a considerably larger component of its highway network that has local functions. Table 4-2 provides a breakdown of all classifications of roadways in Northfield.

**Table 4-2: Classification of Roads in Northfield, NH 2012**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Miles</b>
<b>Class I (Interstate)</b>	<b>6.62</b>
<b>Class II (State Secondary)</b>	<b>7.248</b>
<b>Class V (Town Roads)</b>	<b>42.02</b>
<b>Class VI (Unmaintained Town Roads)</b>	<b>11.89</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>67.78</b>

Although the majority of the town is accessible through either the regional or local network within community boundaries, there are some areas where access is only available by unmaintained roadways or by traveling first through an adjacent community. An example is the far eastern section of Town. Access to that section relies on Knowles Pond Road which connects to Fellows Hill Road by unmaintained Payson Road or via a circuitous route through either Canterbury or Belmont to Fellows Hill Road. In addition, some Town maintained roadways rely on unmaintained roadways for continuity, such as Shedd Road which has a section of unmaintained highway between Bay Street and Shaker Road.

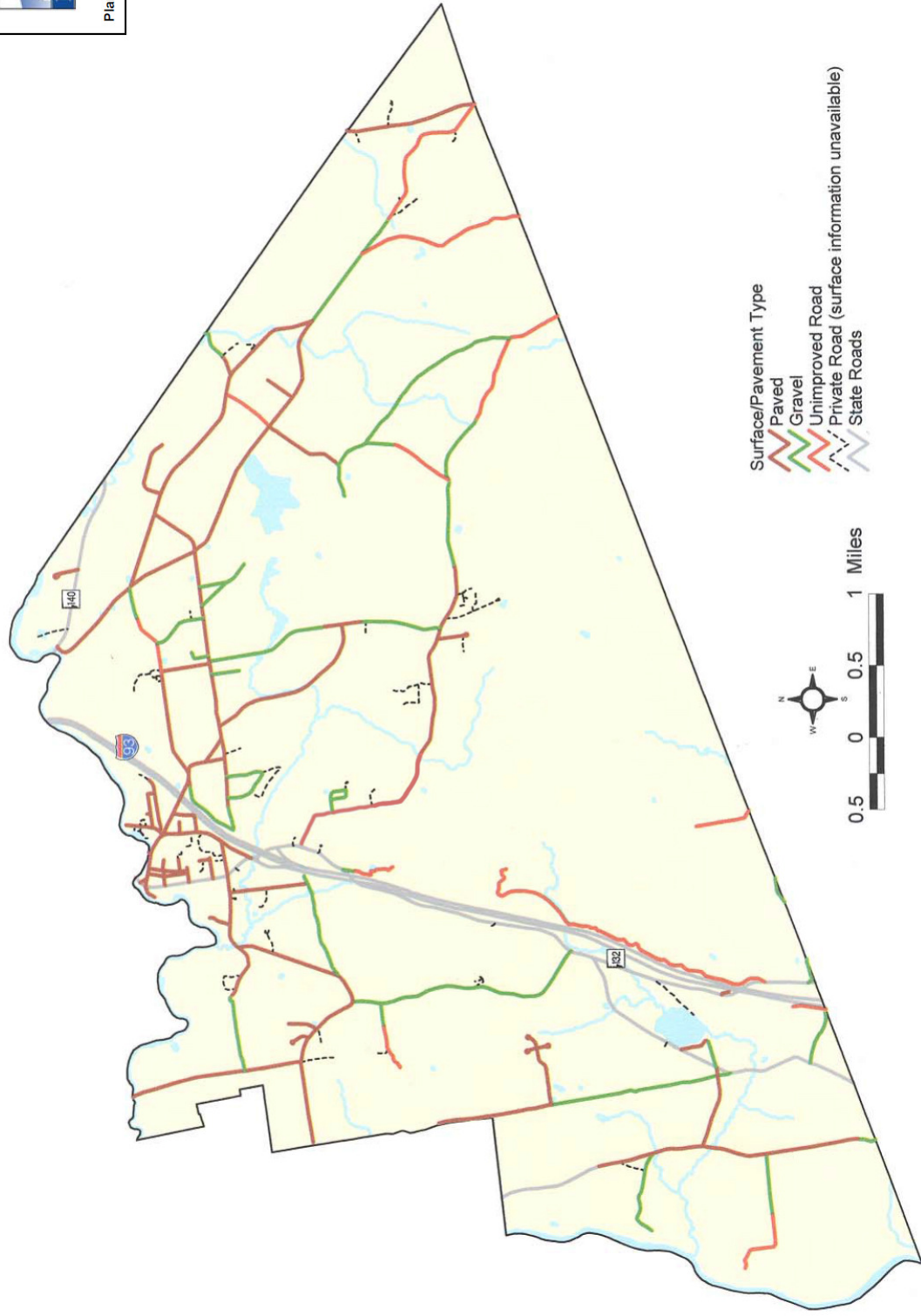
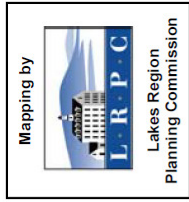
**Of the 42.44 miles of town maintained roads in Northfield, approximately 34 have paved surfaces, and 7 have dirt surfaces. (1.2 paved miles of Bean Hill Road was added in 2013) The road surface type of the town maintained roads is illustrated in Map 4-2 on the following page. Through the community forums held in the autumn of 2002 & 2012 CIP, residents identified mixed views on whether existing dirt roads should be paved or remain as gravel or dirt. There are advantages and disadvantages associated with each surface type, and only a careful review of each roadway, the function that roadway serves, and the amount and nature of the traffic frequenting the roadway should consideration be given to paving dirt and gravel roads.**

**The State of New Hampshire distributes Highway Block Grant Funds to Towns for maintenance and repair of town maintained roads. The amount of funding a town receives through Block Grant Funds is based on a formula using population and highway mileage. As indicated in Figure 4-1, Northfield’s town highways expenditures for maintaining their highways has increased at a rate of over 30% over the last five years. However, the amount of Block Grant Funding received for**

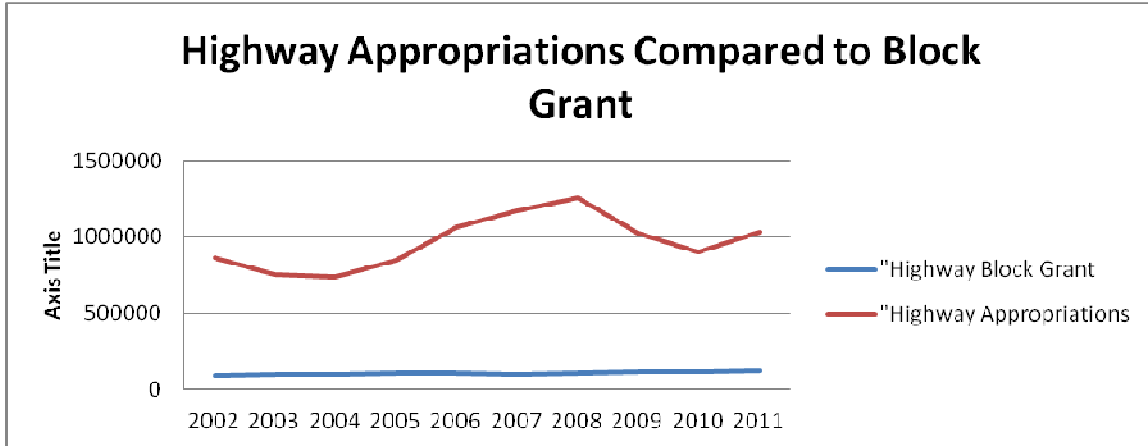
maintenance and repair has only increased at a rate of 10%. In addition, the percent of Northfield's expenditures covered by Block Grant funding has decreased from 15% in 1991 to 14% in 2011.

Pavements generally represent the largest capital investment in any modern road system, and the decisions regarding maintaining paved roads are not always easy. One of the strategies a community can use in order to maximize the use of funds spent on roadway maintenance is to employ a pavement management system. The fundamental reason for using such a system is due to the very nature of the pavement itself. Pavements tend to deteriorate very slowly during the first few years after placement, and deteriorate very quickly when they are aged. The quality of the pavement is often referred to as a Pavement Condition Index (PCI). The deterioration of pavements tend to follow a fairly standard curve, as illustrated in Figure 4-2. If no maintenance is performed on the pavement, the PCI will generally follow this curve. Once a PCI reaches a low level, generally anywhere below a level of 60, complete reconstruction of the road is normally required. This reconstruction is often very costly.

Map 4-2: Road surface type for town maintained roads in Northfield, NH  
2003 **There are no changes in surface type as of 2012.**



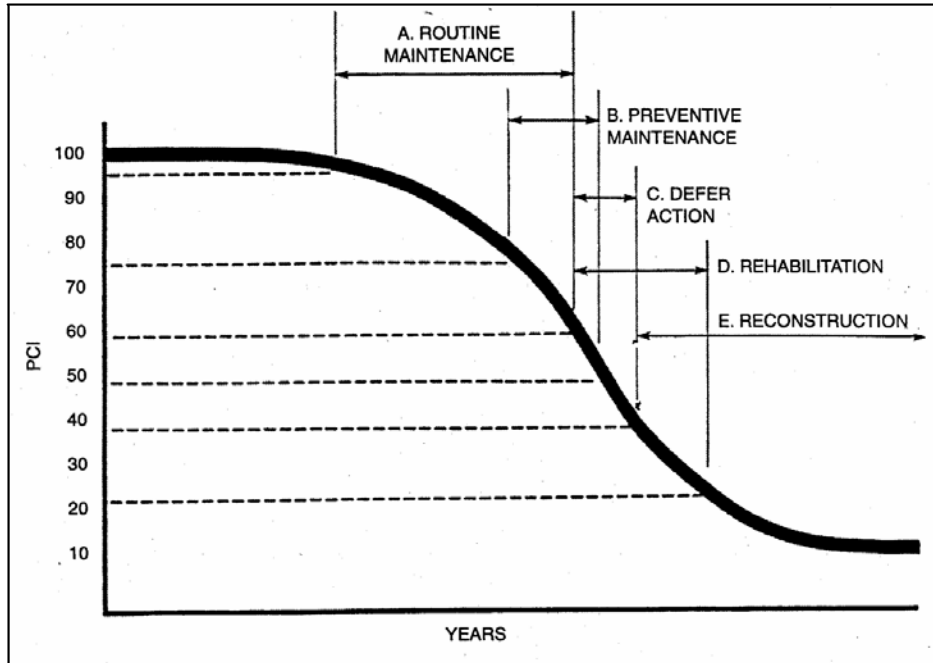
**Figure 4-1; Town Highways expenditures compared to amount of State Highway Block Grant received in Northfield, NH 2002-2011**



However, many studies have shown that it is far more economical to preserve roads than to delay repairs, forcing the need to reconstruct. Studies have also shown that as traffic levels increase, which has been the case on many Northfield roads, the costs associated with delaying repair work also increases. As such, it has been realized that repairing the worst roads first may in fact be the most expensive way for a community to operate a highway system. As such, developing an inventory of pavement conditions in a community, and integrating that information into a pavement management system, can maximize the benefits from highway expenditures and be considerably more economical in the long term.

All town maintained highways were inventoried in the summer of 2002 using the Road Surface Management System (RSMS). Data, collected through visual observations of highway conditions, were entered into the RSMS for analysis. The analysis gives each highway a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) between twenty (20) and one hundred (100). A PCI of twenty (20) indicates that the highway needs to be rebuilt and a PCI of one hundred (100) indicates that the highway is in good shape. Figure 4-2 provides an indication as to the type of work that should be done to a highway based on the PCI.

**Figure 4-2: Typical Pavement Condition Index (PCI) Maintenance and Repair Curve**



Of the total mileage of Town maintained highways in Northfield, eighteen percent (18%) of the highways had a PCI of 55 or less, indicating that a decision could be made to defer any further action on the highway until it is rebuilt or reconstructed. The cost of rebuilding or reconstructing a highway should be funded with other than normal maintenance funding. However, fifty-nine percent (59%) of all highways had a PCI of seventy-five (75) or greater, indicating those highways should continue to have routine or preventive maintenance performed on them to extend their service life until their PCI became 55 or less.

The average PCI for all of the Town's maintained highways was eighty-one (81) indicating that Northfield's highways are in fairly good condition and that the bulk of the Town's budget for highways (pavement sealing, shimming, recycling and new pavement) is the reason for Northfield's high quality of highways. The high PCI rating for Northfield's highways is confirmed by the Community Forums and survey conducted in 2002. The survey indicated that only twenty-five percent (25%) of the respondents identified highway conditions as a serious problem. Eighty-six percent (86%) of the respondents Strongly Agreed or Agreed that new development should bear the cost of impacts to the highways. In addition, approximately forty-five percent (45%) rated winter

and summer highway maintenance as Excellent or Very Good.

There are also a significant number of roads in Northfield that are gravel and dirt. The town maintains these roads as part of its regular maintenance budget. It is likely that many of these roads do not have the traffic volumes or functional characteristics that warrant paving in the future, and the community should continue to maintain these roads using acceptable unpaved road maintenance strategies. One of the critical maintenance strategies includes ditching and drainage improvements, especially where unpaved roads are concerned.

**In 2012 the CIP Committee, Highway Department and Police Department ranked each road in Northfield on a scale of 1 (Minimal) to 5 (critical) based upon the amount of traffic, safety conditions, road surface conditions and operating costs. Using this method, Bay Hill Road, Fiske Road, Sargent Street and Zion Hill Road received the highest scores, indicating these are the roads most critical to repair. The high traffic volume of these roads makes them important to concentrate on. In 2013 voters passed a warrant article to rebuild Fiske Road and this project was completed during the summer of 2013. Other roads with high rankings were Bay Street, Bean Hill Road, Cross Mill Road, Fellows Hill Road, Hodgdon Road and Summer Street. All of these roads, with the exception of Bean Hill are through roads used by residents and non residents to travel through Northfield to reach other towns and/or to avoid traffic on Rte 3/11.**

***Traffic Volumes and Flow.*** Many residents of Northfield have felt that traffic levels on many of the roads throughout town have been steadily increasing. There are several reasons why this may be occurring. One of the more obvious reasons for increased traffic in Northfield is the growth in the population of the town itself. As development occurs, it is logical that local traffic will increase. Studies have concluded that generally, every new single-family home generates approximately 10 new vehicle trips per day.

A second reason is the continued population growth of the region and the communities directly surrounding Northfield. One of the concerns raised repeatedly through the community forums and through the community survey was the increase in people using roads in Northfield as alternate routes to and from areas outside of Northfield. For example, increased congestion on US Route 3 from Franklin to Tilton and Exit 20 may be pushing commuters and other travelers to seek other routes to I-93. One of the points of access for many of these commuters may be Exit 19, resulting in travel through Northfield.

Table 4-3: Traffic Counts for Northfield and Immediate Area, 2009 - 2012

Map ID	Counter #	Annual Average Daily Traffic	Year of Traffic Count	Location
A	82039055	830	1999	SHAKER RD AT NORTHFIELD TL
		830	2011	
B	62039054	6,400	2001	NH 140 AT NORTHFIELD TL
		8,100	2010	
C	82451084	7,400	2001	NH 140 OVER WINNIPESAUKEE RIVER
		9,300	2010	
D	2451001	26,745	2001	I-93 SOUTH OF US 3 & NH 11
		33,000	2011	
E	82451083	7,400	1999	ELM STREET OVER WINNIPESAUKEE RIVER
		5,000	2009	
F	82163082	900	2001	CROSS MILL RD OVER WINNIPESAUKEE RIVER
		1,400	2009	
G	82343064	260	1999	OAK HILL RD OVER CROSS BROOK
		260	2010	
H	82343044	250	2000	SANDOGARDY POND RD AT CROSS BROOK
		270	2012	
I	82343062	220	1997	SHAW HILL RD AT FRANKLIN TL
		---	---	
J	62343002	31,000	2001	I-93 AT CANTERBURY TL
		33,000	2011	
K	82343065	790	1999	NH 132 OVER I-93
		820	2010	
L	82343043	570	1999	BEAN HILL RD 1.3 MILES WEST OF JCT WITH NH 132
		650	2010	
M	82343068	160	1999	KNOWLES POND RD OVER WHICHIER BROOK
		130	2012	
N	82343069	150	2000	SHAKER RD OVER WHICHIER BROOK
		130	2009	
O	82343042	2,700	2001	NH 132 NORTH OF BEAN HILL
		2,600	2010	
P	82343045	4,700	1999	NH 132 NORTH OF I-93 AND NORTH OF SUMMER ST
		4,600	2010	
Q	82343063	2,600	1997	SARGENT ST AT B&M RR CROSSING (WEST OF NH 132)
		---	---	
R	82343067	820	2000	OLD FORREST RD OVER WILLIAM BROOK
		860	2012	
S	82343066	2,100	1999	ZION HILL RD OVER WILLIAMS BROOK
		2,200	2009	

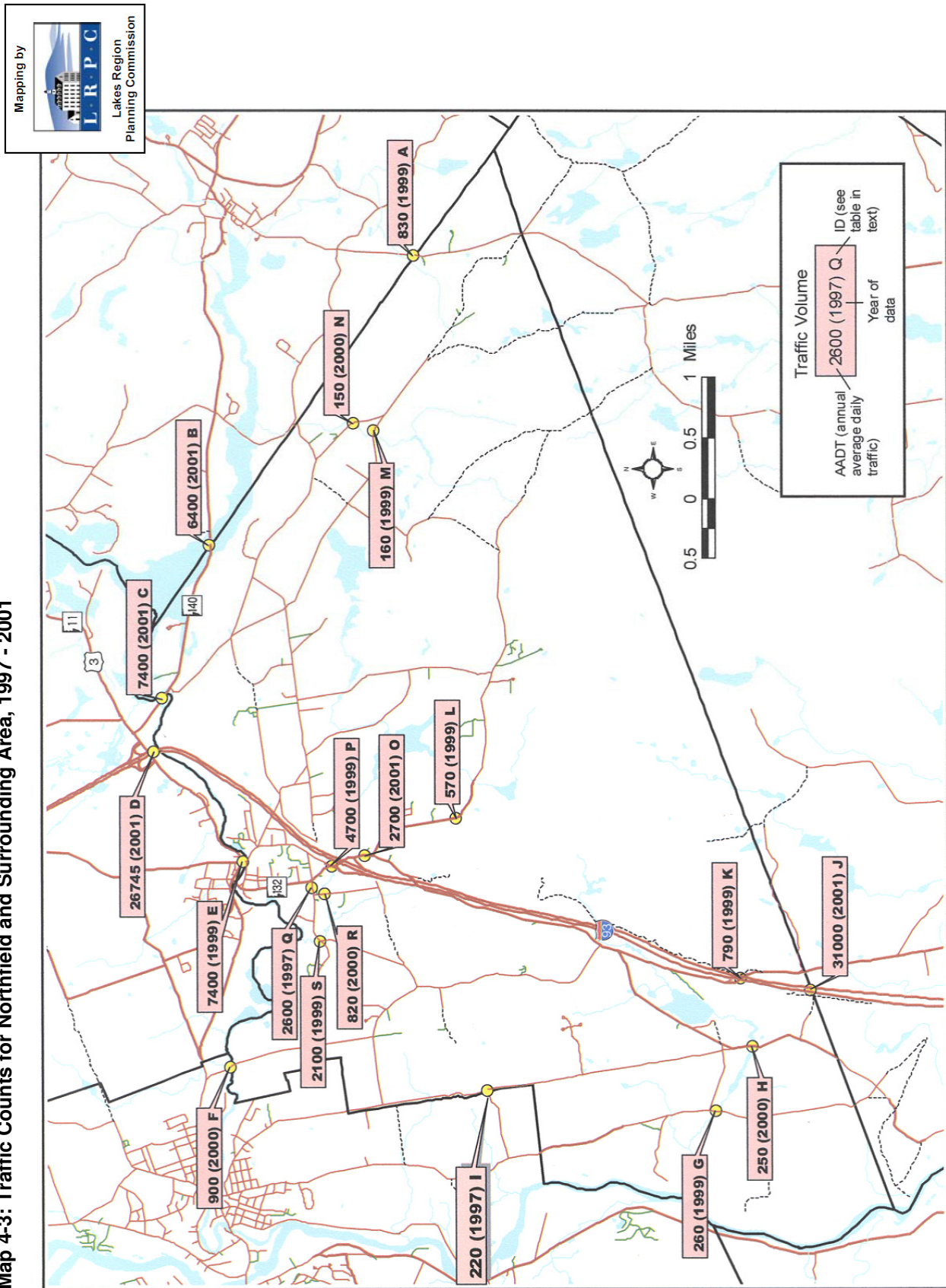
Table 4-3 provides a summary of traffic volumes collected by the NHDOT throughout the town of Northfield and the immediate surrounding area. Unfortunately, the traffic count data is not collected every year for every location, so there are some difficulties comparing all of the counts to one another. The traffic counts in Table 4-2 are graphically displayed in Figure 4-3, which relates to the Table using an alphabetical identification code.

Map 4-3: Traffic counts for Northfield and surrounding area 1997-2001

The traffic volumes in Table 4-3 are measured in Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT), which represents the total amount of traffic on an average day throughout the year. These volumes will fluctuate throughout the year based on several factors, including the season and the occurrence of special events. The following section will describe some of the general characteristics of the traffic volumes and patterns as illustrated in Map 4-3. The discussion will refer to the traffic counts identified on the Alpha identification code provided both in Table 4-3 and Map 4-3.



Map 4-3: Traffic Counts for Northfield and Surrounding Area, 1997 - 2001



**Interstate 93 (D and J).** I-93 is the major north-south corridor through the State of New Hampshire providing travelers from the eastern United States to Northern New England and the Province of Quebec, Canada. For Northfield and the Lakes Region, it provides residents with convenient access to points south including Concord and Manchester, NH, as well as Boston, Massachusetts. I-93 also provides access to the Lakes Region for many travelers seeking recreation and tourism opportunities.

Traffic counts on I-93 in 2001 estimated total volumes (northbound and southbound) at approximately 31,000 **(33,000 in 2011)** Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) at the Canterbury townline, south of Exit 19 in Northfield (location J). North of Exit 19, traffic volumes were recorded at 26,745 AADT **(27,152 in 2012)** south of Exit 20 at the Tilton townline (location D). Consequently, approximately 6,000 vehicles on an average day of the year exit or enter I-93 at Exit 19 in Northfield. Not all 6,000 vehicles, however, have an origin or destination in Northfield, but instead come and go from points elsewhere, such as the City of Franklin **and through Tilton to the Lakes Region.**

**NH Route 132 (K, O, and P).** There are three NHDOT traffic counting locations on NH Route 132 in Northfield. The southernmost location (K), exhibited a relatively low AADT of 790 in 1999 **and 820 in 2010.** Primarily, vehicles using NH Route 132 close to the Canterbury townline are more local in nature, presumably generating from the southwest portion of Northfield or the northwest portion of Canterbury.

The other two traffic count locations are both south and north of Exit 19 (labeled O and P respectively). Here traffic volumes measured significantly higher than the southern location; NH Route 132 south of Exit 19 had an AADT of 2,700 (2001), **(2600 in 2010)** and NH 132 north of Exit 19 had an AADT of 4,700 (1999) **(4600 in 2010)** Although some of this traffic is certainly local in nature not accessing I-93, much of it is presumably generated from the Interstate. Of those vehicles exiting from I-93, the majority presumably travel north on NH Route 132, to the more urban areas of Northfield as well as US Route 3 providing access to Tilton, Franklin, and points beyond.

**NH Route 140 (B and C).** Traffic volumes measured on NH Route 140 represent primarily regional traffic, traveling through the Town of Northfield. NH Route 140 at the Tilton townline had an AADT of approximately 1,200 vehicles greater than did NH Route 140 at the Belmont townline (location B). This indicates that on an average day approximately 1,000 vehicles use NH Route 140 for more local purposes, including access to Shaker Road as well as the existing business located in Northfield on NH Route 140.

**Sandogardy Pond Road, Oak Hill Road, and Shaw Road (H, G, and I).** These three locations all indicated very low traffic volumes at the time the last traffic count was measured. The Shaw Road location (I) at the Franklin townline measured 220 AADT in 1997. The Oak Hill Road location (G) measured 260 AADT in 1999. The Sandogardy Pond Road location (H) measured 250 AADT in 2000. Although the majority of the traffic at these locations is likely local, due to recent subdivision and building permit activity in this largely rural residential area of Northfield will presumably have increased over the past several years. **The most recent traffic counts, however, do not indicate a substantial increase in the amount of traffic at these locations.**

**Fellows Hill Road (Shaker Road—Belmont) (A).** Fellows Hill Road is technically a Northfield road, however it does not have any connections to any other Northfield roads. The primary flow of traffic (830 AADT in 1999) is presumably accounted for by travelers between the town of Belmont and points south, such as Canterbury and Concord.

**Knowles Pond Road and Shaker Road (Northfield) (M and N).** The traffic count locations of both Knowles Pond Road and Shaker Road in Northfield are located in a very rural part of Northfield. Traveling south from either location, Knowles Pond Road and Shaker Road merge as one, and subsequently turn into a Class VI road which is not maintained. Understandably, both locations have very low traffic counts, with Knowles Pond Road (location M) having an AADT of 160 in 1999, and Shaker Road having an AADT of 150 in 2000. **Traffic counts on Shaker Road and Knowles Pond Road remained approximately the same in 2012.**

**Elm Street (E).** The Elm Street location is located on the bridge over the Winnepesaukee River as you cross between Downtown Tilton and Northfield (location E). This location exhibited a relatively high AADT of 7,400 in 2001. The traffic flowing over the bridge at this location likely serves two purposes. First, Northfield residents use Elm Street to provide access to Downtown Tilton, US Route 3, and ultimately Exit 20 and points north and east. Elm Street also provides access between Exit 19 and US Route 3, which leads to Franklin and points west. **The traffic count on Elm Street in 2009 shows a substantial decrease of traffic.**

**Cross Mill Road (F).** Cross Mill Road is located in the northwest portion of Northfield, and provides access from Northfield across the Winnepesaukee River to US Route 3, in close proximity to Downtown Franklin. Consequently, it also provides an alternate route for travelers along US Route 3 seeking access to businesses on Forrest Road and Park Street in Northfield, as well as Exit 19 and I-93. In year 2000, Cross Mill Road over the Winnepesaukee River (location F) had an AADT of 900. **This count increased to 1400 in 2009.**

**Sargent Street and Zion Hill Road (Q, R, and S).** The Zion Hill Road (location S) traffic count location had an AADT of 2,100 in 1999 **and 2200 in 2009.** Although much of this traffic is more local in nature, accessing homes in the area as well as Southwick School, some of this volume may also be attribute to travelers from the Franklin area traveling east to destinations such as the industrial park on Forrest Road in Northfield and Exit 19 and points south.

The Sargent Street traffic count (location Q) is located in between Forrest Road and Park Street, to the east of the Northfield Recycling Center. The AADT at this location was 2,600 in 1997, higher than that found at the Zion Hill Road location. This could be attributable again to traffic heading to and from Forrest Road and the City of Franklin, but may also represent local traffic with destinations on Sargent Street itself, such as the Recycling Center.

The Forrest Road traffic count (location R) had an AADT of 820 in 2000 **and a decrease to 600 in 2009.**

The character of development on Forrest Road is a mix between industry and residential, and the measured traffic volumes can be accounted for by the traffic generated by the businesses (employee commutes, deliveries, etc.) as well as that generated by the homes located along here.

**Bean Hill Road (L).** Bean Hill Road connects the more developed areas of Northfield, around Park Street and Exit 19, with the rural residential area in the central part of town including the area around the Highland Ski Area. In 1999 the Bean Hill Road traffic count (location L) had an AADT of 570, presumably for the most part attributable to local traffic. **The 2010 traffic count shows an increase to 650 on this road.**

**Exit 19.** The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) update their Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan every two years. This Plan contains projects that have been identified as priorities throughout the state and are planned for construction at some point in the future. There are two projects in the Current Ten Year Plan (2003-2012) that involve the town of Northfield:

- 1) Northfield - Complete Exit 19 at I-93.
- 2) Franklin to Northfield - New Connector Road from NH 3A in Franklin to Exit 19 in Northfield.

The two projects identified above are identified as separate projects, but are however, clearly related. The first project, completion of Exit 19 providing access to I-93 to and from the north, is currently planned for construction in 2010, with Preliminary Engineering to start in 2003. Through the community forums held in autumn 2002, it became clear that there were varying opinions in town regarding whether Exit 19 should be completed or not. People who felt it should be completed indicated the positive effects it would have on relieving congestion at Exit 20, as well as opening up the possibility for limited, quality development around Exit 19 in Northfield. Those opposed to completing Exit 19 felt it would only increase traffic in the area and attract the type of business associated with Exit 20.

Due to the differing opinions voiced at the community forums, a question was included on the community survey aimed specifically at asking this question of the people of Northfield. The question simply asked whether the people felt it should be completed or not, and why. The results of the survey reflected the opinion heard through the community forums, and the responses to survey indicated that 50% of the respondents were in favor of completing Exit 19, and 50% were against it. However, as in the community forums, many responses contained qualifications that indicated that the completion of Exit 19 would be acceptable if the land use regulations were in place to adequately control the type and quality of growth around Exit 19.

The second project, involving the construction of a connector road between the west side of Franklin and Exit 19, has Preliminary Engineering planned to begin in 2007, with construction of the Connector Road itself occurring sometime past 2012. The purpose of the Connector Road is to provide people from the City of Franklin, and points north and west, easy access to Exit 19 and I-93, and as such, relieve traffic congestion on US Route 3.

**Both of the above projects have been removed from the NH DOT 10 year plan and neither has been completed. The 2012 Community Survey still showed the responses split fairly evenly on the question of the completion of Exit 19 with very similar responses and comments to those in the 2003 survey. It appears that the state no longer considers this a priority.**

**Traffic Speeds and Safety.** A common issue raised through the community forums and the community survey involved not only increased traffic volumes throughout town, but also increased speed of traffic. One of the consequences of paving gravel roads is the added potential speed of motorists, not only because of the improved surface condition but also because often gravel roads are “straightened out” in the process. The community has identified the need to address these speed problems, especially on the more rural, local roads, and in areas of town with high pedestrian and bicycle activity.

Although increased enforcement is often looked at as the answer to speed problems, this may not always be the best solution. Increased enforcement not only is very costly from a financial point of view, but it is also often inefficient. This is especially the case on rural, low-volume roadways where having police officers posted for speed enforcement may not be the wisest use of the resource. More often today, communities are looking towards innovative roadway design techniques to slow traffic down. This is often referred to as traffic calming. There are many resources available for traffic calming, and the town may wish to explore these methods in greater detail as means of effectively and efficiently creating a safe travel environment for both vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel.** The ability for people to travel by bicycling and walking is integral to the transportation system. Bicycle and pedestrian travel not only is a mode of transportation, but also offers significant recreation and health benefits. Through the community forums and the community survey, improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities and opportunities in Northfield was identified as a priority.

Simply providing the facilities, such as shoulders, sidewalks, and crosswalks, is often not enough. When constructing new facilities, careful consideration should be given to design issues to provide facilities that provide maximum safety and enjoyment for the user, including adequate separation from the roadway. Furthermore, consideration needs to be given to ensuring adequate warning devices in high bicycle and pedestrian traffic areas. This can be accomplished through the use of warning signs and lights (where appropriate), as well as providing a system where sidewalks and shoulders are interconnected.

Currently, Northfield has approximately 3 miles of sidewalks. Between 1997 and 2001 the Town’s yearly budget for sidewalk construction was \$3,000. However, until 1999 the Town spent very little on sidewalk construction. Starting in 1999 (expenditure of \$1,828), the Town began spending money on sidewalk construction (2000 - \$3,500, 2001 - \$3,500). The slow start to spending funds on sidewalk construction could be the contributing factor to the respondents in the 2002 survey rating sidewalks as the lowest in community services. In the proposed 2002 budget sidewalk construction was budgeted at \$3,500. **In the 2012 Highway budget there is no specific line item for sidewalks and no repair proposed.**

Several areas throughout Northfield have been identified as in dire need of improved bicycle and pedestrian conditions. Two areas identified by residents as having critical needs have been identified as:

- 1) Elm Street and the elimination of the “flush sidewalk”
- 2) The area surrounding Southwick Elementary School

Although the lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and the consequent safety concerns in these two areas have been identified as significant problems, there may be difficulties in implementing physical improvements in both areas. Regarding Elm Street, limited physical space and continued questions regarding available town right-of-way for the construction of sidewalks must first be resolved. The town should pursue the necessary steps to investigate the feasibility of implementing sidewalks in this highly traveled area by both pedestrians and vehicles. **The town has addressed the sidewalk issue on Elm Street between Granite Street and the Cannon Bridge. Residents no longer park their vehicles in the sidewalk area which has been clearly delineated with line painting.**

Regarding the Southwick School area on Zion Hill Road, the current policy held by the School Board is to not permit students to bike or walk to school. The principal reason for this policy is the lack of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the area and a concern for school children safety. It seems likely that the school board would lift the bus-only policy if there were safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the area, and the town should seek out funding in order to provide these facilities and encourage children to walk and bike to school. **A study of the sidewalks and potential for alternative access to Southwick School has been completed by the School District. No action is planned at this time.**

Regardless whether the issues surrounding Elm Street and Southwick School are resolved, the town should explore various mechanisms for funding sidewalk improvements throughout town. Often these improvements can be funded through the Federal Transportation Enhancement Program, administered by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT). The town should work with the Lakes Region Planning Commission (LRPC) to apply for funding for these improvements in the near future.

The town should not, however, rely solely on the expectation of receiving Transportation Enhancement funding. This funding stream is highly competitive, and there are no guarantees. The town should seriously consider other grant opportunities and the establishment of a Sidewalk Capital Reserve Fund as a means of ensuring sidewalk improvements occur in the future.

In terms of bicycle facilities, the town should evaluate where facilities are most need throughout town. Often the simplest solution is to provide paved or gravel shoulders when reconstructing and improving roadways. The town must carefully consider decisions involving the construction of shoulders, especially paved shoulders, as doing so may have the undesired effect of increasing the width of a road’s travel way, and consequently, the speed of vehicular travel.

The community has already begun, and is in the process of, administering the construction of Phase One of the Winnepesaukee River Alternative Transportation Trail, which has received funding from the Federal Transportation Enhancement Program. The first phase of this trail will connect Downtown Franklin to Northfield at the Northfield/Tilton train station. Phase Two, which has been awarded funding through the same program, will connect Northfield to Belmont. The final phase of the project is planned to connect Belmont to Laconia, completing an alternative transportation corridor from Franklin to Laconia. Not only should Northfield support the completion of this trail, but it should also attempt to connect its own sidewalk and bicycle network to this trail system wherever possible. **Phase 1 of the Winnepesaukee Trail was completed in 2005 from Franklin to Park Street in Northfield. Phase 2A from Route 140 in Tilton west to Maher's Welding was completed in 2010. Phase 2 which will extend the trail from Maher's Welding west to town owned land in Tilton is currently being engineered with expectations of being completed in 2015. It is still hoped that the "Missing Link" bridge crossing the Winnepesaukee River will be funded in the future. The Town of Northfield has acted as the project manager for this entire project. The Winnepesaukee River Trail has increased in popularity each year with walkers, runners, bikers, cross country skiers and bird watchers. Completion of the trail into the Town of Tilton will undoubtedly see even more residents enjoying this beautiful trail along the river. The west end of the trail connects with the Northern Rail Trail which has completed approximately 60 miles from Lebanon to Concord. A preliminary study of the continuation of the trail from Rte 140 to Silver Lake Road has begun at this time.**

***Railroads.*** The Concord to Lincoln rail line runs through Northfield from Canterbury to Tilton along the west side of I-93. The rail line is owned by the State of New Hampshire and there are daily tourist services (seasonal) on this line operated by the Winnepesaukee Scenic Railroad. There are also infrequent freight services using this line on a monthly basis, however no Northfield businesses use the line. There has been a considerable amount of discussion lately regarding the potential of opening up the Northern Rail Line from Boston, Massachusetts to Montreal, Quebec. The Northern Rail Line runs through Franklin, and contains a spur which connects to the Concord to Lincoln rail line in Northfield at the train station on Park Street. **This spur no longer exists, however the river trail uses the rail bed.**

***Transit Service and Park and Ride Lots.*** Concord Trailways travels through Northfield on I-93 between Concord and Laconia with a stop in Tilton at Exit 20 on I-93. Concord Trailways stops at the Evans ExpressMart on US Route 3 in Tilton, however this location does not provide parking for bus users, and therefore is not always attractive to travelers. The City of Concord recently constructed a Concord Trailways terminal on I-93 at I-393, which has free long term parking which may be more attractive to potential bus users in Northfield.

The Greater Laconia Transit Agency (GLTA) runs a fixed daily route from Laconia, down US Route 3 to Tilton and on to Franklin. GLTA also includes as part of this fixed route other alternate side routes including along NH 140 from Exit 20 to Belmont Village. New Americans with Disabilities Act requirements obligate GLTA to also provide on-demand transportation for any qualified individual within a three-quarter (3/4) mile buffer of these

fixed routes, which includes a fair portion of the town of Northfield, including the Village area.

There are other transit services available, normally referred to as human response or demand response providers. These services are normally based on user demand, and typically provide transportation for the elderly and disabled who need regular transportation to needed services such as health care.

Currently there is no specific area in Northfield designated for park and ride options, despite the fact that a significant amount of Northfield and adjacent community residents commute to Concord and points south. The closest Park and Ride facility is located approximately one mile east of Exit 20, and has been identified as inconvenient for the majority of commuters who are located west of I-93. The Tilton Park and Ride lot also offers no shelter opportunities, and has no connection to the existing Concord Trailways stop located close to Exit 20 itself. The town of Northfield has identified the creation of a Park and Ride lot as a priority in order to provide this transportation option to travelers in the area.

**Airports.** The Laconia (located in Gilford) and Concord airports are the only airports in the immediate area. They offer charter and private airplane service. The closest scheduled airline passenger service is at the Manchester International Airport, which is easily accessible via I-93 in approximately 40 minutes. The Manchester Airport is also accessible by both GLTA, which provide on-demand transportation, and Concord Trailways, which runs regularly scheduled routes to the airport from its terminal in Concord.

### **GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the information provided above, as well as the valuable input provided by the public throughout this master planning process, the Town has adopted the following goal for transportation:

**Promote a safe, integrated transportation system that effectively moves goods and people while balancing the needs of transportation users with the values of the community.**

To fulfill this goal, several objectives and recommendations have been developed to guide future planning policies and initiatives:

#### **Objective A. Provide a safe and efficient highway network for vehicular travel.**

1. Encourage the Highway Department to adopt and maintain a Pavement Management System, such as the Road Surface Management System (RSMS), in order to plan and budget for roadway improvements for inclusion in the Capital Improvements Program. **This has been done using the ranking system as discussed earlier in this chapter.**
2. Complete a comprehensive functional inventory of all gravel roads in order to determine whether current traffic levels and the use of these roads warrants paving these roads in the future.



3. Work with the Police and Highway Department to conduct a speed survey of local roads and identify implementation techniques in order to slow traffic down where warranted.
4. Work with the Highway Department to develop road design standards for new and existing roads that will provide flexibility in design and opportunities for traffic calming on local roads.
5. Identify needs and submit transportation improvement projects on State highways to the Lakes Region Planning Commission for inclusion in the Lakes Region Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
6. Work with the NHDOT and communities of Franklin and Tilton to find solutions to relieve congestion on US Route 3 and reduce regional traffic volumes on local Northfield roads.
7. Develop an access management strategy to help maximize and preserve the capacity of the existing highway network. Elements of the strategy should be incorporated into the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and site plan review regulations. Consider a Memorandum of Agreement whereby the Planning Board and the NHDOT agree to cooperate in the implementation of the access management plan through the project review and driveway permitting processes.

**Objective B. Provide a safe and comfortable network for pedestrian and bicycle travel.**

1. Develop a bicycle and pedestrian plan to supplement this Master Plan. The plan should: (1) inventory all existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities, (2) inventory activity centers or neighborhoods that ought to be connected, (3) identify specific areas where networks can be expanded or improved, (4) identify needed support facilities (i.e., restrooms, drinking water, bike racks, benches, parking areas, etc.), (5) include an education and awareness component to encourage greater utilization and to reduce the exposure to the risks associated with these forms of travel. The plan should be considered in the scoping of all public and private development projects.
2. Provide a network of multi-purpose facilities to improve travel opportunities to, from, through, and within Northfield. These facilities should all integrate with, where possible, the currently approved and funded Winnepesaukee River Trail.
3. Work with the School Board to secure funding and provide adequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the vicinity of Southwick School. **A “Safe Route to School” study was completed in 2012. A survey of parents of Union Sanborn and Southwick School students showed that parents would not allow their children to bike or walk to school even if the sidewalks were improved or constructed, due to safety issues.**
4. Budget for and conduct a right-of-way survey on Elm street to determine the feasibility and costs of constructing sidewalks from Granite Street to the existing sidewalk at the bridge over the Winnepesaukee River. Based on the results of the study, seek out and secure funding for the implementation of the sidewalk project in this area.
5. Consider paths, lanes, shoulders, trails, and sidewalks as part of all new construction efforts.

6. Incorporate bicycle and pedestrian access into land use regulatory processes.
7. Maintain existing, designated cross walks and related signage. Consider new crosswalks and improved advanced warning signage where necessary.
8. Consider pilot projects to demonstrate traffic calming measures to reduce vehicle speeds, improve safety, and improve the quality of travel for pedestrians and cyclists.

**Objective C. Encourage the availability and use of alternatives to vehicular (automobile) travel.**

1. Promote efforts to expand public transit service, such as that provided by the Greater Laconia Transit Agency (GLTA), in the Northfield area.
2. Encourage initiatives in and around Northfield that would provide public transit connections to Concord and points south.
3. Explore opportunities for the development of a Park and Ride lot in close proximity of Exit 19.
4. Ensure that access to the Northfield Train Station and rail lines are maintained so that future rail opportunities are not diminished.

**Objective D. Encourage initiatives that will coordinate land use development and the maintenance of efficiency and safety in the transportation system.**

1. Continue to permit and encourage the use of shared driveways as a means of reducing driveways along town and state roads.
2. Explore the creation of a new Village Zone in the Park Street, Sargent Street, and Summer Street area, which encourages mixed uses and bicycle and pedestrian friendliness. **At a public hearing held in 2012 relative to accepting a grant to study the zoning in the “down town” area of town, voters strongly objected to any changes being made. The grant money for the study was returned.**
3. Require land use change and development to provide needed roadway improvements and pedestrian facilities through conditions of approval and the collection of impact fees.
4. Ensure that residential growth in Northfield does not outpace the ability for the town to adequately maintain the transportation system.

**Objective E. Improve the communication of, and participation in, transportation issues affecting Northfield.**

1. Continue participation on the Lakes Region Planning Commission Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Planning Board representation on the Commission.
2. Initiate communications to keep the general public, Boards, and Commissions informed on the status of proposed or pending transportation projects (local and state) through both print and electronic media.
3. Maintain an effective working relationship with NHDOT District 3 regarding highway maintenance, driveway permitting, and district-level projects.
4. Encourage public participation in the Lakes Region Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Northfield Capital Improvement Program (CIP) processes.
5. Build working relationships with neighboring communities and encourage the involvement of other communities in regional transportation planning.
6. Ensure improvements to the state highway network, such as Exit 19, occur through a highly participatory, interdisciplinary approach involving all stakeholders in Northfield.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights the municipal facilities and services that are located within the community. The exploration of the capacity of existing facilities is key to understanding the provision of future services. Changes in population, the age of residents, and the mix of commercial versus residential development all have an impact on the demand for and types of community services that are provided. As the community grows, the demand for services is ever increasing.

Much of the Information for this chapter was provided by department heads and administrators through survey questions and personal interviews. The description of each of the community facilities also reflects the future space needs as stated by the department heads. Results of the Northfield Master Plan Community Survey specific to community facilities and services are also included in the chapter.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

***The Pines Community Center.*** The Pines Community Center, located at the junction of Summer and Park Streets in Northfield, is a 5 acre site with an enclosed baseball field, dugouts, concession stand, and a shady stand of pine trees. In operation since January of 1993, the Pines Center provides recreational programs for residents of the towns of Northfield and Tilton, as well as non-residents that are willing to pay a fee for services. The Pines Center has provided more than 1,700 family memberships in their ten years in operation. On average, daytime programming is attended by 90-100 children each day during the school year. Program income covers nearly fifty percent of the total operating budget with the remainder of the funding provided in equal shares by Northfield and Tilton.

**Although no immediate plans exist to expand the facility, the original building was designed to accommodate a gymnasium and pool in the future. The operation is currently staffed by two full-time and four part-time staff. In the summer an additional 13 part-time staff are added to accommodate additional programming. Local organizations that use the Pines Community Center for events, meetings, and activities include: Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Little League, Babe Ruth, local softball leagues, Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS), Head Start, Community Action and the Winnisquam School District. Ongoing program needs are addressed through a community survey, the most recent of which was conducted in March 2003.**

***The Northfield Recycling Center/Holding Area.*** The Recycling Center is also operated by the Highway Department, located off Sargent Street, on Johnson Road the

Center is open four days each week to residents. The Center is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00 am to 3:15 pm for recycling only and Wednesdays and Saturdays from 8:00 am to 4:45 pm for the disposal of solid waste and recycling. The Town, through an annual agreement with the Penacook Incinerator, pays a fee for solid waste disposal that is based on a Guaranteed Minimum Quantity (GMQ). The Town pays an additional fee for tonnage disposed in excess of the GMQ. Marketable items that are recycled such as metal, aluminum, cardboard, plastics, etc., offset the costs of disposal.

In 2012 the Town held two three-day Amnesty periods, one during the last week of April and the other during the second week of September. During these periods the Center brought in 30.42 tons of solid waste.

The following chart is a breakdown of the total tonnage per year that is brought to the Penacook Incinerator and the price per ton.

Year	Tons	Price/Ton
2009	2,832.50	\$ 45.90
2010	2,765.10	\$ 62.10
2011	2,694.37	\$ 66.80
2012	2,611.80	\$ 66.80

**The Northfield Highway Department.** Located in the town garage on Park Street, the Highway Department is comprised of seven full-time, one year round part-time, and two summer seasonal part-time personnel. The Department has the primary responsibility of maintaining the 43 miles of town roads in Northfield. Additional responsibilities include sidewalk maintenance, upkeep of town cemeteries, and the maintenance of all town parks and recreational areas. In 2012, the Department purchased and constructed the new salt shed.

Future goals of the department include the reconstruction and paving of additional town roads to increase the life expectancy and reduce annual costs of maintenance. Decisions to pave gravel roads should take into consideration input from residents who live along and in close proximity to such roads.



**Winnisquam Regional School District.** Northfield public school pupils are served by the Winnisquam Regional School District, comprising the towns of Northfield, Sanbornton, and Tilton. Capital and operating costs are shared among the three town district based on a combined allocation for Tilton-Northfield and for Sanbornton based on equalized valuation and average daily membership. Schools in the district include: Union Sanborn School (K-2), Southwick School (3-5), Sanbornton Central School (K-5), Winnisquam Regional Middle School (6-8), and

the Winnisquam Regional High School (9-12).

A capital improvement plan was developed by the School District to plan and schedule improvements and upgrades to all facilities. These improvements are funded through voter approved fund balance using a capital reserve fund for that purpose. Recent improvements include installation of new standing metal roofs on all three elementary schools which began in June of 2010 and is scheduled for completion in fiscal year 2018, construction of an emergency access road to the upper athletic fields at the high/middle school campus, extension of athletic field irrigation, and many smaller repairs including door replacements and ventilation improvements. There were also extensive repairs to the Middle School building envelope and drainage system in 2012.

The School District completed an energy audit of facilities in January 2009 and implemented recommended improvements including a wood burning bio-mass plant for the high/middle school campus. The improvements are expected to be self-funded through energy savings and the award of a Qualified School Construction Bond using ARRA funded interest.

Based on forecasted future needs all schools in the Winnisquam Regional School District have sufficient capacity for the near future.

Table 5-1: Capacity of Winnisquam Regional School District Schools, 2013

\*NOTE: Functional Capacity includes the 90 percent factor taking into account variables such as assigning fewer students to some classes due to programming, course selection, and/or learning needs. This allowance is for assigning fewer students to undersized classrooms. The overall capacity is the total number of students that the school can have in the building space. For example a school may have an overall capacity of 500. The functional capacity = 90% of 500 or .90x500 =450. The percent of capacity is how much of the building space is utilized by the number of students.

School	Current Enrollment	Overall Capacity	Functional Capacity	% of Capacity
Union Sanborn School	280	340	274	100%
Southwick School	230	375	337	68%
Sanbornton Central School	193	295	265	72%
Winnisquam Regional Middle School	370	550	495	74%
Winnisquam Regional High School	447	625	562	79%

Schools represent the single largest local tax investment. Long term projections

of school populations are difficult to assess accurately. Even the annual enrollment figures typically vary by as much as plus or minus twenty percent. Given these difficulties, the Superintendent of School's student projections indicate over-all declining total enrollment for the schools in the district through 2015. A quality school system is an added incentive for those persons looking to locate in a given area. It is difficult to assess the impact that the quality of the educational system has had and will have in providing an incentive for new residents to locate in Northfield. According to the Superintendent of Schools, recent trends in residential development in the School District and the improvements to the Elementary Schools, Middle School and High School, the capacity should be sufficient to accommodate projected enrollment increases in the near future.

**Northfield Police Department.** Located on Park Street, the Police Department facility was expanded in 1997 to its current size, which incorporates office space and a three bay garage. When planned, the expansion was estimated to carry the Department 10-15 years without additional space needs, however based on a more recent assessment, the minimum (10 year) estimate is more realistic.

The Department has seen a significant increase in the number of calls over the past several years (Table 5-2). The increases have been attributed to not only the residential growth in the community, but also increases in the volume of traffic in the area. Future facility needs include the addition of at least one Juvenile Officer/Investigator to the staff and the addition of holding facilities which could possibly be accommodated in the basement of the station which is currently used for storage.

**Table 5-2: Northfield Police Department, Number of Service Calls and Vehicle Miles Traveled, 1998 - 2002**

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Service Calls	4,197	4,770	5,123	6,165	7,285
Miles Travelled	92,606	91,997	90,553	101,108	115,318

**Table 5.2: Northfield Police Department, Number of Service Calls 2003-2012**

Service	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
calls	5300	5226	5071	5206	5560
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Service calls	5961	5492	5716	6959	6026

The role of the Police Department in the community goes beyond law enforcement. The Department actively participates in programs offered through the Winnisquam Regional School District, such as the Youth Assistance Program, Youth Opportunities Program, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE), and the Drug Free School Committee. Funding for the Police Department is provided

primarily through tax dollars raised through the Town of Northfield, though grant awards and business donations are received regularly. Currently the Department is comprised of nine full-time sworn Police Personnel, a full-time Administrative Assistant and five part-time Police Personnel.

*Hall Memorial Library.* The library was built in 1886, began operation in 1887, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Hall Memorial Library



provides library services to the towns of Tilton and Northfield, with costs shared on a 50-50 basis between the two communities. The annual operating budget for the library consists of 94% town appropriated funds and 6% funds from other sources such as donations, program fees, and interest from trust funds. The library is open 48 hours per week, provides weekly and monthly programs for a variety of ages, has an estimated weekly patronage of nearly 600 people, and circulates over 65,000 items annually. Public computers and wifi are

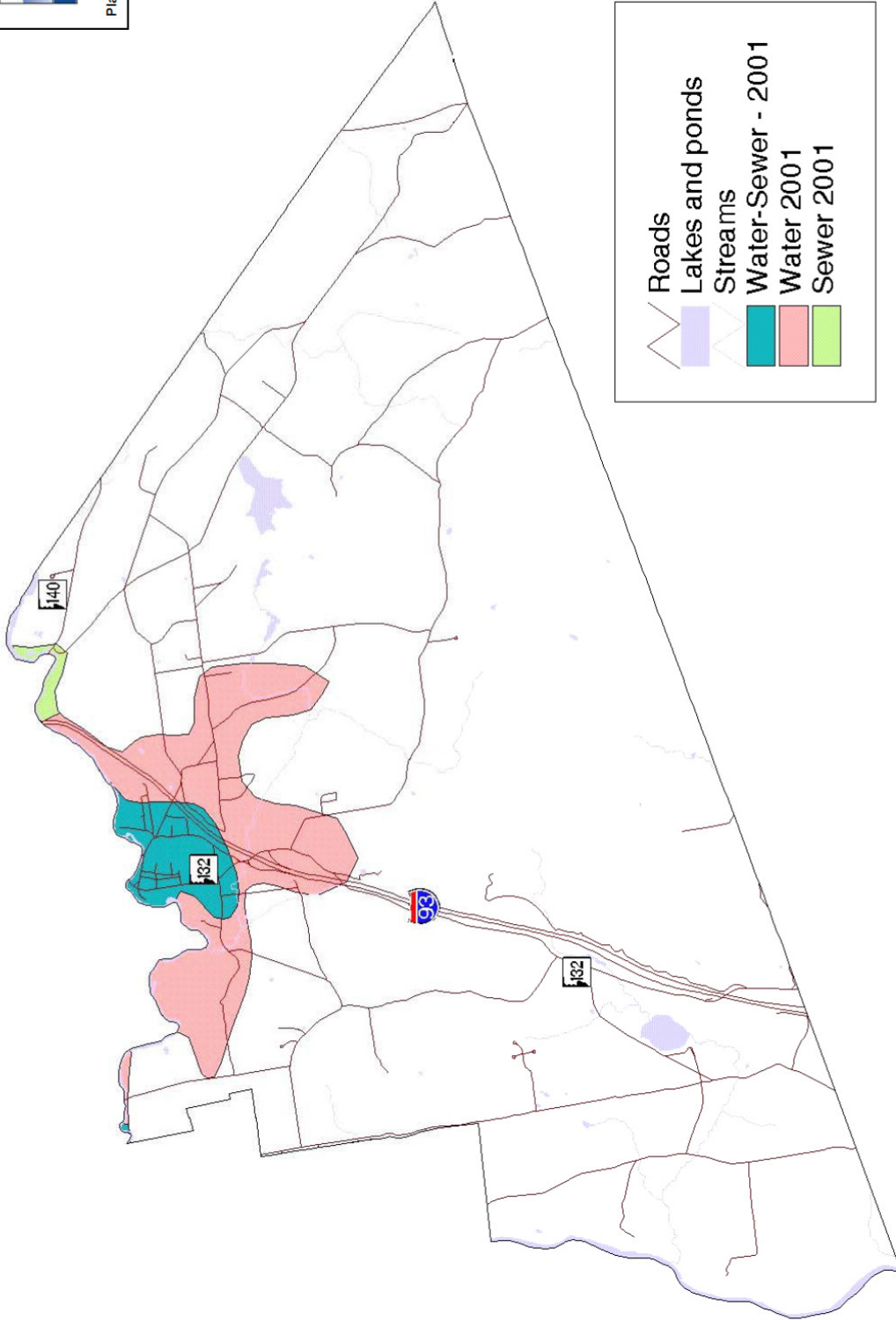
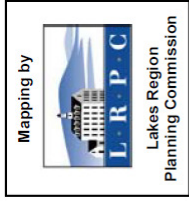
available and in constant demand. Audio Books and e-books are available through the state library for patrons with a library card. Currently the Library is operated with two full-time and seven part-time employees.

Space needs for the library were addressed by the 2001 completion of a 5,000 square foot building addition bringing the library space to a total of 7,200 square feet. The added space provides adequate room within the building to house additions to the library's collection, and it is anticipated the expansion will accommodate future space needs for the next 20 years. When planning the addition, it was decided to eliminate a proposed meeting room in favor of maximizing actual library space. It is anticipated that growth in the programs offered at the library beyond the capacity of the existing downstairs meeting space could be met by using the Union Sanborn School for meeting space.

*Sewer and Water.* The town of Northfield public sewer system is part of the greater state-owned Winnepesaukee River Basin Project (WRBP) with its waste treatment facility located in Franklin. The WRBP connects ten Lakes Region communities through more than 60 miles of interceptor sewers that extend from the Merimack River in Franklin, northeast to Center Harbor. While the WRBP system is designed with sufficient capacity to extend its service area well beyond the ten communities currently being served, there are presently no plans to do so. Sewer extensions within most of the WRBP's member communities are continuing on a schedule based on local needs and desires.

In Northfield the WRBP serves 1,830 residents. Currently there are no plans for a large expansion to the existing sewer infrastructure in Northfield. Revenues in excess of treatment fees are placed in a capital fund and used for repairs to the existing system. Small incremental expansions of the system do occur. For example, in 2000 two Chase Road homes were added to the system, with the costs

Map 5-1: Off-site Sewer and Water for Northfield, NH 2001





of the expansion shared by the property owners and the Northfield Sewer Commission.

Public water in Northfield is provided by the Tilton-Northfield Aqueduct Company. Map 5-1 details where existing public water and sewer and combined water and sewer infrastructure currently exist. Provision of these services plays a role in the suitability for commercial and industrial development to occur. Future land use policies and zoning regulations should reflect the availability of these public services and address funding sources for future expansion if commercial and industrial development are a targeted goal for the community. Soda Brook Cooperative on Twin Bridge and Shaker Roads, with 25 residences connected to the sewer system in 2006.

**Fire and Rescue.** Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS is a Fire District that provides emergency services to the Towns of Tilton and Northfield. It operates out of 2 stations with its headquarters located at 12 Center Street in Tilton and a second station located at 149 Park Street in Northfield. Currently there are 14 Career and 20 Call personnel and are staffed 24/7. The department has seen an increased number of emergency incident responses over the last several years as depicted in Table 5-3 below. In addition to the increased number of emergency calls, non-emergency services rose from a total of 1,443 in 2001 to 6,391 in 2012. Non-emergency services includes but is not limited to items such as inspections, permits, service for dry hydrants, cisterns, public education, equipment maintenance, building maintenance, training and equipment service testing. The department has out grown its headquarters building, which dates back to 1886 and is looking forward to a new building plan in the future. To learn more about Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS please visit [www.tnfd.org](http://www.tnfd.org).

**Table 5-3: Tilton-Northfield Fire Department, Emergency Incident Responses, 1993 - 2012**

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
# of Responses	854	905	954	1,007	1,039	899	962	1,045	1,334	1,432
2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
1,334	1,436	1,621	1,537	1,525	1,569	1,459	1,756	1,523	1,600	

**Northfield Town Hall.** Northfield Town Hall was constructed in 1828 as the Methodist Episcopal Church. It was remodeled in 1861 and has served as a town hall since 1873.

The Northfield Town Hall serves three main functions: meeting space, office space, and

record storage. The 2,300 square foot main hall is comprised of 1,500 square feet of meeting space and 800 square feet of office space. Town Hall is shared by the following town officials and groups:



- Board of Selectmen
- Town Administrator
- Town Clerk/Tax Collector
- Account Clerk/Secretary
- Welfare Director
- Planning Board
- Zoning Board of Adjustment
- Conservation Commission
- Trustee of Trust Funds
- Supervisors of the Checklist
- Treasurer
- Knowles Pond Stewardship Committee
- Code Enforcement Officer/Health Officer
- Budget Committee
- Assessor
- Northfield Economic Development Corporation

An additional 2,000 square feet of space is located in the downstairs hall which is equipped with a kitchen. The downstairs hall is used primarily by the Grange, however, other community groups, town committees, etc. hold meetings at least once a month. Building needs include: repairs to bathroom flooring, and additional storage and office space.

### **RECREATION FACILITIES**

The Town of Northfield boasts several existing and proposed recreation sites in the community. Conservation of land for recreational use continues to be held in high regard for the community. The recreational areas owned and maintained by the town add to the quality of life for residents of the community and are also associated with resource preservation, area tourism, and health and welfare. Recent studies discussed in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) developed by the Office of State Planning indicate that outdoor recreation is on the rise. In particular walking and hiking were listed as a leading form of outdoor recreation. A description of Northfield recreation sites follows.

**Arch Park.** The Tilton Arch, a Roman Arch replica, was built in 1883 for Charles Tilton who lived across the river in Tilton and could view his arch from his piazza. His plan was to be buried there, but wanted his final resting place to be in Tilton. After an unsuccessful bid to legally combine Northfield and Tilton, he chose to be entombed in the Park Cemetery in Tilton instead. Northfield acquired the 18 acre hilltop parcel through a tax deed in the early 1900's.

The Arch Park Committee was formed in 1990 with the objective of making the park more accessible and available to the public. The Arch is listed in the National Register of Historic Buildings, and as such, the committee tried to maintain the historical nature of the site while making provisions for handicap accessibility and parking. The parking lot was located off Summer Street, with access to the arch provided by a paved walkway up the hill. Picnic tables and barbeque grills were placed on the grounds as well as strategically placed benches to rest and enjoy the view. The most visible historical improvement was to replace the 4 lamps around the Arch with replicas of the original gas lamps. Opening the area up with a new driveway and parking lot has allowed more visibility for police coverage and vandalism has decreased radically since the improvements to the park.

While the Committee is not functioning at this point, the plans were to add historical signage to the area, explaining the origin of the Arch. While making improvements to the park, it was discovered that the land on the Elm Street side where the old path is does not belong to the Town. Better access to the park would be provided and the park would be used more if this path could be restored. The Town may wish to pursue purchasing this parcel from the abutting property in the future.

Arch Park is a valuable asset to the community with its beautiful views and wide open area right in the middle of town. In the past this location has served as a radio tower, bob sled runs, and kite flying area. Even with the improvements, the area has not been used to its potential. It is a perfect location for weddings, family picnics and other events and is available free of charge. Continued information is needed to make residents aware of the availability of the park.

**Northfield Skateboard Park.** Through the efforts of volunteers, a small Skateboard Park has been developed at Surette Park.

**The Pines.** The town owns and maintains the "Pines", a 4.6 acre park for use by the community for family gatherings, Old Home Day Weekend, Tilton-Northfield Recreation Council Programs, and Youth League Baseball, horseback riding and annual tractor pulls and horse pull events. Notable features on the site include a baseball diamond, horse rink, the Pines Community Center, picnic tables, and a shady stand of pine trees. Also housed on the site is the Northfield Police Station.

**Sandogardy Pond Town Beach.** The Sandogardy Pond Town Beach is the town's only public swimming facility. It is located on a 65 acre parcel that was donated to the town in 1935 by the Glines family. **With a Federal Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant and town appropriations, the town made an \$130,000 improvement project for the beach in 2003. A new bath house and parking area were created along with a playground area near the beach and a 50' dock was installed.**

**Tilton Island Park.** Located on the Winnepesaukee River separating the towns of Northfield and Tilton, this 3/4 acre park is available for functions and is the site of the Savina Hartwell Memorial Concert Series which is held each Sunday in July and August. **The Island, while physically in the Town of Northfield, belongs to both Tilton and Northfield, deeded by the Tilton family.**

***Knowles Pond Conservation Area.*** The Knowles Pond Conservation Area is 85 acres in size and has been protected from development under a conservation easement since the town of Northfield purchased the property in 1999. During colonial times, the pond was used as a source of power and water for nearby residents. Over the years, the forest that surrounds the pond has been harvested for timber, cleared, and converted to farmland. Although past disturbances have modified the land, Knowles Pond Forest continues today as a suitable habitat for many native plants and animals. The forest is dominated by hemlock, beech, oak, and pine trees, all common to central and southern New Hampshire. The purpose of this conservation area is for the preservation of wildlife habitat, clean water resources, low-impact recreation and the permanent preservation of the rural character surrounding the pond. Future goals include extending trails surrounding the pond and construction of an outdoor classroom area for wildlife and conservation educational opportunities for local schools.

A network of trails allows access by foot, horseback, skis, and snowshoes. Only one trail permits the use of snowmobiles and ATV's. Knowles Pond Conservation Area Trail Guide contains a walking map and highlights the important natural features of the property. Fishing, sailing, canoeing and kayaking are all permitted activities on the 75 acre pond, while gasoline engines are strictly prohibited. **The Northfield Conservation Commission worked diligently to raise private funds and secure grants to purchase a Conservation Easement on the Doubleday property in 2004 which protects a major portion of the north side of the pond and is currently working to procure conservation easements on the remaining private properties surrounding Knowles Pond. This would provide increased protection for this very special and highly valued area in Northfield. In 2012 the Conservation Commission purchased 37.5 acres across Rand Road from the Knowles Pond Conservation Area. Plans call for additional trails to connect to existing trails on the Knowles Pond property. Residents continue to use this area in increasing numbers as they discover the beauty and serenity of the pond and forest.**

***Winnepesaukee River Trail:*** The Winnepesaukee River Trail is an alternative transportation trail designed to connect Franklin, Tilton and Northfield. Phase 1 (Franklin to Surrrette Park) and Phase 2 (Burger King to Maher's Welding in Tilton) have been completed and very well received by the public. The trail which follows the old railroad bed along the Winnepesaukee River provides bicyclists, pedestrians, horseback riders, cross country skiers, etc. an alternative method of transportation parallel to, but safely away from the busy Route 3&11 corridor. Funding for the project has been through the Federal Transportation Enhancement Program with a local match of 20% of the total project costs. Plans for Phase 2A are currently being engineered which will extend the trail from Maher's Welding to the river and a parking lot on town owned land in Tilton. It is hoped that a "missing link" bridge across the river from Northfield into Tilton near the old dam site at the end of Granite Street will be built in the future. In the meantime, the trail will follow the sidewalk into the Town of Tilton and cross the river at the Cannon Bridge. This will link Phase 1 with Phase 2, and provide a total of about 6 miles of trail from Franklin to Route 140. Ultimately it is hoped the trail will connect with a similar trail proposed by the Town of Belmont, providing a complete alternative trail from Franklin to Laconia. The entire effort for the Trail

has been spearheaded by a volunteer committee known as the Winnepesaukee River Trail Association.

*Surette Park:* Surette Park is a 7 acre natural area on the Winnepesaukee River on the west side of Northfield Village. The site is a former mill site which was acquired by the town in the late 1990's and the subject of federal contamination cleanup efforts. In 2012 the town entered into a Restriction and Use Agreement with NHDES to allow for limited improvements to the site. Currently Surette Park serves as the eastern terminus of Phase I of the Winnepesaukee River Trail and is home to the Northfield Skate Park. Other uses include passive recreation and fishing. Surette Field is used for football practice in late summer and fall.

In the 2012 community survey Northfield residents identified picnic facilities, playground, outdoor performance venue, basketball court, sports field and baseball field potential future uses of Surette Park. The town should pursue a comprehensive study of future uses of this park.

*Winnepesaukee River Shaker Road/Route 140 Boat Ramp.* A new ramp and parking area were constructed by the NHDOT District III and the NH Fish & Game Public Boat Access Program in 2011 providing access to the Winnepesaukee River. The improved access has seen an increase of activity by small boats, kayaks, canoes and fishermen.

**SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES CAPACITY**

Table 5-4 summarizes the capacity for each of the community facilities discussed in this chapter. Although recreation facilities are not included in this table, standards do exist that are helpful in assessing the level of services provided based on a community's population. The town may wish to use the standards when planning recreation facility and services needs in the future.

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES SURVEY RESULTS****Table 5-4: Summary of Community Facilities Capacity for Northfield, NH 2003**

	Available Capacity	Near Capacity	Above Capacity
Pines Community Center		x	
Northfield Town Hall			x
Northfield Highway Department			x
Northfield Recycling Center		x	
Union Sanborn School	x		
Southwick School	x		
Sanbornton Central School	x		
Winnisquam Regional Middle School	x		
Winnisquam Regional High School	x		
Northfield Police Department		x	
Hall Memorial Library	x		
Tilton-Northfield Aquaduct Company	x		
Northfield Sewer Department	x		
Tilton-Northfield Fire Department		x	

Source: LRCP, based on information provided by Town Officials

**Table 5-4: Summary of Community Facilities Capacity for Northfield, NH, 2003**

- **Available Capacity** - indicates that future growth could be accommodated in the existing facility.
- **Near Capacity** - indicates that the facility is nearing capacity and that level of use should be monitored with studies for future needs initiated as appropriate.
- **Above Capacity** - indicates facilities in which future growth can no longer be accommodated in the absence of a facility expansion.

The Northfield Master Plan Community Survey contained three questions directly related to the provision of community services. When asked to rank the quality of individual town facilities and services, the possible ratings were on a scale of 1 to 5, (1) poor, (2) fair, (3) good, (4) very good, and (5) excellent. Over-all respondent scores were tallied and averaged. Table 5-5 provides the results of this portion of the community survey. The table indicates that the 485 respondents to this question gave the Library a mean (average) rating of 4.3, meaning that, on average, persons in Northfield rank the quality of services and library facilities to be of very good to excellent quality.

Also related to community facilities and services was the survey question that asked what respondents felt to be the “most serious problems” in Northfield. Given a list of choices, 69% of the respondents listed property taxes to be the most serious problem, followed by 36% who felt that the lack of industrial development is the most serious problem. Lastly, when asked if “any new development should pay additional money for the impact it has on such things as roads, traffic, schools, etc.” the vast majority of respondents (86%) agreed.

Input obtained through the community forums, as well as the open ended questions in the community survey, indicate a growing concern among residents regarding access to community facilities and services for the elderly. As Northfield’s population continues to age, as it has over the past 20 years, the town will have to ensure that opportunities exist for the elderly and disabled to travel to and from community facilities such as the Hall Memorial Library and the Pines Community Center. Working with public transit providers such as the Greater Laconia Transit Agency will become increasingly important for the town in the future to meet these transportation needs.

Table 5-5: Northfield Master Plan Community Survey Responses, 2002

Community Facilities and Services	Number of Responses	Mean Rating	Percent Excellent/ Very Good
Library	485	4.3	83.9%
Rescue/Ambulance	457	3.9	66.1%
Fire protection	502	3.9	65.8%
Police protection	527	3.8	63.0%
Trash removal	548	3.6	56.2%
Schools	445	3.4	48.4%
Winter road maintenance	560	3.3	44.1%
Summer road maintenance	554	3.3	41.5%
Town Government	489	3.2	36.9%
Town Communication	528	3.1	33.9%
Recreation facilities	478	2.9	27.8%
Streetlights	496	2.9	22.8%
Sidewalks	500	2.7	19.2%

Source: Northfield Master Plan Community Forums and Survey Report, December 2002

Table 5-5: Northfield Master Plan Community Survey Responses, 2012

Community Facilities and Services	Number of Responses	Percent Excellent/ Very Good/Good
Library	256	83.8%
Rescue/Ambulance	260	53.8%
Fire protection	254	63.1%
Police protection	253	61.9%
Trash removal	256	79.2%
Schools	255	80.7%
Winter road maintenance	254	67.6%
Summer road maintenance	252	86.9%
Town Government	250	86.5%
Town Communication	251	75.7%
Recreation facilities	254	80.4%
Streetlights	246	63.8%
Sidewalks	256	56.5%
Recycling/Holding area	260	51.9%
Enforcement of zoning	259	46.9%
Economic Development	246	29.9%

Source: Northfield Master Plan Survey 2012



**GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the information provided above, as well as the valuable input provided by the public throughout this master planning process, the Town has adopted the following goal for community facilities and services:

**To provide fair, realistic, and affordable community facilities and services to the growing population of the Town of Northfield.**

To fulfill this goal, objectives and recommendations have been developed to guide future planning policy and initiatives:

**Objective A. Develop a structure for the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) that improves the Planning Board's ability to implement the Master Plan through the CIP process. A Capital Improvements Program has been created and is updated annually.**

1. Annually update the CIP and monitor facility and service needs in the community.
2. Develop a CIP Committee comprised of a mix of individuals including several Planning Board members.
3. Encourage all departments to annually participate in the CIP process.
4. Ensure that the Master Plan serves as the guiding document for the development of the CIP.

**Objective B. Continue to evaluate the adequacy of existing community facilities and services in terms of efficiency and available capacity.**

1. Establish a permanent Northfield Community Space and Service Needs Committee to regularly monitor and assess future community facility and service needs. This committee should report to the CIP Committee on an annual basis.
2. Assess future facility, equipment, and staffing needs for the Police Department.
3. Examine current Town Hall usage, safety, and future expansion needs.
4. Continue exploring options for the expansion and/or relocation of the Town Garage.

**Objective C. Promote local economic development initiatives by ensuring community services are available and expanded to complement business development in the community.**

1. Study the cost feasibility of extending water and sewer service south to allow for the expansion of the commercial/industrial zone south along NH Route 132.
2. Work with the NHDOT and LRPC regarding the potential for completion of Exit 19 at Interstate 93 and the impact it will have on future development and the provision of community services and facilities. **Expansion of Exit 19 has now been removed from the long range plans for the State of NH DOT. Interestingly, the 2012 survey results were very similar to the 2002 survey showing respondents evenly split in favor or opposed to the expansion.**

**Objective D. Establish defined bicycle and pedestrian linkages throughout the community to connect community facilities and services.**

1. Develop a bicycle and pedestrian plan for Northfield that inventories and evaluates future connection needs between community facilities and services for people of all ages.
2. Establish a pedestrian and bicycle ways map for all existing and proposed facilities in the community inclusive of sidewalks, trails, and shared road access.

**Objective E. Enhance recreational facilities and services for people of ages and level of ability.**

1. Promote ongoing evaluation efforts at the Pines Community Center to determine needed programs and services for all residents of Northfield.
2. Promote the construction, operation, and maintenance of a local skateboard park in the village area.
3. Examine needed public transit improvements to provide access to recreational facilities and opportunities in Northfield.

**Objective F. Improve the communication of, and participation in, community facilities and services planning in Northfield.**

1. Continue to publish quarterly the “Northfield News” and dedicate a section of the newsletter to specifically inform the public about issues and plans related to community facilities. **The printed “Northfield News” was discontinued due to the expense. However, an on-line publication is produced weekly from the Town Office with announcements, upcoming events, and other information. This is available on the town website, northfieldnh.org.**
2. Encourage the public and affected parties to participate in the decision-making process regarding planned community facility and service improvements in Northfield.
2. Encourage all departments to actively participate in keeping the newly established Northfield website current and reflective of Northfield planning goals and objectives.

## LAND USE

### INTRODUCTION

There are several factors that influence a community's land use development patterns and characteristics. Many of these factors, such as the elements of a town's transportation system, have been described elsewhere in this Master Plan. As such, this chapter largely represents an integration of other concepts and trends found elsewhere in this plan, such as population growth, housing development trends, increased demand for community services, and the need for bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the village area. By examining land use in relation to other important elements in the community, Northfield will be in a better position to ensure that future development occurs in a way that supports economic development, enables a strengthening of the social fabric of Northfield, and preserves the natural environment which residents enjoy.

The development of this Master Plan has included the development of a future land use plan for Northfield. The future land use plan contains recommendations that are based on an understanding of several elements which form the structure of this chapter. These elements include: 1) existing land use development patterns; 2) existing zoning regulations controlling land use; and 3) the identification of key issues related to land use development in Northfield. Understanding these three elements has led to the development of the future land use concept for the town of Northfield.

### CURRENT LAND USE DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Initial development and growth in Northfield largely occurred as homesteaders sought out prime plots of land for agricultural operations. By 1850, industrialization brought mill development and employment to Northfield. Associated with the opening of riverfront mills was more urban style development in close proximity to the Winnepesaukee River. At approximately the same time, the Boston, Concord, and Montreal Railroad had been completed through the village of Northfield, providing ready access to points south and north for the existing and future residents of the community. Due to both the mill development and the completion of the railroad, residential development increased and the population of Northfield grew dramatically during the late 1800's. There would be no similar development or housing boom until the 1960's when the construction of Interstate 93 was completed. This major transportation improvement provided the impetus for increased growth as it greatly improved access to Concord, Manchester, and points south.

Interstate 93 had two major impacts on future development patterns in Northfield. First, Interstate 93 was constructed so that it traveled immediately to the east of the existing village area. As a result, the construction of the Interstate inadvertently may have formed an eastern boundary to the village limiting further expansion of the village's compact development pattern. Second, since Interstate 93 also provided ready access for the automobile to points south, newcomers to the town no longer needed to be located close to the railroad or the other less efficient north-south highways such as

what is now known as NH Route 132. As such, the construction of Interstate 93 may have unintentionally opened up some of the rural areas of Northfield, contributing to the dispersal of residential development away from the village area.

The general existing land use patterns in Northfield can be characterized by the following:

- A concentration of higher density mixed residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal uses in the village area;
- Limited industrial and commercial development along NH Route 140 between Tilton and Belmont;
- Industrial development along the west side of Forrest Road southwest of the village;
- Low-density rural residential development along town roads throughout the community;
- Large areas of undeveloped forest lands throughout the southern portions of the community, especially in areas south of Bean Hill Road;
- Agricultural land and activities scattered throughout town.

Map 6-1 shows the general land cover patterns throughout Northfield. This map was developed by analyzing 1998 aerial photographs. This data does not demonstrate actual land use patterns on a parcel by parcel basis. Instead, it describes the natural or man-made features of the land. For example, this land cover map may show a forested three acre house lot as “forest”, while a land use map would show the same area as “residential”, as it is defined for tax assessment purposes. Below are more detailed descriptions of some of the major land use patterns found in the Town of Northfield

***Northfield Village.*** The Northfield Village area is the historical town center for the community. It is roughly defined as that area bounded by Park Street to the west, the Winnepesaukee River to the north, I-93 to the east, and Exit 19 to the south. Residential land uses are characterized by a mix of single-family homes, multi-family apartments, condominiums, townhouses, and elderly housing. The older residential homes found in the village tend to be on relatively small lots with reduced frontage. Mixed within the residential land uses are municipal and community facilities including the Northfield Town Hall, the Hall Memorial Library, the Pines Community Center, the Northfield Police Station, and the Northfield Highway Department Garage. There are also scattered commercial and industrial uses in the village area. In conjunction with the mixture of land uses and increased density in the village area is the availability of both off-site sewer and water.

***Industrial and Commercial Development.*** Limited industrial and commercial development has occurred in Northfield. The land along NH Route 140 in Northfield has a high potential for industrial and commercial development due to access to NH Route 140 and Interstate 93, as well as the availability of off-site water, although off-site sewer is not readily available. Other industrial development has occurred in the Forrest Road area of town and along Park Street, both areas where off-site sewer and water is available. In these areas, however, residential uses also exist which may not be compatible with the industrial development. In fact, conflict has arisen in the past between the residential land uses on the east side of Forrest Road, and the industrial

uses located directly opposite them to the west on the same road.

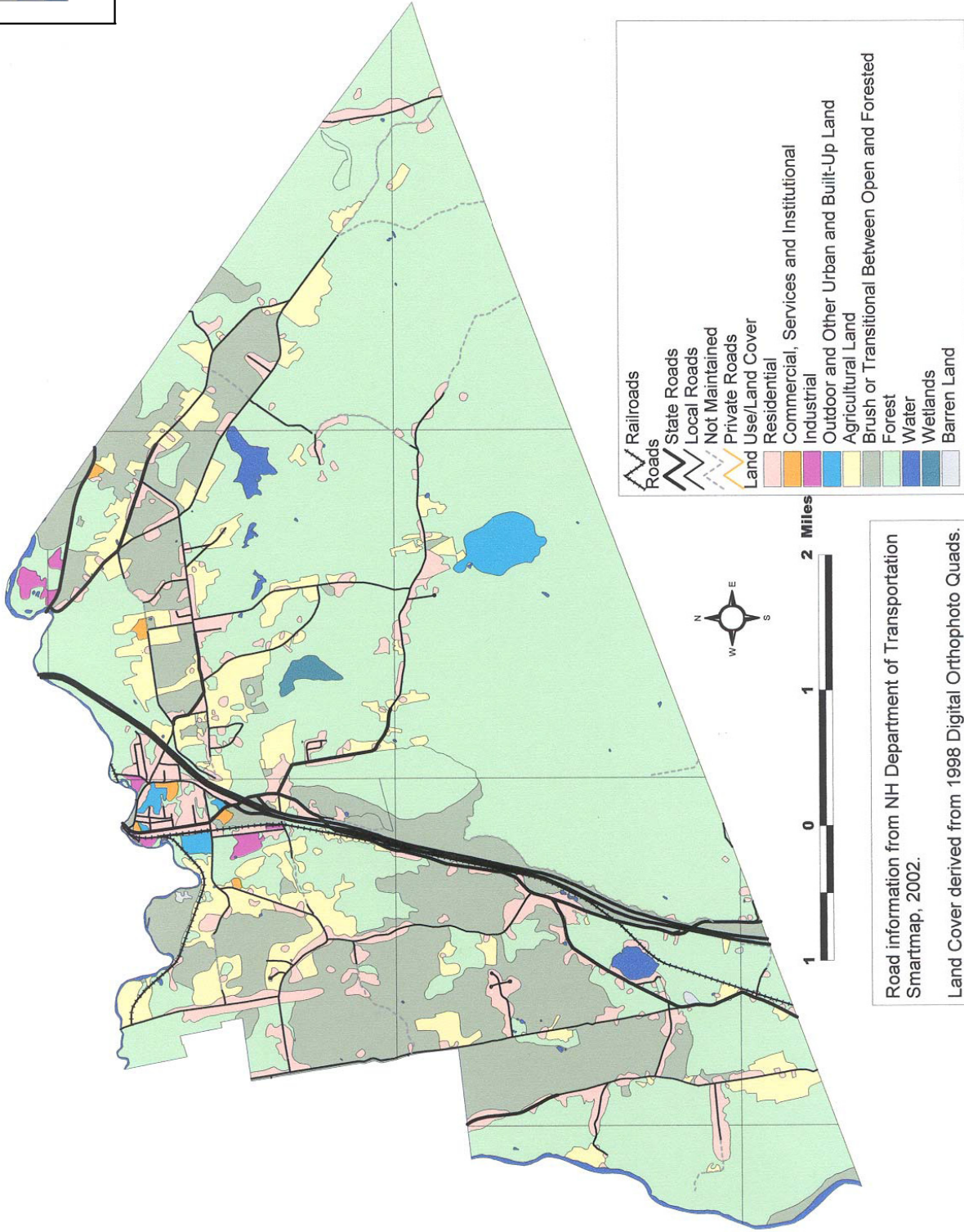
***Rural Residential Development.*** The majority of recent residential development has occurred along the rural roads in Northfield. This development pattern has largely been facilitated through the subdivision of land with frontage on town roads (and direct access on town roads by individual driveways), as opposed to the creation of new subdivision roads. Two notable exceptions, however, are the Wethersfield single-family residential development (approximately 30 homes) off Shaker Road, and the Northfield Commons multi-family development (approximately 96 units) on Scribner Road. Since the majority of residential development has occurred along existing town roads, much of the “back” lands in Northfield remain as large, contiguous forest and open space areas.

***Forest Land.*** A significant portion of land in the Town of Northfield today remains forested. Although the amount of forest land has decreased over the past decade as rural areas have been developed with housing, there remain many areas that are undeveloped. Examples of these areas include the large tracts of land between Bay Hill Road and Bean Hill Road, and south of Bean Hill Road, where there is limited, or in many cases, no access via town maintained or state maintained roads.

***Agricultural Land.*** Agricultural land uses can be found scattered throughout the Town of Northfield. One particular area where this occurs is around and between Zion Hill Road and Sargent Street in the northwest area of the community. Other areas with noticeable land dedicated to agriculture include: the areas around Shaker Road and Knowles Pond Road, from NH 140 through the end of the town maintained portion of Shaker Road; scattered areas within the Shedd Hill Road, Bay Hill Road, and Turnpike Road part of town just east of Interstate 93.



Map 6-1 – Existing Land Use Map for Northfield, NH 2002



## LAND USE AND ZONING

The primary local regulation in Northfield that influences land use development patterns is zoning. Northfield first adopted zoning in 1973, in response to increased pressures for development and a desire to preserve the existing land use patterns including the more urban-style village area, and the rural countryside characterized by working farms and open space. Although the town's zoning has evolved since it was originally adopted, it still largely reflects the community's desire to preserve open space in the rural areas, and promote development in the village. The zoning also identifies two areas where industrial and commercial development is permitted, largely based on access to off-site sewer and/or water.

An analysis of the development potential of land within each Zoning district in town can provide a better understanding of the development potential within Northfield. Not only does zoning regulate the types of land uses that may occur in a particular district, but it also regulates the form in which the land may developed. Examples of this form of regulation include lot frontage requirements, minimum lots sizes, and maximum allowable areas of impermeable surfaces on any lot. The town of Northfield has four zoning districts, and one overlay district. Each district has its own set of development standards, including a breakdown of permitted, permitted by special exception, and not permitted uses. The Groundwater Protection Overlay District adopts all of the regulations of the underlying district(s), and augments them with increased restrictions in character with the purpose of the overlay. The current Northfield Zoning Map is provided as Map 6-2.

***Commercial/Industrial District (C/I).*** The purpose of the Commercial/Industrial District is to allow for commercial and industrial development in close proximity to major transportation corridors, off-site sewer and water, and other community facilities. There are currently three areas of Northfield zoned as Commercial/Industrial. One location is along both sides of NH Route 140 between the town boundaries of Tilton and Belmont. Another area currently zoned Commercial/Industrial is located to the west of Park Street (NH Route 132), and north of Scribner Road towards the Winnepesaukee River. Finally, the area immediately south and west of Interstate I-93 Exit 19, including Forrest Road, is zoned Commercial/Industrial. In total, a very small portion of Northfield is zoned Commercial/Industrial (approximately 978 acres, or 5.3% of the total land area), presumably due to a lack of available off-site sewer and water in most of the community.

**In 2013 Economic Revitalization Zones (ERZ) were created for these 3 Commercial/Industrial areas. Designating the ERZ allows new or expanding businesses to qualify for tax credits toward the State of NH Business tax based upon their investment in real estate and/or creating additional jobs. A TIF district was created in the Rte 140 corridor which would give a property tax break for a new business that constructs or adds to the sewer line along Rte 140.**

**The Northfield Economic Development Committee has been revitalized and is now actively seeking methods of attracting business to town.**

**Conservation District (CONS).** The purpose of the Conservation District is to discourage scattered and premature growth and development in areas of Northfield that are currently undeveloped. The goal is to protect from adverse impacts the valuable resources in these areas such as wildlife habitat, agricultural lands, open space, and woodlands. This district has larger frontage requirements than other areas in town, as well as a relatively large minimum lot size of 5 acres. The majority of Northfield is currently zoned as Conservation (approximately 11,201 acres, or 61.2 % of the total land area).

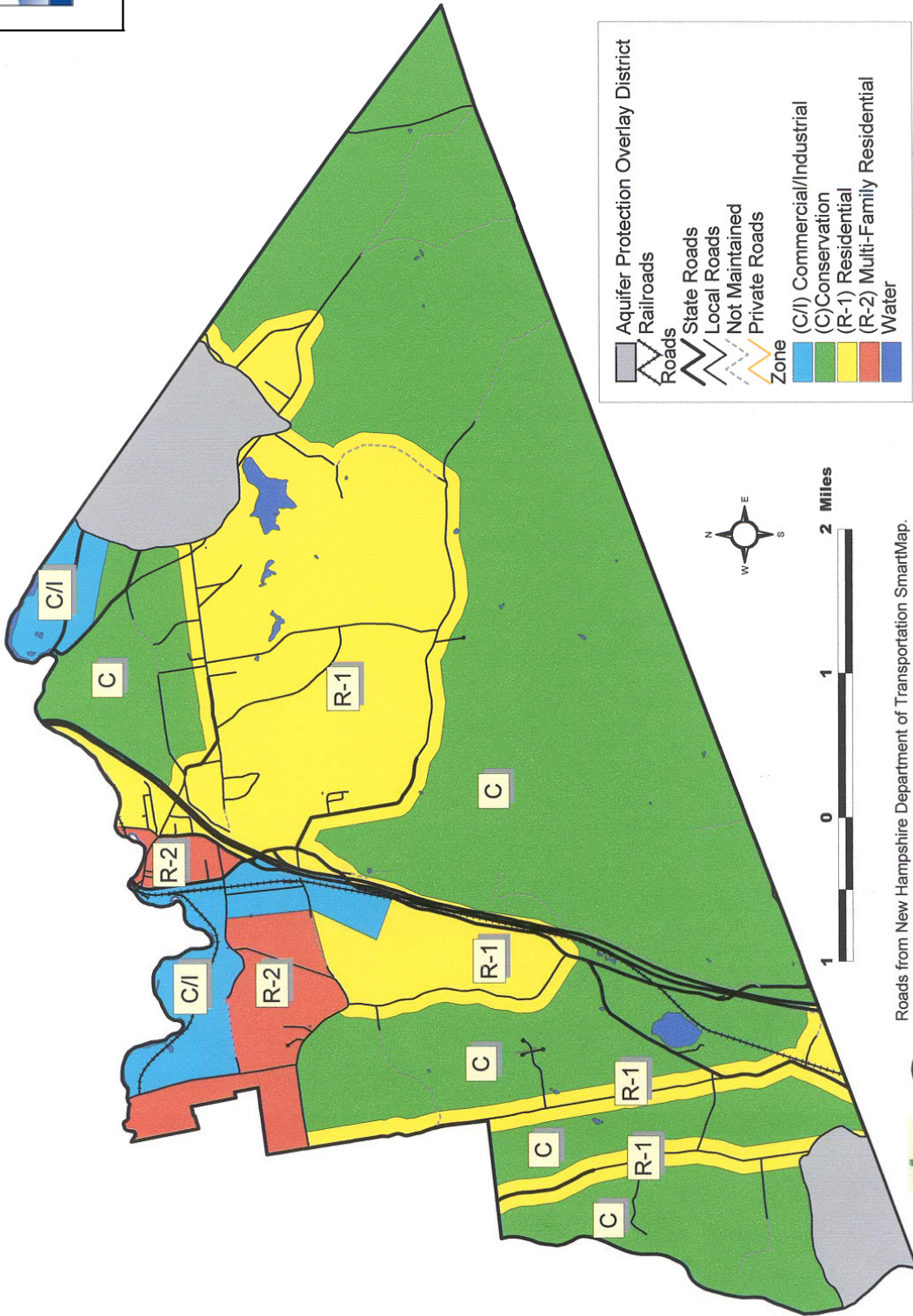
**Single-Family/Two-Family Residential (R-1).** The purpose of the R-1 Zone is to provide for the development of predominantly single-family housing development in areas of town with good access to town-maintained Class V roads. Lots in this zone are required to be of a minimum size of 2 acres and have lesser frontage requirements than those in the Conservation District. In total, approximately 5,325 acres, or 29.1% of the total land area of Northfield is zoned R-1.

**Multi-Family Residential (R-2).** The purpose of this district is to allow higher density residential development in areas generally closer to town services, commercial areas, and major transportation corridors. The R-2 Districts are located in the Northfield Village area and the northwest area of town close to the City of Franklin. A very small portion of Northfield is zoned R-2 (approximately 812 acres, or 4.4% of the total land area).

**Groundwater Protection Overlay District.** At the March 2000 Town Meeting voters adopted an overlay district specifically intended to provide enhanced protection from contamination of the town's groundwater resources. The boundaries of the overlay zone coincide with the boundaries of the Stratified Drift Aquifers as mapped by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NH DES) in 1999. This includes two areas of Northfield, one a portion of land on NH Route 140 and the other in the southwest part of Northfield west of Oak Hill Road.

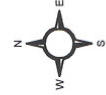


Map 6-2: Zoning Map for Northfield, NH 2003



**Legend**

- Aquifer Protection Overlay District
- Railroads
- Roads
- State Roads
- Local Roads
- Not Maintained
- Private Roads
- Zone
- (C/I) Commercial/Industrial
- (C) Conservation
- (R-1) Residential
- (R-2) Multi-Family Residential
- Water



Roads from New Hampshire Department of Transportation SmartMap.  
 Hydrologic features and political boundaries are from USGS 1:24,000 scale Digital Line Graphs, distributed by Complex Systems Research Center, Durham, NH.



Zones approved: September, 1973.  
 Zones amended: March, 2002

## LAND USE ISSUES

***Residential Growth Management.*** Through the community forums held in the fall of 2002, as well as the analysis of the results of the community survey for this Master Plan, residents of Northfield expressed widespread concern about the rate of residential growth and the loss of valuable open space and farmland. Local officials, including the Police Chief and Road Agent, also provided input regarding the rate of residential growth, stating that growth was quickly outpacing their ability to provide adequate services in Northfield. As a result, the Planning Board developed an interim growth management ordinance that was adopted at March 2003 Town Meeting. The result was a moratorium on the subdivision of land for residential purposes for one year, allowing the Planning Board to focus on the development of this Master Plan Update and to develop new strategies to deal with residential growth in town.

***Lack of Commercial and Industrial Development.*** Many residents in town felt that the number one problem in Northfield was the property taxes. Closely associated with this opinion is the feeling that Northfield lacks both industrial and commercial development. Although portions of Northfield are currently zoned for Commercial/Industrial development, the development potential in these areas may actually be quite low due to the lack of available off-site sewer and/or water. In order to promote more commercial and industrial development, the town will need to investigate ways in which off-site sewer and water can be provided to undeveloped land zoned for commercial and industrial growth.

***Land Use and Environment.*** The results of the community survey show that residents of Northfield perceive the preservation of the natural environment as a critical issue facing the community. When given a list of 14 key issues, respondents identified four of the top five issues to be the preservation of the following: 1) the quality of water resources; 2) river shorelines; 3) wildlife habitat; and 4) wetlands. The protection of the quality of the water resources associated with the Stratified Drift Aquifer located in the area of NH Route 140 was a constant theme throughout the community participation component of this Master Plan Update. The land over the aquifer is prime for commercial and industrial development with the availability of off-site sewer and water and is located on a major transportation corridor with easy access to Interstate 93. Future land use planning efforts, including zoning and Site Plan Regulations revisions, will need to integrate the preservation of natural resources in order to ensure that the long term goals of the community are realized.

***Land Use and Transportation.*** Any future development that occurs in Northfield will have an impact on the local transportation system. Conversely, how well a transportation system functions will have an impact on the type, location, and intensity of future land uses. It will be even more important for the community to ensure that development does not negatively impact the function of all aspects of the transportation system. For example, in the village area, future land use change and development needs to be associated with bicycle and pedestrian improvements in order to ensure transportation choice and safety as well as reduce the dependence on motorized transportation where possible.

**Exit 19 and Interstate 93.** When the community was asked about the future expansion of Exit 19 (to a full north-south interchange) the response was evenly split; one half of the survey respondents felt it should be expanded, the other half did not. If land use development does occur at Exit 19, then the town needs to ensure that it happens in a way that protects the natural surroundings of the area and reduces the impacts development could have on the community and its residents. If development does not occur, then the community will have to continue to allow and promote commercial and industrial development elsewhere in town in order to address the goals of the community as indicated in the results of the community survey. **NH DOT has removed the expansion of Exit 19 from its long range plan.**

### FUTURE LAND USE CONCEPT

**Smart Growth.** Smart Growth is development that serves the economy, community, and the environment. Northfield has acknowledged that it will continue to grow as a community, and that it needs to ensure that this occurs in ways that support economic development and jobs, creates strong neighborhoods with a range of commercial, housing, and transportation options in areas such as the historic village, and protects the natural environment that individuals and families in Northfield currently cherish.

As such, the community has recognized that future development needs to occur in areas best suited to handle it. These areas are close to existing municipal services, such as off-site sewer and water, schools, and other community facilities; are close to existing transportation corridors and are suitable for future construction of new options, such as sidewalks; and avoid areas where development would have negative impacts on the natural environment.

Based on current land use development patterns, the existing Town of Northfield Zoning Ordinance, and an understanding of the key issues facing the community, the Planning Board developed a future land use concept for the community. This concept is depicted in Map 6-3, and shows the general locations for possible future land use development for the community. Although this future land use concept is non-binding, it should be used by the Planning Board in its future efforts to amend and revise the zoning ordinance to meet the overarching community goals found in this Master Plan.

**Commercial/Industrial Areas.** Based on comments received from the public, the future concept for the community includes an expanded area of commercial and industrial development in Northfield. Commercial/Industrial land uses could occur along NH Route 132 from the southern part of the Village to approximately ½ mile north of the Canterbury Town line. This area of commercial and industrial land uses buffers 1,000 feet on either side of NH Route 132 and/or Interstate 93 creating a corridor approximately 3.5 miles long. However, for this land use development to occur, the community will first have address issues regarding the provision of off-site sewer and water. Development should also occur in a way that preserves the transportation corridor of NH 132, since commercial/industrial uses can have significant negative impacts on traffic flow and safety through the generation of large amounts of additional traffic.

The concept for the land currently zoned Commercial/Industrial along NH Route 140 in the northeast part of town remains unchanged, and it will be important for the town to ensure that any future land use change does not negatively impact the natural environment and the stratified drift aquifer located underneath NH Route 140. Revisions to local ordinances and regulation may need to occur in order to facilitate growth in this area while mitigating the potential negative impacts it may have on the environment.

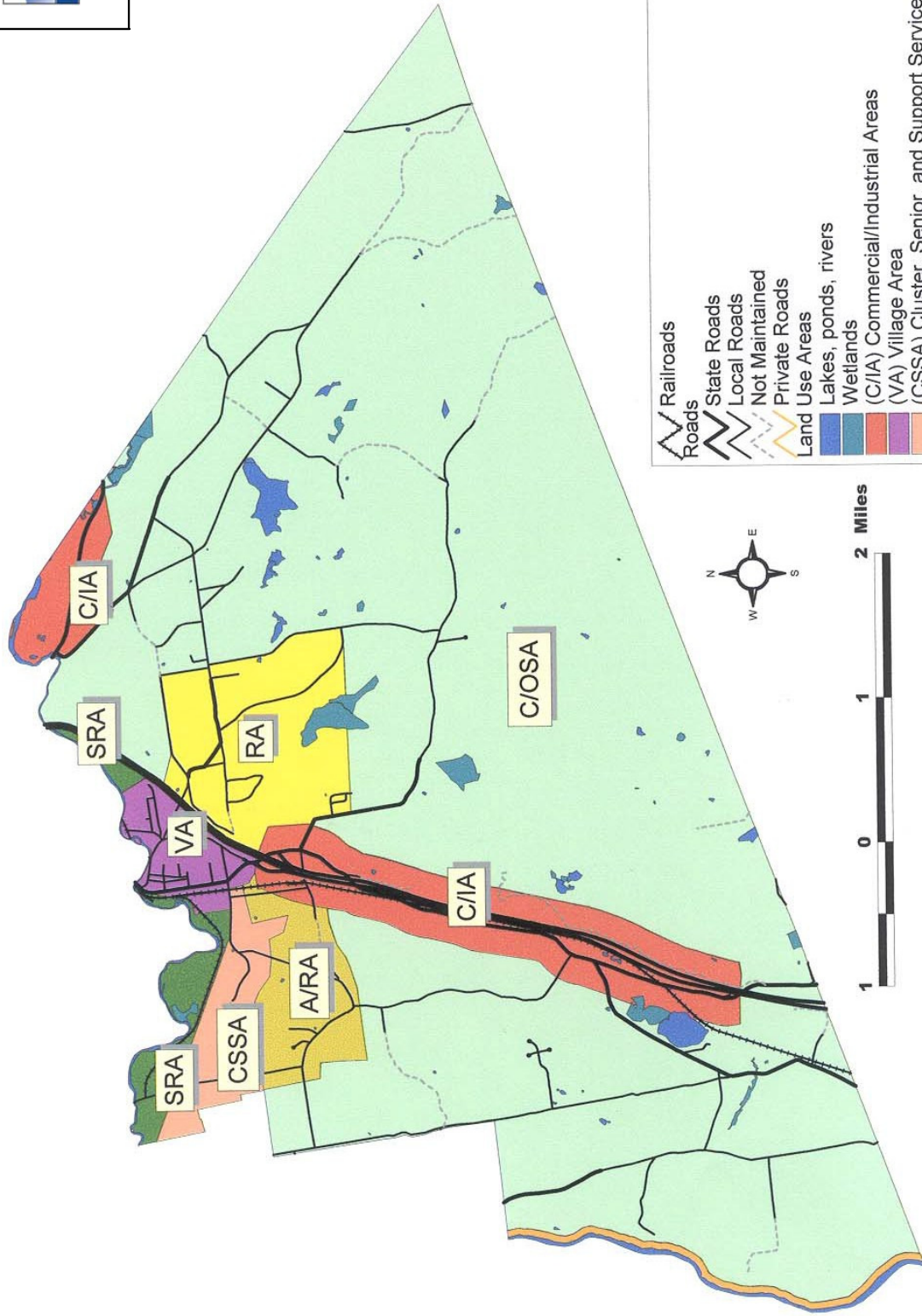
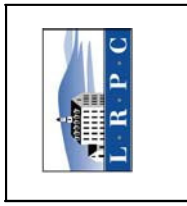
***Village Area.*** The community of Northfield envisions a newly defined Village Area in its historic village. This new Village Area would encompass the majority of the existing built-up area of Northfield, bounded by Park Street to the west, Exit 19 to the south, Interstate 93 to the east, and the Winnepesaukee River to the north. The village area itself would encourage a mixture of land uses and an environment friendly to both bicyclists and pedestrians. This would be one of only two areas in town (the other being the Cluster, Senior, and Service Area) that would allow multi-family style housing in Northfield.

***Cluster, Senior, and Support Service Area.*** Located to the west of village would be an area of town primarily dedicated to land uses such as higher density cluster residential development, elderly care homes and support services, and education. This area would be characterized by bicycle and pedestrian facilities providing linkages to both the Village Area to the east and the Shoreland Protection Area to the north (discussed below). Support services might include, but not be limited to, day care facilities as well as medical and pharmaceutical uses.

***Residential Area.*** This area of town would include a combination of two-family and single-family residential uses, very similar to what is now encouraged in the R-1 District. This area would consist of the area east of Interstate 93 and north of Bay Hill Road, although a portion of town directly south of Bay Hill Road would also be included. The density of development in this area may vary based on the availability of off-site sewer and/or water, as well as the development of open space/cluster subdivisions.

***Agricultural/Residential Area.*** Based on existing agricultural operations and a desire of the community to protect agricultural land, the future land use concept identifies an.

Map 6-3: Future Land Use Concept for Northfield, NH

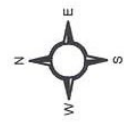


**Roads**

- Railroads
- State Roads
- Local Roads
- Not Maintained
- Private Roads

**Land Use Areas**

- Lakes, ponds, rivers
- Wetlands
- (C/IA) Commercial/Industrial Areas
- (VA) Village Area
- (CSSA) Cluster, Senior, and Support Services Area
- (RA) Residential Area
- (A/RA) Agricultural/Residential Area
- (SRA) Shoreland Recreation Area
- (C/OA) Conservation/Open Space Area
- (MRSA) Merrimack River Shorefront Area



The proposed land uses displayed are based on suggestions from members of the Northfield Planning Board in Spring 2003. These categories and boundaries are for planning purposes only. Road information from NH Department of Transportation Smartmap, 2002.

**Shoreland Recreation Area.** The community has expressed a desire to protect its water resources and shoreland areas. The area of town south of the Winnepesaukee River, heading east from the Franklin townline to NH Route 132 has been identified as desirable for enhanced shoreland protection. This area would also be targeted for recreation, leisure, and educational uses that would be compatible to the natural setting and landscape of the shoreland. This area could include enhanced shoreland protection area that would be specifically designed for agricultural uses. This area would include a portion of town with existing agricultural operations, between Zion Hill Road and Sargent Street in the northwest part of town. Agricultural activities in this area would be encouraged, and uses that do not compliment agriculture would be discouraged. The town may wish to explore innovative land use controls such as Agricultural Zoning and the Purchase of agricultural/conservation easements for this area which would promote the retention of existing farms and farmland in the long term as desired by the community.

**Conservation/Open Space Areas.** The community has indicated through the public participation program conducted for this Master Plan that preserving open space is of a highest priority. Northfield already has an extensive amount of land zoned "Conservation" with larger lot frontage and minimum lot sizes than any other zone. In order to further protect rural areas from excessive residential development more of the land area in Northfield is planned for long term open space/conservation protection.

**Merrimack River Shorefront Area.** In order to further protect river shorelands in Northfield, the area along the Merrimack River could be subject to enhanced regulations that, for example, would require all timber harvesting operations, including that of mature timber, to occur in accordance with the Best Management Practices identified by the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development, Division of Forests and Lands.

## **GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the information provided above, as well as the valuable input provided by the public throughout this master planning process, the Town has adopted the following goal for land use:

**Encourage managed growth and development that supports economic opportunities, enhances the social and community fabric, and preserves the natural environment that current and future residents cherish.**

To fulfill this goal, objectives and recommendations have been developed to guide future planning policy and initiatives:

**Objective A. Ensure that growth is managed in a way that provides development opportunities without negatively impacting the town and its people.**

1. Revise and annually update the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to forecast major capital expenditures and promote tax rate stability.
2. Develop a long-term growth management ordinance. **A Growth Management Ordinance was adopted in 2004 and allowed to sunset in 2013 as there has been relatively little growth seen in town during this period.**
3. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to promote compact development in the village area, and discourage development in Northfield's open spaces.

**Objective B. Support and enhance the viability of the historic village area of Northfield. A grant was received by the town to study the current zoning in the down town area and determine if any changes were needed to protect the area between Rte 93, Exit 19 to the South and Scribner Road area to the west. At a public hearing relative to this study, residents were determined that there be no change to this area and the grant funding was returned to the State of NH.**

1. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to create a new Village District that resembles the existing built-up village area.
2. Promote compact and infill development in the new Village District.
3. Ensure that new development and redevelopment enhances safety and convenience for bicycle and pedestrian transportation.
4. Encourage community facilities and services to remain in the village area.
5. Continue to support civic events such as the Tilton-Northfield Old Home Day that supports the village area of Northfield.
6. Promote sewer and water extensions within the general village area that would facilitate future expansion of commercial and economic opportunities.
7. Develop design guidelines to protect and enhance the historical architecture in the village area.

**Objective C. Promote new commercial and industrial economic opportunities in appropriate locations in Northfield.**

**The Northfield Economic Development Committee is actively seeking commercial opportunities for Northfield.**

1. Ensure that commercial and industrial growth occurs along NH Route 140 in a way that protects the Stratified Drift Aquifer and Northfield's drinking water supply.
2. **Promote** industrial development in areas where off-site sewer and water are available and where it would not negatively impact existing residential neighborhoods.
3. Encourage commercial opportunities in the village area that would compliment existing commercial and residential uses.
4. Examine the possibility of expanding commercial and industrial opportunities south along NH 132 so that the transportation system and economic vitality of the village are protected.
5. Maintain distinctions between rural areas and the village, while promoting home occupations throughout town.
6. Monitor and participate in the progress of possible future expansion of Interstate 93, Exit 19 and revise local ordinances and regulations to reflect current community planning goals. **Exit 19 is no longer in the State of NH's long term plan.**

**Objective D. Promote development practices that protect and preserve the open space and natural resources in Northfield.**

1. Support the development and use of a Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) for the community. **The Conservation Commission funded an NRI for the town in 2004.**
2. Develop conservation and open space subdivision allowances to encourage the permanent protection of open space throughout the community. **An Open Space Development chapter was included in the Zoning Ordinance in 2005.**
3. Support local initiatives to preserve open space and agricultural land through the purchase of conservation easements.
4. Develop new regulations designed to protect and encourage agricultural activities in the rural areas of Northfield.
5. Promote scenic qualities of Northfield's shorelands by developing a Shoreland Recreation Zoning District along the Winnepesaukee River.
6. Expand shoreland restrictions for all water resources, including rivers, ponds, streams, and wetlands.

**Objective E. Continue to improve the land use development review processes.**

1. Conduct regular reviews of the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and site plan review regulations to ensure that they are both user friendly and that they are consistent with current planning policy objectives. **This is ongoing.**
2. Encourage improved training and support for local land use boards and commissions. **This is ongoing.**
3. Encourage increased interaction between the Planning Board and other town boards, commissions, and departments.
4. Revise the Zoning Ordinance as needed to reflect the future land use plan outlined in this Master Plan.
5. Develop and encourage the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) in development relating to landscaping and the preservation of natural buffers.
6. Develop lighting regulations to mitigate impacts from commercial and industrial lighting throughout town. **Lighting regulations have been added to the Subdivision Regulations.**



**APPENDIX:**

**NORTHFIELD MASTER PLAN  
COMMUNITY SURVEY  
2012**

**An on-line survey was conducted in 2012 with very similar questions that were in the 2002 survey with some up to date additions. A few responses were submitted by mail as well. Total number of responses was 260, a smaller number than in 2002, but the responses were very similar to those in 2012.**

**NORTHFIELD MASTER PLAN  
COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS  
2012**

**1. What is the best thing about living in Northfield?**

**Location – 30**

**Small Town, Rural Setting 78**

**Quiet Country living 45**

**Schools 2**

**Friendly people 22**

**Access to highway and shopping 37**

**Sample comments:**

*It's not Franklin.; The Community itself; Quiet residential living living, friendly neighbors and others; Live here all my life born and raised my family roots; It has a country feel but is close to anything and everything a person would need; The Serenity; Convenient location, rural area, scenic views, Glines park is family friendly and Tilton Arch for picnics; The town doesn't copy Tilton's plan/Malls etc.; So far the crime rate is relatively low.; size, community involvement & location; Garbage pickup; low crime, low traffic compared to inner cities; It is not being over taken by sprawl, but we need to keep growth under control - we are a rural community; Peaceful, uncrowded; Considerate mostly friendly people; Wonderful neighbors. Seems to be things going on all the time;. The Old home town values, community spirit and a great place to raise the children; . It is a very nice town everything you would need is here and it is beautiful; Nice country local friendly Police and Fire Good Road Agent; Elderly gets a tax break on paying taxes; small government; Old Home Day; Not the property taxes; open space; The small community; The peace and quiet, privacy yet people are friendly. No subway noise, sirens, neighbors partying all hours, etc. People are genuine; The great environment, privacy, police, EMTS and fire depts, controlled growth, cleanliness, highway services, waste removal. Friendliness of community, respect for others, sense of community pride and safety; the beauty of nature, all the trees and forests; The beauty & upkeep of the land & roads; Cross between country setting and suburban shopping access; Nothing much to fight about; Rural area of Bean Hill; the freedom to live without intrusion from our elected officials; The community events;*

**2. What would you improve about living in Northfield?**

**Additional on and off ramp at Exit 19 9**

**Lower Taxes 48**

**Make town more attractive/town center – enforce building codes 11**

**Improve road conditions 54**

**Increase law enforcement/reduce crimes 7**

**Attract more industry/commercial businesses 19**

**Better schools 3**

**Mandatory recycling 13**

**Add sidewalks 4**

**More recreational events 4**

**Nothing 10**

Sample comments:

no burning of any kind on private property to reduce fires, *do not build where there is no water available to put out fires*, dog laws should be enforced more and fines increased for dog law offenses; *Not that the town has much control over it, but I would like to have access to better internet services*; Dividing the apportionments for safety service and Fire district service based on the percentage of calls per town just the same way the school didtrict towns based on # number of students attending; *less people*; spot zoning should not be used to stop growth; *roads, parks, waterfront along the river*; fines for littering (signage); *More community activities for adults...soccer leagues, book groups, hiking groups, something to make living here fun.*; increase Mom & Pop store growth; *A Post Office in Northfield*; more small town living and less political oversight; *increased,town-wide gatherings beynd Old Home Day*; recycle trash, *limit trailers*, min. lots for new homes, *increase fire/police protection including new equipment*; Get the Abandoned Houses to be fixed at near Old Tilton.; *Keep it small*; plan growth and development rather than react; *Light pollution, traffic. Racing vehicles along Zion and Hodgdon at night.*; I'd like to see some of the houses more presentable on the outside. Some bldgs look slum-like; *better schools/lower taxes*; need more day programs for diabled people; **LOWER THE TAXES. Cut Spending. Stop sending so many kids to Winnisquam where the education they get is not worth the money we spend.**; ability to have a home business without the regulations; *Planned/budgeted road improvements/maintenance of roadside trees/culverts*. Coordination and cooperation with Tilton projects with increased timely communication between towns; *I wouldn't begin charging for trash collection. I have been faithfully recycling and believe that some incentive to get others to recycle would be a better plan*; Lower Taxes. *The town should live withing their means instead of wanting things we cant afford and making us pay for it even though we tell you we dont want it!*; Must control so-called growth; *Stop building multi-family housing*; protection of open spaces, less development; *A sense of community (so many citizens only live here)*; No development at Exit 19! *Encourage more people to recycle*; having our elected officials fight more against mandates that are being imposed on the citizens; *Have less regulations, restriction, govermental control*; Town's people need to take more enterest in what is going on.; *Force clean up of properties and enforce zoning and building/addition rules*. System to adjust property taxes to people"s ability to pay. Town becoming "For Sale".

**3. Which one of the following responses best reflects your opinion on the rate of population growth occurring in Northfield at the present time?**

- Growth is not a serious problem      **64**
- Growth is being managed properly      **110**
- More controls on growth are needed      **65**
- Fewer controls on growth are needed      **10**

**4. Which one of the following responses best reflects your opinion on the rate of economic growth occurring in Northfield at the present time?**

- Growth is not a serious problem      **46**
- Growth is being managed properly      **101**
- More controls on growth are needed      **33**
- Fewer controls on growth are needed      **55**

5. Check all of the following that you believe to be the most serious problems in Northfield. (multiple answers)

- o Loss of farm land **85**
- o Lack of multi-family housing **3**
- o Lack of affordable housing **25**
- o Excessive housing development **31**
- o Lack of commercial development **87**
- o Lack of industrial development **88**
- o Other \_\_\_\_\_
- o Road conditions **143**
- o Traffic **32**
- o Loss of open space **49**
- o Property taxes **160**
- o High crime rates **11**
- o Junk & garbage on private properties **107**

6. Do you strongly agree, agree disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements? Check the appropriate box.

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	No Opinion
a. Land should be protected from development	53	111	51	13	14
b. Any new development should pay additional money for impact on roads, traffic, schools, etc.	117	104	16	3	9
c. The Town is managing development well	10	116	46	12	63
d. It is important to provide for affordable housing	33	109	57	24	24
e. Areas important to wildlife habitat should be preserved	145	97	8	2	6
f. Attracting new industry is important.	103	89	30	10	16
g. Attracting commercial development is important	62	100	51	14	22
h. Identifying and preserving historical buildings is important	97	114	19	1	18
i. Access to rivers and ponds for recreation should be increased	61	108	39	60	33
j. Lighting of buildings and parking lots should be regulated to minimize its impact.	55	122	31	12	36
k. Protection of wetlands is important.	99	123	18	3	11
l. More recreational activities needed for adults and seniors	36	114	39	14	54
m. More recreation programs are needed for teens	58	120	31	6	37
n. Preserving the rivers' shorelines is important	99	136	5	2	13
o. The quality of water resources is important.	142	107	3	0	3

**7. How would you rate the following community facilities and services? (please check the appropriate answer.)**

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion
a. Library	93	85	40	6	1	31
b. Summer road maintenance	16	54	70	69	39	7
c. Winter road maintenance	31	57	76	55	26	9
d. Schools	20	62	79	26	16	52
e. Rescue/Ambulance	72	82	52	4	2	48
f. Police protection	53	102	55	18	12	13
g. Recreation facilities	16	55	105	39	8	31
h. Trash removal	66	92	68	17	5	8
i. Recycling center/holding area	64	99	62	16	11	8
j. Town Government	15	72	106	28	12	17
k. Fire protection	56	92	61	10	3	32
l. Town Communications to public	23	63	80	48	21	16
m. Street lights	23	31	93	41	15	43
n. Sidewalks	13	32	90	51	24	46
o. Enforcement of Zoning/Building Codes	8	33	81	35	23	79
p. Economic Development efforts	6	14	57	68	26	75

**8. Please tell us how you feel about Exit 19. Which of the following best describes your opinion?**

- I do not want an additional on and off ramp at Exit 19 **136**
- I want an additional on and off ramp at Exit 19 **124**

**9. What do you think would be the consequence of an additional on and off ramp at Exit 19?**

- Those in favor:
- Reduce Traffic at Exit 20 - 20
  - More commercial Development - 26
  - More traffic for business - 33
  - Easier Access - 35
- Those opposed:
- Increased traffic - 63
  - More commercial Dev. - 18
  - Don't need it - 15
  - Will increase taxes - 9
  - Loss of rural feel of town - 9

**Sample comments:**

town more desirable to live in, *property values increase*, much easier to travel north; *what we have today is good, what's wrong with what we have*; Loss of wildlife habitat, more bad elements finding their way into our

town, more crime / violence. *Less peace quite more stress just getting around town;* Increased sale of gas, snacks; easier availability of emergency services; *cause you wouldn't have to go thru all the lights in tilton to get on the interstate to go north;* Way too much traffic *.It will ruin Northfields" small town appeal forever!* perhaps we could attract an industry to help with the tax rate. the downside would be more traffic but if it brings money to the town we are for it; *Would be able to get on 93 if going North without having to go thru traffic at exit 20 and also be able to get off the hwy instead having to exit at 20;* don't want another exit 20 nightmare; *Route more vehicles thru N"flds business area, attract more commercial and industrial business.* Ease of access for residents.; *more comercial trucking and overall traffic requiring road upgrading and possible widening along with creating a hazardous potential to recreation areas and schools;* It would disrupt the area and add to the traffic - though it would be helpful in attracting commercial and retail businesses.

**10. Are there buildings and/or land in Northfield that you think are of particular importance to protect? If so, what are they?**

Bean Hill Areas 8

Cemeteries 5

Currently owned rec. areas, (Knowles Pond, Sandogardy Pond, Pines, etc.) 19

Elementary School 5

Town Hall 15

Library 21

Railroad station 5

Corliss Farm/Southwick Farm 8

Union Church 7

Island 2

Arch 10

Farms and farm land 10

None 9

**Other comments:**

anything historic. *There is minimal info about many of the historic buildings. I'd like more of that;* The water shed from Sondogardy Pond down to the M river. Tremendous area for wildlife, Cross Brook has a Wood Turtle population of which are only on non-polluted streams. My siteings are shared with Fish & Game, The woodland/ Cross Stream habitat from Oak Hill down to the Merrimack River is a hidden gem and should be protected from development at all costs; *Historical buildings, abandoned land and buildings;* ALL buildings/ land currently owned by the Town & any land; *Farms;* Sandogarty Pond and all other water resources; *Rivers and ponds, playgrounds;* Wetlands,Farm Land,buildings of the 1800"s & early 1900"s; *Corliss"s farm land/Bean Hill area staying rural;* Merrimack River shore line, *Bean Hill and sourounding areas,* SYC hay fields, wildlife area and river front, The Pines a corridor of land along the River Trail, Tilton School Field; *historical buildings;* *Time to leave the past behind us and move forward;* All historical buildings and their properties is vital for Northfield heritage.; *conservation areas, wetlands, river, ponds; water supply;* Old houses & barns, there should be a tax break to restore and preserve barns and historic structures.; *Land that Northern Pass wants to widen & build 135 ft. steel towers on along current Right-of-ways-- for proposed high-volt transmission lines should be protected from devaluation & unsightliness.* *Northfield should ban such a proposal; it is unnecessary*

**11. Surette Park is a largely undeveloped 7.5 acre park along the Winnepesaukee River. Do you think the town should develop this park for additional recreation uses? (multiple answers)**

- **No, I feel Surette Park should stay as is** 58

- **Yes, I feel Surette Park should be developed to include (check as many as apply):**
  - Baseball field 53
  - Sports field for soccer and football 57
  - Outdoor performance venue 98
  - Other
  - Picnic facilities 136
  - Playground 104
  - Basketball court 70
- Fishing area 2
- Boat launch and swimming 5
- Skateboard 2
- Arboretum/natural area 2
- Multiple uses 1
- Tennis Court 3
- Industrial Park 2
- Walking trails 2
- Farmer's market 2
- sell it 1
- Swimming pool 1
- Too much noise already 1
- Move Rec Center there and use current rec center for Town Hall 1
- Several "no" said it is too expensive either to develop or maintain

**12. Which of the following responses best reflects your opinion on conservation efforts in Northfield at the present time?**

- Efforts to conserve Northfield's land and water resources should continue as is **132**
- We need to make a greater effort to conserve our land and water resources **68**
- Conservation is stifling growth, we need to make less of an effort to conserve Northfield's land and water resources **31**

**13. Please tell us what you think about development in Northfield**

- I support more residential development but not more commercial/industrial development **13**
- I support more commercial/industrial development but not more residential development **74**
- I support both residential and commercial/industrial development, so long as the development benefits the town and is reasonably regulated **103**
- I am opposed to more residential or commercial/industrial development **50**

**14. What kind of commercial or industrial development is appropriate for Northfield?** (Multiple answers)

- |   |            |   |            |
|---|------------|---|------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Light industry      | <b>112</b> | <input type="radio"/> Home bases businesses               | <b>89</b>  |
| <input type="radio"/> Heavy manufacturing | <b>21</b>  | <input type="radio"/> Small business (under 20 employees) | <b>116</b> |
| <input type="radio"/> Retail              | <b>75</b>  | <input type="radio"/> All of these                        | <b>59</b>  |
| <input type="radio"/> Tourist based       | <b>70</b>  | <input type="radio"/> None of these                       | <b>13</b>  |

**PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF**

**15. Resident status**

- |   |            |   |          |
|---|------------|---|----------|
| <input type="radio"/> Year Round Home Owner | <b>254</b> | <input type="radio"/> Non-Resident Property Owner | <b>9</b> |
| <input type="radio"/> Year Round Renter     | <b>0</b>   | <input type="radio"/> Non-Resident                | <b>0</b> |

**16. Your age:**

- |                                      |           |                                   |           |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| <input type="radio"/> Under 25 years | <b>1</b>  | <input type="radio"/> 25-40 years | <b>25</b> |
| <input type="radio"/> 41-55 years    | <b>98</b> | <input type="radio"/> 56-65 years | <b>78</b> |
| <input type="radio"/> Over 65 years  | <b>43</b> |                                   |           |

**17. How long have you been a resident or a non-resident property owner in Northfield?**

- |  |           |  |            |
|--|-----------|--|------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Less than 1 year | <b>1</b>  | <input type="radio"/> 1-5 years          | <b>21</b>  |
| <input type="radio"/> 6-10 years       | <b>42</b> | <input type="radio"/> 11-15 years        | <b>40</b>  |
| <input type="radio"/> 16-20 years      | <b>24</b> | <input type="radio"/> More than 20 years | <b>120</b> |

**18. Any other comments or suggestions?**

I love Northfield but I really hope it continues to be the small country town that I have lived near most of my life;

Let's get on the stick and make Northfield more than just a place you drive through on your way to someplace else;

Keep on doin" your good work. Please don"t allow Northfield to "grow" too fast. We love our rural community. My in-laws have lived here since the late 1950"s, and I"d hate to lose the "character";

I appreciate the weekly newsletter. Thank you! I liked it better when it was emailed in its entirety rather than just emailing a link, but still - it"s great!;

I think this town"s attitude of it"s who you know, not what you know really effects the well being of all the residents, favoritism is hard to combat when your not a lifer here, I think the town"s build/code officer"s position is a prime example, if Dana din"t work for Pike would there be a different paving company completeing the majority of road paving projects, and How can those with a known name be allowed to get an occupancy permit for a home without stairs and railings, or a completed deck? not in current codes is that legal, however it is happening in this town, these codes are for safety reasons, and should now be over looked, but look at the Cullen property on Shaw road, still no front steps or handrails on the farmer"s porch, there are others as well, but we all know Cullen is a name associated with Northfield. There is a lot of favoritism in this town, I tried to volunteer for a town committee, but the town manager is an ass and didn"t even respond because he doesn"t like me, poor baby. How about being honest with residents, oh charging for pay as you go, but not telling the residents the projected income from cashing in on the recyclable goods we are asked to take to the transfer station, how about paving the dirt roads before repaving those roads which are paved? I will say the girls at Town Hall are awesome, The police department is awesome, and the fire department is great, and as well our Library is very very good;

Northfield still suffers from the same issues as when we moved here 28 years ago. We have done some wonderful conservation projects including Knowles Pond and the Winni Trail but always fall short when trying



to create a better tax base. Southwick School was built on that land so that the Tilton School fields could be purchased for commercial/industrial development. That was over 16 years ago and we're still "discussing" exit 19 and industrial development with no resolutions. As long as there is still an "old school mentality" in Northfield things won't change. Industrial development is not evil. It brings many levels of employment opportunity from upper management to unskilled labor to an area. Conservation is a great cause but it doesn't pay the bills! There are many clean industrial opportunities available for any town that wants to improve their tax rates. Retail, however, does tend to bring mostly low paying jobs to an area. Check out Walmart and the outlet mall for a reference;

We should not stifle growth, however we should have a plan that allows for moderate growth in line with the 10 year plan for the Town;

Northfield is a really nice town, but the blighted properties are rampant. If property owners can't be legally made to clean up/fix up, laws should be put in place to remedy the embarrassment. If there is a law already in place, it should be enforced. I.E.--Elm Street, just for one example;

Property tax relief for seniors needed;

I love Northfield. I grew up here, and I plan to stay the rest of my years. I look forward to being a part on northfields future;

My major concern is speed limit control.. I live in a 30mph zone, and it's nothing to see cars buzz by at speeds over 65mph. Out in the boon docks and no cops around. My other pet peeve is road side brush, 132 gets trimmed, sandogardy doesn't, brush is so thick and high, can't see the cars coming from the end of the driveway. Too many close calls;

I have only lived here for about a year. I love the community and the school system;

Summer Road crew needs to pay attention to poor visibility at stop signs due to tree/bush growth.

Ditching/drainage/mowing on roads need to be addressed more. visibility issues on Reservoir Road

The bike Park has caused more traffic on the road and hard to get off the road due to no where to step off due to poor drainage or visibility is low due to trees/bushes;

Thanks for this opportunity to save paper!;

Line 6E - I agree stongly but also believe it is not up to the town to regulate private property

I also have a problem with the general tenor of the survey - while only an idiot would want bad water, loss of animal habitat, teens and seniors neglected, etc, ad nauseum only a total moron would believe that the town government should regulate these things in any way unless it was to encourage property owners and businesses to assist development of positive programs. Perhaps by lowering certain taxes/fees. Thus people/businesses who promote clean water and happy seniors and recycling(which I believe makes the town a fair amount of revenue)have financial incentive to keep the town nice.Carrots work so much better than sticks (the awful pay as you throw idea which would have had our woods full of trash) All of these questions should have comment sections - 7F. What we have is too much. On a recent visit to the station I was appalled at the installation of their new "safe" room. I was denied access to my own police station and was forced to talk to a rude officer through a little window like I was at a bank in downtown Los Angeles. The new chief needs to get a grip and stop creating ways to spend Homeland Security grants. Absolutely ridiculous;

I have lived here 39 years. plan to stay, not perfect town but damn close to it. i think local gov tries very hard to be fair and open. can't ask any more of any one. thank you all!;

Fully pave Shaw Rd, properly communicate the benefits of Payt to residences and re-introduce for a new vote, require fire permits to decrease bonfires and brush burning;

Northfield is a very nice community. It would be even more attractive to the eye if folks would take more pride

in their private property. Homes and land can be neat and clean even if money is scarce. Throwing garbage and junk on the premises only deteriorates their homes but also brings the value of the community down. Perhaps a town beautification plan with incentives could help. THANK YOU!!!

There are a few questions, such as #13, that could also use an other box. On that, I think we need to find ways to sustain decent lives without paving paradise;

I love living here!!! Town employees have been VERY helpful in providing information as I needed it;

Please continue to patrol roads for speeders. Bay Hill is particularly bad as it is used as a short cut by residents from other towns, such as Belmont. Too many speeders;

I love Northfield and would like to see it remain the same. Keep up the good work!

Eliminate trash pick-up, require citizens to use the recycling center and improve efforts to recycle for profit

delayed traffic light for taking a left turn onto Park St from Main St;  
the town boards should not be tools to prevent growth;

On the development question - I am in favor of some additional development, particularly industrial / commercial, but not to an extreme (i.e. an exit 20). For winter maintenance, should plow earlier in the storm versus just sanding; Living in this town has been great due to the access to all the Town of Tilton has for shopping but the taxes in town are really not helping people to remain in town;

School system should go to a more user paid system, More children, more cost. Renters with many children do not contribute to school system.;

would like to see more effort put into equalizing the school district formular. the district provides a service;what is wrong with the cost being split 3 ways;331/3 each?;

Love my neighborhood and I work very hard with my neighbors to keep it safe and healthy for our families to live!

Roads and Infrastructure improvements should be made with the long term in mind. Drainage and roadbed preparation is essential.Do not waste funds and labor on quick fixes, do it right to last, and well planned.

On development: Grow the town smart. Make it a place people want to live, work, and play.

Protection of land can be done with good management. Often development can increase wildlife habit by properly designing wetland areas and woodland management. Remember it is useable land, not acreage that counts. Northfield has a lot of raw land. Development can be integrated with land management for everyone's benefit.

I'm a mechanical engineer and builder by trade. I'd be willing to do some volunteer work in this area.

A place at the dump to bring oil paints and cleaners that will be accepted every week;

The options and wording of these questions did not really provide the opportunity to provide good feedback. Development really depends on the way decisions are made. I don't want to say yes we need economic growth and development and then see Northfield turn into Titlton. I like a nice rural town, but I like people to have employment opportunities as well. Otherwise, the town has a lot of beauty and natural resources, we should take advantage of it. Natural parks that accomodate kids, adults, and organized recreation (Odell Park is a pretty good example actually). Any time I want to go do anything I have to leave town...it would be great to have stuff to do here;

online info from town's :-);on "meetings",key subject matter could be added to posting-saving time /prompting interest for those with specific concerns...vs needing to listen to all.Overall, GREAT to have these, tho !!Thanks!

I would like a Northfield address with a Northfield zip code. I have had issues in the past with a Tilton zip code which is Belknap County when I reside in Northfield which is Merrimack County. It is frustrating! ;

Too many people have moved into town and want the amenities they have had in other locals. Move into Northfield because you like what we have not to change us. If we do not have what you feel you need, look someplace else;

Please consider somehow restricting traffic on Zion and Hodgdon Roads. Speed is excessive, amount of traffic is clearly damaging the Road. Much of the traffic across it could / should be on Rte. 132, a road the State maintains and is responsible for. Or so I assume. The wear and tear on this road is just costing the town more \$ in repair and maintenance. And it is now extremely dangerous to walk along. Perhaps at least closing to heavy traffic (Allow local deliveries only) and making it a less convenient BYPASS to the Rte 3 / 132 traffic;

Keep the tax"s as low as possible.

I moved here from another nearby town which have lived for most of my life and have learned to love. Tilton is such a clean, friendly town. I feel so safe and happy since I moved here.

I always have roads issues....my grass and side road areas are always neglected and never look appropriate. This is the town's land and they don't take care of it.

We would be interested in selling our property.

I would like the state owned part of Oak Hill Road paved and lines maintain the whole length of road year round.

Made in T/N date at the Pines!

With property taxes we are paying all town roads should be paved. And every home should have a mailbox in front of home not on different street plus street lights.

Highlands Mtn seems to be reborn as a mountain bike place, can we do the same for the river? encourage companies that rent kayaks and canoes and do trips along the river (Like Saco River)? it would be great to develop a trail along the Northfield side of

Would like to see a recycling committee to educate the townspeople. The presentation at the Town Meeting in March 2012 was a great start. I would like to see it expanded by a committee.

Like the grammar schools. Middle and high schools are lacking.

The questionnaire didn't allow for all possible responses. I would prefer you leave a blank after each question to allow comment. Question 12 for example.... I don't want growth but I don't want additional conservation efforts either. I can't expe

Send out the ten year plan to all tax paying year round residents

common sense needs to be common

We need to give tilton island back to them or remove the bridge and sink it!

Please patrol the Highland Bike park more often. There is always excessive noise after 10 pm. Alcohol and drug use as well.

Thank you to the Selectmen and town staff and volunteers for their dedication time and efforts. The Selectmen should work in concert with one another, regardless of political and personal interested. The Town manager

should take control of issues affect

Continue improvements at recycling center and to encourage our residents to become leaders, not followers in an improved recycling effort. Work on keeping a small town atmosphere in Northfield and strive to enforce and use protection to keep a pristine e

I would like to see Bob Southworth develop some regulations re: the number of items that may be taken from the free-store at the dump. The free store is intended for residents to donate useable items that other residents want or need. It was not intende

Protecting water resources is very important, but as stated above the town of Northfield is not in the buisness of owning property!!

Hiring policies/practives should benefit the town not famnily members.

We have owned on East Side Road for 37 years. Initially, we were all seasonal resident. Now there are several year round residents. We think Northfield should make East Side Road a town owned road.

don't mess with Knowles Pond

I would like to coment on question 13 I think that a little bit of growth is OK for residential and business but it needs to be kept to minimal growth..I love this town and have lived here my whole live and dont want to see it get to over grown...

I think that having a few manufacturing facilities would help the taxes for the town and get more work for the population we have is important. Good jobs leads to less need for affordable housing.

Official "Welcome to Northfield" signs,with origination date,at strategic locations.

It seems that houses in Northfield are not moving as in very hard to sell. It could be a mix of many economic factors at once but this does not bode well for the future and makes Northfield look like a less desirable place to live.

The community center would benefit more people if the programs were more affordable.

Northfield committees & boards are mostly volunteer run, and it would be nice to see these volunteers recognized on a regular/annual basis.

we are in general quite satisfied with northfield. More activities are neded for us seniors.

a newsletter per month

Stay away from "universal rights" based decisions in our decision making process. Common sense is a fast fading attribute in our governments efforts. This country was founded on the concept that government is a rascal that needs to be limited. We have f

I grew up in a much more rural town, but presently own an old farm property in Northfield and greatly enjoy the rural area of Bean Hill and wish not to see any further development, especially of back land. Class 6 roads should not be developed especially

Developing industry comes with risk. Fire and Police costs go up, pressure on town resources go up and taxes may or may not cover cost. Additional risk is that industry can leave and cause a scar on town. It is far easier to turn farmland/residential I

Strong growth in industry creates jobs and creates a better tax base and at the same time we have to be wise with our natural resources.

why, are these questions being asked this way? they seem to imply that should one think that there are too many restrictions on something and that person wants less restrictions on so many of these questions then it could mean the following, they must want

Let the residents and the economy control growth not the government

Protect country lifestyle that we have, keep gravel roads, resist major change, don't try to provide more services - just let us live simply. Town is doing ok - if it ain't broke don't fix it!

The town's police department has so many officers and yet it is hard to get their assistance when needed, always rely on state police. Even though fireworks are legal to purchase the town should make an ordinance that they can not be let off they are distr

get rid of the corruption by the selectman and the dept. heads (police, highway). The town simply can't afford their way's.

Northern Pass high-voltage transmission line proposal is the greatest threat to quality of life in Northfield. Town officers should work to oppose such, as it devalues property & threatens health & welfare of residents & taxpayers.

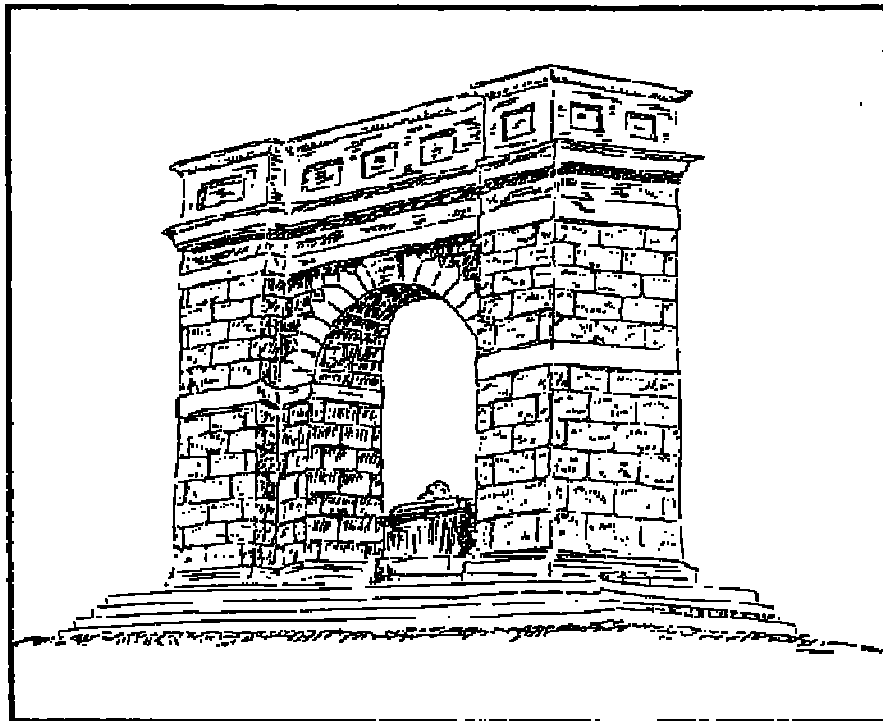
Get a real road agent - one who will work and knows how to build and maintain roads. The tax payers are getting screwed! Attract small business to town to help lower taxes.

**APPENDIX:**

**NORTHFIELD MASTER PLAN  
COMMUNITY FORUMS AND SURVEY  
REPORT, DECEMBER 2002**

# NORTHFIELD MASTER PLAN COMMUNITY FORUMS AND SURVEY REPORT

Presented to the Northfield Planning Board  
December 2002



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Northfield Master Plan Community Forums and Survey Report

## December 2002

### Summary of Findings

- Through the Community Forums held in September 2002, it became obvious that many people in in Northfield feel the town is experiencing increased growth in terms of both population and residential development. According to the results of the community survey, a slightly greater proportion of the respondents indicated that more growth controls are needed as opposed to those that felt growth is being managed properly at the present time.
- Property taxes, a lack of industrial development, and excessive housing development are serious problems according to survey respondents. The level of property taxes seems to be viewed as being associated with the lack of industrial and commercial development in Northfield.
- Despite the lack of industrial and commercial development, there is concern over the loss of farmland and open space. According to the open-ended questions in the survey, as well as the Community Forums held in September 2002, the rural character and sense of community in Northfield are identified as important and something not to be lost.
- The quality of the water resources, the protection of river shorelines, the preservation of wildlife habitat, and the protection of historic buildings and sites, are also important to those who responded to the survey.
- The concept of impact fees seems to be acceptable as a means of having future growth pay for itself, according to survey respondents.
- Lighting regulations are perceived as desirable in Northfield according to survey respondents.
- With respect to community services and facilities in Northfield, those that rated high include the Library, the Rescue/Ambulance service, and both fire and police protection.
- The quality of recreation, sidewalk and streetlight facilities are rated lowest.
- The opinions regarding whether Exit 19 should be expanded to a full interchange were split. Some see the potential expansion as a way to attract commercial and industrial growth, while others see it as creating more traffic and detrimental to the rural character of Northfield.



**Northfield Master Plan Community Forums and Survey Report  
December 2002**

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***Appendix***

- Northfield Master Plan Survey
- Statistical Tabulations of Survey

## I. INTRODUCTION

As part of the process of updating the Master Plan, a community survey was designed. The purpose of the survey was to generate input from residents regarding the predominant issues and concerns in Northfield, especially those expressed at the two community forums held on September 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 2002. Some of the issues identified as having greatest importance included population growth and residential development, the natural environment, water quality, wetlands, and community facilities and services. In addition, how the community felt about the expansion of Exit 19, as well as perceived consequences of such an expansion. Any additional comments or suggestions were also welcomed as part of the survey.

## II. METHODOLOGY

With the assistance of the Northfield Planning Board, a community survey (see appendix) was developed. The survey was pre-tested and then sent out to the 1,500 taxpayer households throughout town. In addition, a further 202 surveys went sent to the apartment dwellings in the two (2) major complexes in Northfield. The release of the survey was also announced in local newspapers in an attempt to reach those people who may not have received a survey otherwise. A self-addressed stamped envelope was provided for respondents. Of the total 1,702 surveys sent out, 586 were returned, resulting in a relatively high response rate of approximately 34%.

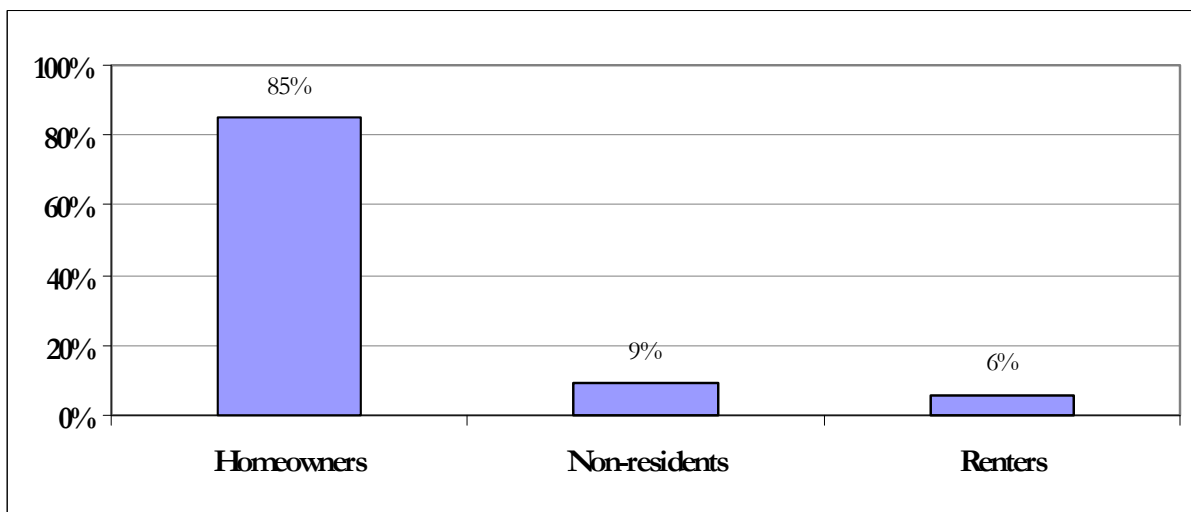
The surveys were tabulated and the open-ended questions were summarized by Lakes Region Planning Commission. This report summarizes the results of the survey responses. It is important to note that although 586 surveys were returned, not every survey was completed in full. For example, the question regarding “resident status” was not answered in 7 of the returned surveys, resulting in only 579 responses for that particular question. The number of respondents to a particular question is provided in the tables and graphs where the information is displayed in this report.

## III. SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

### A. Respondent Resident Status

The respondents were asked if they were a homeowner, a renter, or a non-resident property owner. Of the 579 responses, 85% were homeowners, 9% were non-resident property owners and 6% were renters (see Graph 1 below).

**Graph 1: Resident Status of Survey Respondents**

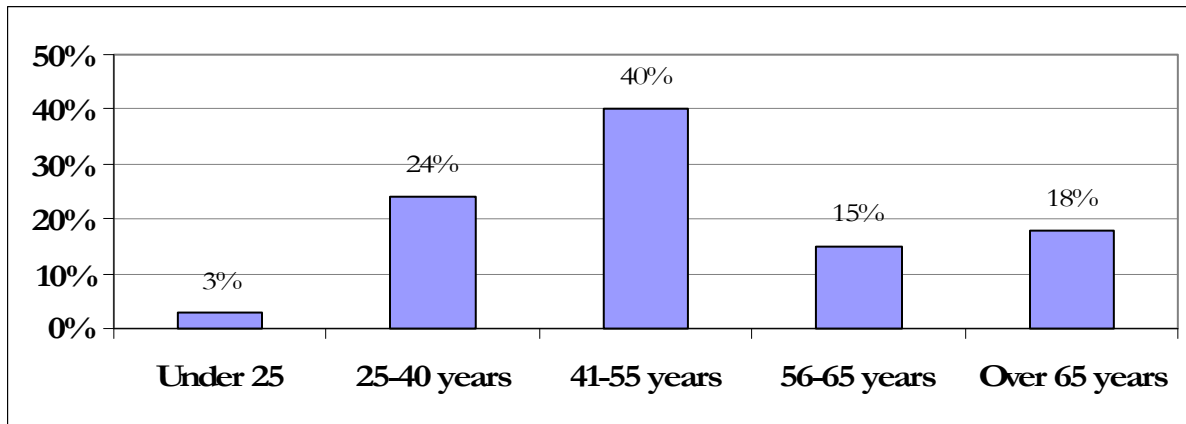


N=579 Responses

*B. Age of Survey Respondents*

Respondents were also asked their age category. As can be seen in Graph 2, most of the survey respondents (40%) were between the ages of 41-55. In total, nearly two-thirds (64%) of the respondents were between the ages of 25 and 55.

**Graph 2: Age of Survey Respondents**

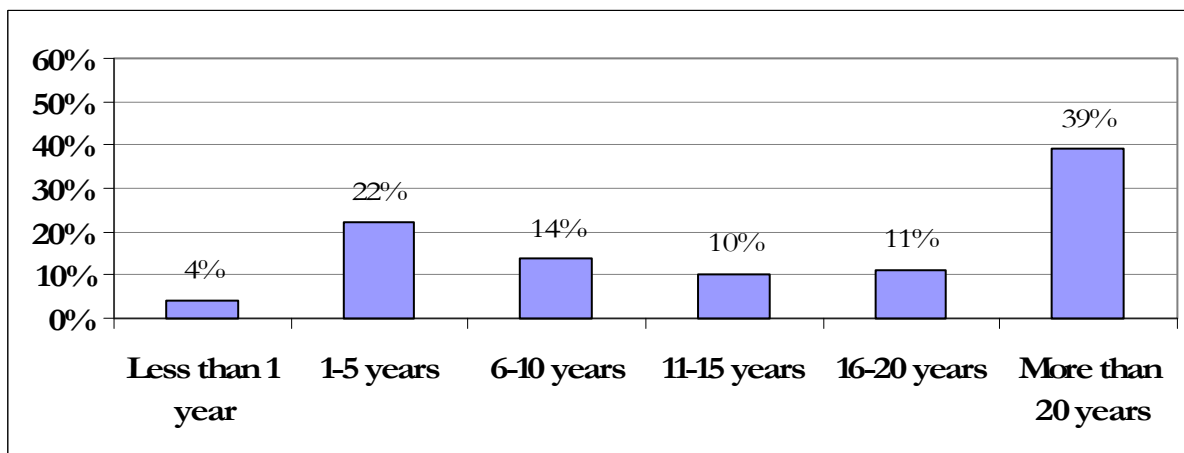


N=580 Responses

*C. Length of Residency or Property Ownership*

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate how long they have been a resident (property owner or resident) or a non-resident property owner in Northfield. As can be seen in Graph 3, the majority of respondents (39%) had been residents or property owners in Northfield for more than 20 years. However, more than one-quarter (26%) of the respondents had only been residents or non-resident property owners of Northfield for 5 years or less. The results are below:

**Graph 3: Length of Residency or Property Ownership (if non-resident)**

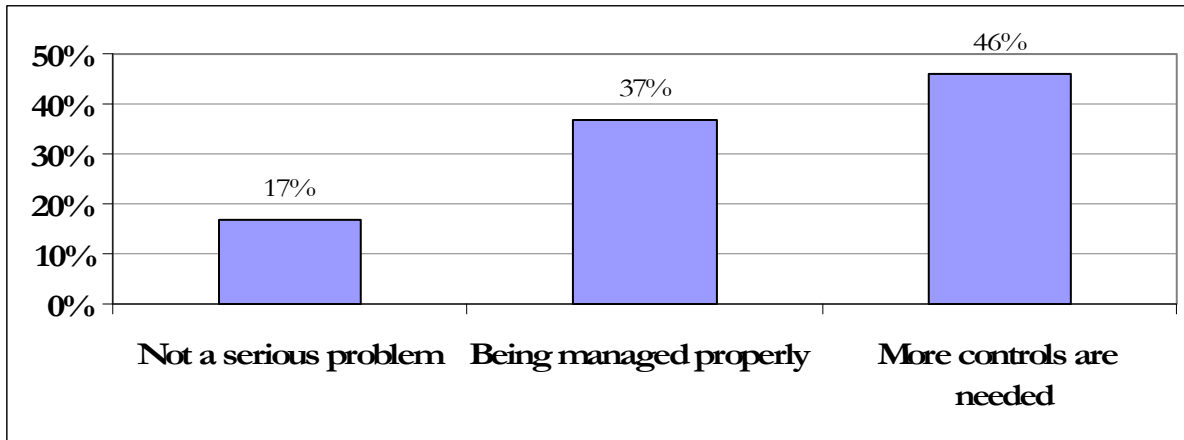


N=582 Responses

**IV. RATE OF GROWTH**

Regarding rate of growth in Northfield, respondents were asked if they felt “Growth is not a serious problem”, “Growth is being managed properly”, or if “More controls are needed”. A minority of those responding to the question (17%) said they thought growth was not a serious problem, 37% felt that growth was being managed properly, and 46% said they thought more controls are needed (see Graph 4). It is important to note that only 545 of the 586 surveys returned contained answers to this question, meaning approximately 7% of the respondents chose not to respond.

**Graph 4: Opinions on Growth of Survey Respondents**



N=545 Responses

**V. MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS**

Respondents were asked to identify the most serious problems in Northfield. They were provided ten options to choose from, and were allowed to circle as many as they felt represented serious problems. The percent column below (Table 1) represents the percentage of returned surveys that had the listed issue as being a “Serious Problem” in Northfield. For example, 34.3% of the returned surveys identified “Loss of Farmland” as being a serious problem in Northfield. When ranked, the most frequently identified serious problems were: 1) Property taxes, 2) Lack of industrial development, 3) Excessive housing development, 4) Loss of farmland, and 5) Lack of commercial development.

**Table 1: Serious Problems in Northfield Identified by Survey Respondents**

Serious Problem	Number of Responses	Percent of # of Survey Respondents
Property taxes	405	69.1%
Lack of industrial development	210	35.8%
Excessive housing development	203	34.6%
Loss of farmland	201	34.3%
Lack of commercial development	199	34.0%
Loss of open space	170	29.0%
Road conditions	144	24.6%
Lack of affordable housing	143	24.4%
Traffic	132	22.5%
Lack of multi-family housing	44	7.5%

**VI. ISSUES**

Respondents were also asked to express their concerns toward a number of issues related to land use, development, growth, housing, town management, water, wetlands, and recreation. For each statement, the respondent was asked to identify that they either “Agree Strongly”, “Agree”, “Disagree”, or “Disagree Strongly”. Table 2 shows the results of this question in two different ways.

First, each of the possible responses were coded with a “1” through “4”, with a “1” representing a response of “Disagree Strongly”, and a “4” representing “Agree Strongly”. The average of these ratings is provided in the column labeled “Mean Rating”. For example, a mean rating of 3.6 for the statement “The quality of water resources is important” indicates that the answers received favored a response of “Agree Strongly”.

The second way this data is displayed is by examining a grouping of responses which fell in either the “Agree Strongly” or “Agree” categories. This shows the tendencies for respondents to generally agree with the statement provided. For example, the “Recreation programs for teen-agers are adequate” returned a response of only 45.5% strongly agreeing or agreeing with the statement. This means that generally (55%) of the respondents did not agree with the statement, and therefore believe that the recreation programs for teenagers are inadequate.

**Table 2: Opinions on Key Issues in Northfield According to Survey Respondents**

Issues	Number of Responses	Mean Rating	Percent Strongly Agree/Agree
The quality of water resources is important.	569	3.6	98.6%
Preserving the rivers' shorelines is important.	545	3.4	96.7%
Areas important to wildlife habitat should be preserved.	563	3.5	94.4%
Identifying and preserving historical buildings and sites are important.	545	3.3	91.8%
Protection of wetlands is important.	548	3.4	91.6%
Any new development should pay additional money for the impact it has on such things as roads, traffic, schools, etc.	545	3.4	86.1%
Lighting of buildings and parking lots, for example, should be regulated to minimize its impact.	484	3.1	81.6%
More recreational activities should be developed for adults and seniors.	463	3.0	79.7%
Attracting new industry is important.	524	3.1	79.2%
Access to our rivers and pond for recreation should be increased.	521	3.1	78.3%
Land should be protected from development.	522	3.1	76.5%
It is important to provide for affordable housing.	511	2.9	71.6%
The town is managing development well.	461	2.6	58.4%
Recreation programs for teen-agers are adequate.	418	2.3	45.5%

**VII. COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

Respondents were also asked to rate community facilities and services. The possible ratings were “Excellent”, “Very good”, “Good”, “Fair”, and “Poor”. Again, each of the responses was assigned a numeric value to develop a “mean rating”, with a “5” being the best, and a “1” being the poorest. The responses were also grouped again to determine the tendency for respondents to feel that particular facilities and services were either “Excellent” or “Very Good”.

As shown in Table 3, the Library had the highest mean rating and the highest percent of excellent/very good responses. Other services that received high ratings included Rescue/Ambulance service, Fire protection, and Police protection. Recreation facilities, Streetlights and Sidewalks were rated the lowest.

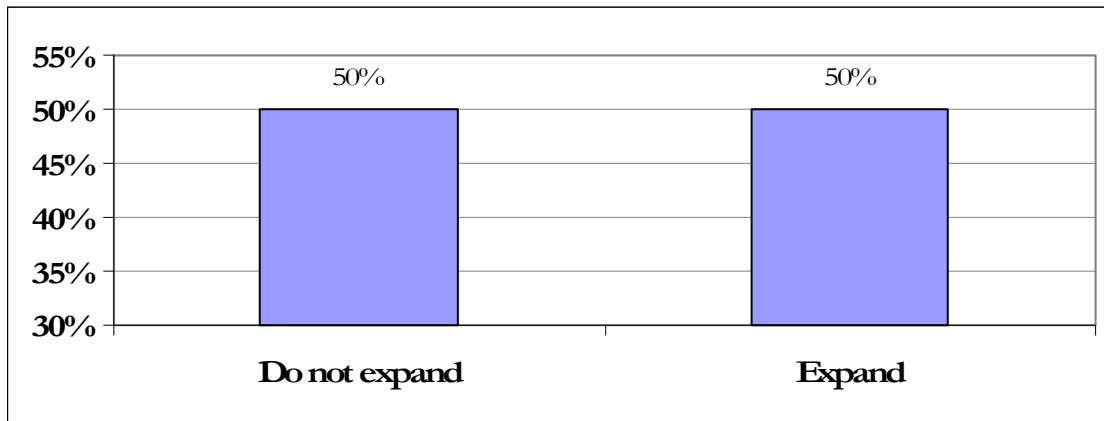
**Table 3: Opinions of Community Services and Facilities in According to Survey Respondents**

Community Facilities and Services	Number of Responses	Mean Rating	Percent Excellent/Very Good
Library	485	4.3	83.9%
Rescue/Ambulance	457	3.9	66.1%
Fire protection	502	3.9	65.8%
Police protection	527	3.8	63.0%
Trash removal	548	3.6	56.2%
Schools	445	3.4	48.4%
Winter road maintenance	560	3.3	44.1%
Summer road maintenance	554	3.3	41.5%
Town Government	489	3.2	36.9%
Town Communication	528	3.1	33.9%
Recreation facilities	478	2.9	27.8%
Streetlights	496	2.9	22.8%
Sidewalks	500	2.7	19.2%

**VIII. INTERSTATE 93 - EXIT 19**

Respondents were asked how they felt about Exit 19 by selecting either statement that best described their opinion. The possible selections were: “I do not want an additional on and off ramp at Exit 19” or “I want an additional on and off ramp at Exit 19”. The respondents who answered this question were equally split on whether Exit 19 should or should not be expanded (Graph 4). It is important to note that 41 survey respondents (7%) did not answer this question.

**Graph 4: Opinions on the Possible Future Expansion of Exit 19**



N=545 Responses

Respondents also provided written reasons for their decision regarding Exit 19. Generally, the reasons given for not supporting an expansion of Exit 19 centered on the concern of more traffic as a result of the expansion, and the loss of rural character in the area. Those who supported an expansion of Exit 19 generally thought it would relieve congestion at Exit 20 and that it would be good for commercial and industrial development in Northfield.

There was no relationship between desired expansion and whether the respondent was a homeowner or renter, young or old, or a new or long-time resident of Northfield.

**IX. COMMENTS**

Respondents were also offered the opportunity to provide open comments regarding some several important topics in Northfield. The following comments are generally representative of all the comments received.

***A. What is the best thing about living in Northfield?***

Clean and quiet community  
 Great school system  
 Close to many outlet stores and dining Close to  
 I93 and work

The country roads, less traffic, but all that is changing since exit 20 started Rural

atmosphere  
 Friendly employees at the Town Hall  
 Convenient hours to do business at Town Hall Small

town

Country living  
 Quiet

The best thing about living in Northfield is the rural nature of the town, including limited commercial development and overall lack of light pollution. Old Home Day and its growing popularity and participation is a good example of the sense of community we have.

Safety, low traffic, cleanliness

Small town, good school, good Town services, not growing out of control Quiet

country setting, great location, close to lakes region

Location  
 Community

Rural life

Currently with open space, but unless something is done soon, there won't be any

Convenient to 93

peace and quiet

Small rural town, not too developed yet, but getting there quickly. Great proximity to Concord, Laconia, lakes, mountains

The rural nature, the wetlands, the farms

Country living but close to the city

The scenery and privacy. It is a very peaceful community.

Good quality of life and close knit community, stores and workplace nearby without having to be right in our backyard

Small town atmosphere Rural setting

Friendly Town Hall Friendly Town meetings Community spirit

Everything

Privacy, sense of community

My neighbors are nice and friendly

Away from hustle and bustle Sandogardy Pond is nice

Rural and recreational space The

size of the community

Cannot think of one, except outrageous taxes Pines

Community Center and schools

The sense of community, slower pace, fewer people, trees, woods, sense of nature around us Having some country atmosphere, trees, flowers, birds and woods

Lower taxes than some towns

Nice friendly town, great services such as garbage pick-up

The rural character and down home people, dirt roads, undeveloped areas A lot of woodland



Friendly, small town community My

neighbors

Good schools Low

crime rate

It was out in the country when we moved here but it is being over developed A very

friendly town

The people!

Sense of security with our current police chief and officers The

most wonderful people

Clean water, quiet, Tilton Main Street, Arch Park, Southwick school, rural resources, cleanliness Living in

country setting, space and beauty

Town government that cares

People, roads, landscape, police, fire and rescue, its atmosphere in general. Keep it a quiet town, a nice little town

The community

It is quiet and we love the woods and all the animals Community

spirit and rural lifestyle

Northfield is a family oriented town

Convenient to shopping and I93 Sense

of community

Location

Natural beauty, quiet, peaceful

The small town feel; historic buildings and monuments; caring and involvement of the residents Quality of life

***B. What would you improve about living in Northfield?***

Nice the way it is

have some sort of central meeting place for residents, i.e., parks, recreation Improve  
the tax base. Discourage low-income housing

Slow down future development Less  
taxes, less government

Expand tax base to lower taxes. Impose impact fees!! Sidewalks,  
especially on Sargent St. to Southwick School. Clean up some of the  
junk yards in town

Lower taxes

School system

Nothing, we like it just the way it is Too

many people are moving in

Try to build a tighter community. Slow the traffic. Well rounded school programs, math, language, science, exercise,  
music, arts, sports team, etc.

More Town water and sewer lines to go up Bean Hill Road More

sidewalks, more planned activities for youths

More things for teen-agers to do Roads

Stop development of housing, the schools are already crowded and we keep having to pay more taxes to cover the  
rest of the children

More land/open space conservation; incentives for landowners to protect property from subdivision and  
development

Much more land in town needs to be protected

Services for Senior Citizens

More conservation areas

Increase recreation for after-school kids Too

many run-down buildings

A better community center

Enforce zoning. Consider increasing recycling education to encourage residents to comply voluntarily

Better school system

More low cost living development for older people with no family, retirees, etc. More

business and or industry to ease tax burden

I would like to see the Highland Ski Resort cleaned up and or fixed up. The environment out there is in bad condition for wildlife

More senior transportation, more recreation and information for seniors as to trips Many

more paved roads

Taxes

I would like more commercial buildings as long as it was done tastefully. Set back off the main road with trees as a buffer zone.

Walk in medical facility Be

in Merrimack County

Tighten town budget. Preserve more open space

Roads and speed of cars

More cultural events

Roads, sidewalks

More recreational areas More

help for the elderly

Leash laws should be enforced

Getting more industries, businesses in town to help with property taxes

Trash, old autos allowed to be stored on property, should be made to clean up

Change minimum lot size to 5 acres

Less taxes for the elderly

Keep it more country, keep dirt roads, increase set back so that houses aren't so close to the road Control on growth

Noise pollution from ATVs traveling on dirt roads and on private property More

programs for teen-agers and children

More affordable rents. The wages in this area do not meet the demands of the price for rents. Would like to see senior housing in Northfield.

Planned, controlled, environmentally-friendly growth.

I would like to see the ponds maintained better with maybe a small town beach at each. Nothing fancy, just some swimming areas with possible lessons for the young kids.

Communication between Town Officials and community people. Limit growth.

I would allow a certain number of new houses per year. Hire a code enforcement officer that accurately inspects.

Clutter in peoples' yards.

Preserve the woods and farmland.

Join the 21st century and think about a balanced town residential, commercial and light clean industry.

### ***C. Any other comments or suggestions?***

You are all doing a good job.

Every time taxes increase, town government points its finger at the schools, but if you compare the town portion of the tax bill to other small towns, we seem to be a lot higher.

Keep up the good work. Could have more stuff for teen-agers to do. I have had my car broken into twice in last 9 months.

I think when you reach the age of 65, people should not have to pay property taxes!

Road construction on Park St. and Sargent St. has made the traffic flow more dangerous than it was before. The road was not straightened and is narrower in some places and too wide in others. Now we feel there needs to be some kind of traffic signal there.

It would be nice for Northfield to develop into an upscale community not to be known for all of the apartments/townhouses, high taxes, etc. Let's get businesses in here with some \$ to help defray our school costs or look to change how the schools are funded by each town. Improve the Rec. program so the children have a place to go and be properly supervised.

The Road Agent does not return phone calls. Dirt roads are low priority. Why do we keep spending \$ on new equipment and winter time OT without being held accountable for it. Culverts are also a problem.

The issues surrounding the Pines Community Center are of great concern. I think the Selectmen should have a greater control over the operation.

Flag at Bridge should be replaced with newer, appropriate sized flag and be lighted if it is to stay out at night. Someone is to be commended also for trying to restore the flowers at the flagpole.

Watch out for the laws you pass they could come back to haunt the whole town. Overall, a very nice community.

Try to keep the small town flavor but mix with a little back road out of the way (sight) industrial. Lower my taxes, please.

The law on dogs should be less severe.

I do not believe I am getting my money's worth from the Pines. I heard the Pines doesn't want teens there, isn't the Pines for everyone or just a few. Do something for the Town and the tax payers, get rid of the huge problem you have at the Pines. Get it done now.

What are we going to do for parking at the baseball field (Pines)? School project looking great. No town can have enough athletic fields. Keeping our kids busy is key. School Board rethink the football issue.

Curtail loud radios, tvs, etc. in or out of vehicles!

The staff at the Town Hall are very helpful and pleasant. The men who work at the Town Recycle yard are very nice and do a great job.

As people migrate north of Concord, it is important to look at community members and youth – these people need to be welcomed to the community – changes should be made to promote growth in activities for the young people – this in turn will enhance the small town feeling.

Post results of this survey.

Remember our children and grandchildren will all need a place to live. Don't deny future generations their right to their own place in the sun.

Thank you for the chance to speak. Please make known what preliminary plans you had in mind when you start.

Land littered with junk cars and plain old junk.

Highland Ski area is wasting away. Please use some tax money to open and fix up the ski area. It could also have a lot of summer uses to continue bringing money in year round. Don't let it waste away.

I think giving land use funds to the conservation committee is a huge mistake. Town government should not become property owners. This will reduce taxes collected and increase the cost of taxes back to the public. Also, having so much land in 5 acre zoning will prevent younger people from being able to live the American dream. I agree too much residential growth is a bad thing, but I believe there could be a better solution. It seems to me if some people want to keep Northfield the way it is, they are at liberty to personally purchase large tracks of land. I shouldn't have to flip the bill or have it affect my children's future here in this good community.

We love Northfield and plan to spend more time there when we retire. Thank you for including us in your planning. It's appreciated. It's just another reason we love Northfield.

I would like Highland Mountain reopened and skiing brought back to this area. The Town could maintain fewer trails and could still make a profit. Night skiing could be limited to one night a week. A ski area would be a huge asset to the community. I would also like to see an exercise gym in town. Thank you.

Northfield is a great place to live and raise a family. We need to attract industry that is suited to small town atmosphere. Please do not turn exit 19 into an exit 20. Keep education costs under control.

I simply love it here. Its like heaven must be. Not friendly neighbors. But everyone else seems so pleasant.

The Northfield News is published by the Town. In the Fall 2002 issue there is a full page article on the Pines Community Center. At the Master Plan Community forums there was overwhelming concern that the TNRC was failing to provide adequate services to the community. The article may improperly influence the responses to recreation related questions and make the results of these responses invalid.

I love our town and its people. I would hate to lose the small town atmosphere we have today. There is also concern over the current administration and organization of our community center, would like to see improvement in that area.

The police need to take more interest in the harassment of people and vandalism of property by teen-aged trouble makers whom come and go through town or drift in from other areas.

This survey was greatly appreciated and would like to see more often.

Way too much development. It is ridiculous, something needs to be done before we turn into Nashua. Just lower taxes, please.

Publish survey results in a timely fashion. Put out surveys frequently, improving the questions based on input. Consider combing Tilton and Northfield as a way to eliminate all government redundancy and lower taxes, etc.

Fire Department spending is out of control. Lets obtain a balance between wants and needs.

The skate park needs to be done so kids do not hang out at the elementary schools. The middle school children need a full time program for the summer.

I feel this survey is a great tool for information. I hope all information will be maximized to assist the growth of our town.

Tilton was a dust parking lot when I moved here, now look at it. We have no commercial or industrial growth in Northfield at all. What do the Selectmen work on all day? Building schools!

I am happy to hear that the Town is seeking resident input on the Master Plan. Thank you for the opportunity to express my viewpoint.

The Town needs to continue to enhance its planning and zoning ordinances to reflect the foresight and planning of its full time residents. Protection of aquifers, riverfront, and farmlands should be a priority, along with enhanced access to the rivers. This town has what so many towns wish they had as far as resources. The onslaught of single-family housing is of less concern than the establishment of additional multi-family housing, particularly conversion of existing single family to multi-family. Affordable housing we have plenty of, and expansion of it could spell disaster in the years ahead.

I feel that new homes are being built too fast and woods are disappearing. Limit house permits per year so it won't be out of control.

It nice that you asked - - thank you

Northfield new taxes and larger building lot size will not slow down growth. It will only add to the expense which is passed on to the consumer. The 20-25 year old, first time buyer.

We should have affordable day bus trips especially for the elderly.

There has to be something done about the drivers in the town that think our back roads are race tracks. Would like to see more people recycling newspapers, cardboard, bottles, plastics, cans.

A larger budget for new books at the library.

### ***X. BUILDINGS AND/OR LAND OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE TO PROTECT***

Respondents were also asked to identify any buildings or places that were of particular importance to them. The following list presents a profile of the predominant buildings and places identified.

#### ***A. Are there buildings and/or land in Northfield that you think are of particular importance to protect? If so, why?***

Knowles Pond area  
Rivers access areas

Town Hall Library

Highland Ski area  
Donahue property

Land around Arch and Town Hall Northfield

Pond  
Shawy Road area

Arch Hall area Baseball  
field (Pines) Land near  
water supply

Arch Town  
Hall  
Northfield Pines

Knowles Pond  
Wetlands

Andy Robert's farm  
Dot Kenyon's farm

R.R. Station  
Old School House

## XI. COMMUNITY FORUM RESULTS

### *A. Cultural and Historic Preservation*

#### Saturday, September 14

- Develop River
- Protection of riverfront land for public access
- Winnepesaukee riverfront
- Develop a River Walk
- Increase public access to the River
- Promote fishing and recreation on River
- Reevaluate setbacks from water in the Zoning Ordinance
- Support of railroad path and history of the river
- Preserve the wetlands
- Preserve wetlands
- Continue efforts to protect, rivers, wetlands, ponds, and aquifers
- Care of water
- Look for incentives to discourage clear cutting forests
- Limit tree cutting and preserve the historical forested appearance of the area
- Keep farmlands safe and undeveloped
- Conserve the remaining farms with easements
- Preservation of historic properties such as farmlands and old homesteads
- Aesthetics - preservation of country atmosphere - open farmland and woodland
- Preserve the rural, farming characteristics of Northfield
- Incentives not sell, such as legal tax breaks
- Increased education about easements, current use, and tax advantages
- More active role to put more land in conservation
- Clean-up Elm Street
- Keep the beautiful tree lined streets
- More appreciation and preservation needed in the historic home and building areas
- Preserve the views up Zion Hill around Southwick Farm
- Protect Bean Hill from development
- Preservation of tree-lined streets and our older homes on quiet streets
- Preserve historic buildings
- Protect land areas around our present historic sites
- Work with developers to protect historic buildings
- Ensure Register of Historic Places is up to date and stays that way
- Inventory private and public historic places
- Define the cultural center and identity (not the UFW)



- Older buildings on Park St. and Highland Ave. and old Northfield Center
- Traffic that doesn't move well ruins the historic, scenic, and cultural characteristics of Northfield. Work with developer to resurrect Highlands Ski Area to year round recreation such as cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, wheeling, hiking, health recreation and fitness (with childcare)
- Work to develop the Highland Ski Area as Year-round opportunity
- Maintain the "Pines"
- Maintain the "Pines" as our community center
- Retain and maintain the "Pines" center for both adult and child recreation purposes
- Important resources include the Tilton Arch, Southwick Farm, and Town Library
- Maintain the Hall Library with important town history
- Need a safe place for children to play like the Tilton Arch
- Maintain the community center
- Identify important resources on maps - library, cemeteries, town hall, Indian sites, water falls, Bean Hill, etc.
- Maintaining our "Old Home Day" festivities
- Continue to cooperate with Tilton on uses of the "Island" and "Old Home Day" celebrations
- Keeping the social events (e.g. Old Home Day, Town Gatherings)
- Continue to promote "Old Home Day"
- I would like to see the schools more available for cultural interests and community events (e.g. musicals, etc.)
- There is a need for more education in the conservation area
- Have residents come into schools to orient the pupils to our history and resources
- I would like to see a course on "peace" bringers into the school curriculum from elementary through high school and beyond
- Continue publication of small Northfield flyer (Newsletter?) which tells us about Northfield History
- Make information about Northfield and Families available to public and developers
- Growth is needed in arts, music, cultural events, quaint playhouses, and antique auctions
- Take an active role in stopping expansion of Exit 19
- Develop regulations to limit noise pollution
- Main Street is nice but gift shops every other store is a short term solution for the owner, if not the street

### Monday, September 16

- Keep intact and enhance the Village area
- Preserve the Village district
- Protect the Village (Park St.)
- Promote the Village district
- Develop renovation protection for the Village
- Protect older homes from demolition in Village
- Create a new "Village District" Zone
- Create zoning to promote traditional New England character in Village
- No change in town character
- Provide more education on Village history
- Increase regulation of business uses with respect to history of Northfield Village
- Make restrictions on new buildings to look and fit in with our New England essence
- Development of the Village district
- Establish a village zoning district, define uses to preserve current spirit of the village, and encourage more walking and bike riding to the Village
- Limit and regulate commercial development in the Village

- Keep the small town feel of Northfield
- More community activities for children and teens
- More community activities to assist in building a stronger and tighter community
- Town museum
- Park for the community, with stonewalls
- Make more use of the library as a cultural center
- Making the “Pines” more accessible for all children
- Continue to improve on the Library
- Keep the Village district and “Pines” center
- Increase knowledge of, and use of, the “Pines”
- Our recreation center and the “Pines” are a “recently” developed cultural value
- Unified effort to provide after-school community activities for kids (i.e. library, community center, recreation, etc.)
- Develop more adult and senior recreation and community programs
- Create after-school programs for youth
- Coordinate all community and recreation programs in Town
- Find ways to improve communication in Northfield
- We need a street map with historical spots labeled
- Preserve the historic integrity of Northfield
- Preserve Town Hall and identify historic buildings and areas
- Protect our historic buildings
- Inventory and catalogue all Historic Buildings in Town
- Make effort to preserve historical buildings - don't crowd them out with new buildings
- Preserve the historic buildings left (barns, garages, etc.)
- Explore more grant opportunities to preserve historic buildings
- Explore more grants to preserve farms, scenic vistas, stonewalls, cemeteries, stone barns, etc.
- Incorporate the town walking tour into the new trail being developed
- Develop trails to arch to tie into future multi-use trail
- Develop multi-use trail
- Continue to protect the Arch
- Maintain the Arch and make more use of it
- Arch area
- Promote the Arch
- Promotion of Arch
- Encourage use of the Arch and other historic areas
- Develop the Arch
- Protect the Arch
- Promote the Arch - Signage from highway, increased visibility
- Clean and develop access to Tilton Arch
- Protect cultural areas like the arch
- Preserve and promote the Arch
- Enhance and advertise the Arch as a centerpiece of the Town
- Provide education opportunities such as field trips and handouts in school regarding Arch
- Cut back trees to increase visibility of Arch
- Promote the Arch locally and statewide through planned activities
- Protect and promote the Arch
- Continued improvement and use of Tilton Arch as a historical park
- Artist studios that are businesses and attraction retail shops
- Encourage small shops in downtown area

- Farming is a cultural way of life, lets keep it possible and valued in Northfield. Children need to grow up around cows and chickens and horses, not just read about them in books
- Save Sandogardy Pond for public use
- Keeping the river accessible for fishing areas
- Tourism connected to history
- Promote tourism and create a Historic District
- Town cemetery looks terrible and we need a task force to upgrade fencing, repair broken stones, etc.

### *B. Natural Resources*

#### **Saturday, September 14**

- We need more land in conservation
- Not enough land in conservation
- A 5% Conservation Zone is good
- Plan large tracts of land into conservation - preserving the rural areas for future generations
- The Town needs to purchase more large tracts of land for conservation use before they are purchased by developers
- Need more open and conservation land
- We need to expand conservation land in town
- Protect as much land as possible
- Protect Winnepesaukee and Merrimack River (and land around them)
- Protect large tracts of undeveloped land
- Preserve rural nature of Northfield
- How can we encourage owners of large parcels of land in current use
- You will need to preserve all agricultural lands whether presently used or not. I guarantee it. Please refer to the Chinese famine of many years ago, when the government eliminated family farms in favor of government run farms
- Concerned about loss of farm and wooded lands which affect wildlife
- No logging keeping the area beautiful for the future
- Fields and woods for and between each new building area, preferably joined together
- Northfield needs to prevent "backlot"
- Increase conservation zoning on residential lots to 10 acres - backlands 20 acres
- Create prime wetlands to protect aquifers in Northfield
- Preserve wetlands
- Develop Knowles Pond for community
- Expand Knowles Pond town land
- Knowles Pond development for residents of Northfield
- Knowles Pond conservation
- Surrette Battery property
- Northfield Pond recreation
- Preservation of Skyline views on Bean Hill
- No cell towers on condos
- Control residential growth consistent with sewers
- Ensure clean, pure water supply by protecting the aquifer
- What is the impact of development on the water quality in the existing aquifer?
- At what point does all the well drilling deplete or exhaust the groundwater system that would require the necessary construction of extended municipal water systems

- Concerned about water quality - both drinking water and stream/river quality (i.e. development affects runoff and drainage into streams)
- Water Quality
- Industrial Pollution
- Protect our water
- Keep the river safe and accessible
- River cleanliness
- Prevent congestion
- Keep Northfield and small town and safe
- I enjoy the semi-rural environment and the diversity of land use already in progress. I will be well over 65 in 2020 so I cannot envision the environment then except for my grandchildren who are living in the area. I like Northfield the way it is and do not appreciate pollution (noise and air) and hate the increased traffic
- Noise pollution from use of land under current use with owners that live out of state. We need designated areas to ride dirt bikes and 4 wheelers and we need to enforce the law when they are illegally used
- I moved here in 1969. I did enjoy the move up here to NH. The growth has been tremendous. I would like to be able to relocate to a smaller home in the near future. I agree we need some light industry and more employment opportunities
- Limit noise pollution by enforcing muffler installation on motorcycles
- Educate owners about value of open space and easements
- Develop downtown - focus commercial development on Park Street
- Reevaluate zoning along riverfronts

### Monday, September 16

- Upgrade the river corridor
- Greenways and trails
- More protected hunting areas
- Indefinite land preservation and conservation easements
- Greenway / Buffer Zone
- Plan buffer areas into all developments by using a portion of the subdivided land to affect separation of lots
- Increase acreage for conservation zoning for residential housing development
- Protecting open space and natural resources through zoning and funding
- Increase our conservation land and fees
- Protect our resources such as water and green space
- Make efforts to preserve out open space, especially the large undeveloped areas
- Assist large land owners with protection easements
- Identify our potential/existing wildlife corridors and begin efforts to conserve through easements, etc.
- Protection of rural character by promoting growth close to where services are and discourage growth in outlying areas
- Keep rural character
- Greenways are good
- Encourage owners of large tracts of land to avoid subdivision and housing development
- Maintain agricultural properties
- Claim more conservation districts
- Promote more current use land
- Develop greenways
- Develop walking, hiking trails using our youth to build so they will respect the preservation of land

- Keep power boats off Sandogardy Pond
- Maintain water resources health and access
- Encourage environmental easements
- Keep Highlands for skiing
- Protect Bean Hill from development
- Protect aquifer by extending Northfield's sewer system (this will mean fewer septic systems)
- Protect river areas
- Protection of NH Route 140's aquifer
- Need to protect aquifer
- Aquifer
- Purchase other half of Knowles Pond and protect
- Preserve aquifer
- Preserve more land and open space
- Protect the Winnepesaukee River
- Improve on our area on Sandogardy Pond and improve its water quality
- Protect our water supply aquifer
- Town forest - 20% of town should be protected forest/agricultural
- Control the development of our farmland
- Lots of people have come to Northfield to have access to beautiful rivers, mountains, forests, etc. These attributes need long-term plans to preserve and allow multi-use activities that do not pollute or use up
- Protect water sources
- Water resources kept clean
- Protect water
- Northfield needs a way to preserve open space. Residents prefer a rural flavor, rural way of life - but it is hard to manage when large sums of \$ come in to buy open space to develop for houses
- Maintain farmland and forest scenery
- Develop matching funds for acquiring open acreage
- Concerns over emissions controls in conjunction with development on NH 140
- Careful regulation of runoff from building sites, agriculture, and lawns into water
- Water usage concerns? Possibly limit lawn watering during draught periods
- Preserve river frontage and promote multi-use trails along rivers
- Water protection and safe use of waterways
- Protecting the Rivers
- River and water protection - Winnepesaukee, Merrimack, Tioga, Knowles Pond - Protect recreation access also
- Promote centralized services
- Increase funding for current use
- What is the right amount of change?
- Increase conservation land
- Provide protection incentives
- Promoting replanting of disturbed vegetation
- What is the relationship between costs of services and conservation land
- Creative Development
- Limit development on NH 140 for Aquifer protection
- Provide more education on Aquifer Protection
- Monitor groundwater withdrawals
- Need to increase recreation opportunities - bike lanes, river access, Skate Park, appeal to youth
- Promote greenways, especially where they naturally exist along rivers

- Promote multi-use trails
- Recognize Current Use is not forever
- Use the Town Newsletter to communicate and educate

### *C. Transportation and Land Use*

#### **Saturday, September 14**

- Better Public Transportation
- Promote enhanced use of railroad stations (i.e. off Sandogardy Pond Road)
- Promote bicycling and walking for both exercise and transportation
- Promote a full Exit 19 but with proper zoning and planning in place
- Sidewalk improvements making areas more safe and accessible
- Multi-use paths
- Trails and walking opportunities
- Improvement of sidewalk system in town (e.g., sidewalk from Park Street to Southwick School)
- Railways
- Winnepesaukee River Trail
- Multi Use Trail
- Recreation and alternative transportation
- Relocate Highway Department to allow commercial development at the present site
- Increase our conservation land owned by the Town
- Should not Impact the aquifer
- Better development of NH 140
- Open space saved
- Need controlled growth of commercial and industrial uses
- Villages
- Planned growth for commercial, industrial, and residential
- Exit 19 can easily turn into Exit 20
- Regulate some types of local businesses and transportation, such as heavy transportation at night and engine brakes
- Need Public Transportation
- Stop Exit 19 expansion
- Limit the types of commercial businesses allowed in developing Exit 19
- No full Interchange at Exit 19
- No Exit 19 development
- Protect aquifer on NH 140 which is a commercial area
- No expansion of Exit 19
- Prohibit growth at Exit 19 - no new Interchange
- Leave Exit 19 as it is
- No full Interchange at Exit 19 - We need to protect to promote our "village area"
- Oppose development of Exit 19 unless growth is controlled
- Plan for how we want a full Interchange at Exit 19 to look so it doesn't look like Exit 20
- Use the Master Plan to limit the development of a full Interchange
- Open up Exit 19 for Commercial Development
- Exit 19 - We would like to see it. We can avoid driving to Tilton to get on I-93 Northbound
- Rail access to industrial park areas
- Review whether or not we want to build out Exit 19
- Keep Exit 19 as it is

- Build a new Town Garage near the transfer station
- Keep our roads rural. We like slow dirt roads. It brings people here who appreciate the rural way of life around here
- Select some of our “back roads” to be designated “scenic roads”
- Close unused town roads
- Need to better forecast improvements to upgrade town roads
- Planned maintenance of roadways to improve road conditions
- Enforce speed limit on all streets in Northfield, not just Park Street
- Keep some of the dirt roads dirt to fit with our rural character
- Limit truck use off Exit 19 to Northfield businesses
- Create forced, safer, slow downs on roads (curves, speed bumps, etc.)
- Maintain traffic patterns
- No traffic lights and minimal overhead street lights in town
- Identify roads that need repair
- Create areas for outdoor activities - all, any
- Improve existing roads
- Surface Shaw Road to help cut maintenance caused by the increase of use with new development
- Parking improvements
- Keep streets clear
- Improve Sidewalks
- Enhance commercial and industrial development on NH 140
- Enhance utilities along NH 140
- Protect the aquifer
- Access management
- Establish a Village District to limit uses in the Village and preserve the Village
- Need for public transportation
- Establish an agricultural district
- Do you think the Interchange should be relocated?
- Are you in favor of a full Interchange?
- Do you think a full Interchange will increase traffic in the Village?
- Do you think that the Village area will be negatively impacted with a full interchange?
- Discourage Expansion to a full Interchange
- What is the advantage(s) to the Town of a full Interchange?
- Zone to plan for a full Interchange in case it does happen
- Enhance safety at Exit 19
- Traffic calming
- Enhance enforcement of traffic laws
- Better shoulders
- Resurface Shaw Road
- Enhance sidewalk system - Dearborn Rd., Sargent St., Gale Ave., and Hill Street
- Planning Board should look at limiting access to some Class VI Roads

### Monday, September 16

- Develop or enforce noise ordinances for loud exhausts - motorcycles and some 4 wheel trucks.
- Limit loud and heavy trucks after regular work hours in residential areas
- More enforcement of speed limits on main arteries (e.g. Bay Street, Summer Street, and Park Street)
- On road construction - when upgrading - keep in the curves, make some “speed bumps” to keep traffic slower - don’t straighten curves

- Keeping some of the back roads gravel or crushed stone as scenic roads - this will keep the town rural
- Speed bumps
- Commuter train southbound
- Sponsor community transportation for the elderly
- Develop Mass Transit (Depot) for railroad or busses or freight
- There is too much development going on without careful thought to land stability and water use, etc.
- There is a need for elderly transportation
- The traffic on Route 3 is too fast - need to patrol high school drivers more - they like to speed through town and down Bay Hill Road
- Limit growth and amount of housing
- Bus routes to Franklin Hospital to Tilton to RBC Center maybe Exit 20
- Route 140 Industry
- Maintain our country roads
- Do not make country roads into nice paved highways - limit improvements so people slow down (I wish they had not paved Keasor Road).
- Set aside the large tracts of land and make them undevelopable
- Enforce speed limits by posting
- No more paved roads
- Keep roads dirt and bumpy
- Define the secondary road design to include pedestrian right-of-ways - 4 foot shoulders for people are needed everywhere
- Less logging - the heavy loaded trucks destroy our roads
- Keep gravel roads
- Open up Scribner Road
- Explore the hiking and biking opportunities in Northfield (e.g. Stowe, VT)
- Bike Paths on the Main Roads in Town
- Safer sidewalks through the village and around whole town area
- Separate high traffic and industrial areas from residential and school areas - keeping shops and walking areas in conjunction with each other
- Set aside land for industry on NH 140 and NH 132
- Define feeder roads and transportation patterns to be efficient and not impact people
- Direct and control Exit 19 expansion
- Plan well ahead for an obviously needed by-pass from Franklin to Tilton and/or Laconia
- Direct and control Exit 19 expansion
- Use some of the land on NH 140 and keep the area off Exit 19 small
- Preserve and activate as much agricultural land as possible.
- You are fortunate to be on an active rail line - that will be a key to this town's long-term survival
- A four-way exchange at Exit 19 will not turn Northfield into a Tilton (Shaw's, Mall, Home Depot, etc.)
- Less permits for housing units and no more apartments
- Encourage developers to keep land open - put houses on smaller areas
- Reduce the amount of building permits
- Increase required lot size and road frontage to limit residential growth and ease road usage
- Expand and preserve wetlands and undeveloped areas to maintain the integrity of our country town
- Preserve more wetlands and conservation areas
- Expand land for conservation
- Provide a weekend tour in Northfield to show how beautiful Northfield is during fall foliage
- Keep open spaces and forests
- Keep scenic roads rural
- Preserve our residential downtown areas



- I appreciate the Knowles Pond area of development. Need to publicize it for more public use
- It's time to limit growth. Plan for some industry and don't allow large retail - small shops are ok.. Definitely limit housing development
- Limit building permits as they relate to transportation
- Managing Growth
- Protection of Natural Resources balance
- Impact fees (Residential and/or Commercial)
- Target area zoning
- Preservation through zoning
- Longer range planning
- No backlot development/easements
- Better communication in town to preserve water supply
- Water supply is near hazardous Route 140 and in an Industrially zoned area
- Explore opportunities to limit clear cutting and to provide conservation easements

#### *D. Assorted Topics ("Grab Bag")*

##### **Saturday, September 14**

- Encourage landowners to allow recreation - e.g. hiking, biking, snowmobiling
- More recreational options for all age brackets - not just the young
- Use the Pines a little more - it could be a place for our kids to play and be safe
- The town should look at creating a new sports facility for kids at Bean Hill Ski Area (Highlands)
- More thought towards our children - their schools education - extra curricular activities, civic involvement, etc.
- Restrict new road construction to limit development into untouched land
- Keep Northfield as a small town community - for us and our children
- Keep small town, friendly atmosphere in all Town Departments - don't get "big townitis"
- Housing - Design affordable subdivision community-based within proximity to schools and transportation corridors
- Discourage building from long distances from Town Center
- More cooperation and communication with the Tilton Main Street Program because the towns are so closely knit and affect each others actions closely
- This town is a rare find and will attract people for that reason
- I think the town will just need to work together
- Preserve our Town Center around the "Pines"
- We need a way to get more residents involved in meetings like this. A very small % of the population makes decisions that all have to live with
- Have a users fee (impact fee?) for housing and building development
- Establish Impact Fees for developers
- Impose impact fees on developers
- Get more people involved in government. The same people attend all meetings and the same people on all town boards
- Keep small town government
- Maintain town meeting concept
- Recognize historic homes and encourage plaques to give the people a sense of history
- Keep Exit 19 the way it is
- No 4-way Interchange in Northfield

- Town should purchase land for future municipal use
- Spending a little more money on the police should be a good way to keep town a nice place to live
- School building plans being out of control because of multiplicity of communities in SAU
- Relocate Town Shed to back road and sell property for industry - keep fire and police in same location
- Evaluate level of police service and keep abreast of it with growth
- Wetlands should be kept as is and not filled in or moved for growth of population
- Encourage town support (funding) for conservation land
- Encourage residents or landowners of large parcels to sell easements to Town Conservation
- Communities with strong church priorities make a better population make-up
- Make sure you get in touch with key people in town when you are planning a public forum - key people who are really well connected and are in contact with a lot of people can really help spread the word and get people involved (e.g. Police Chief, Family and School Coordinator, etc.)
- Gambling at Rockingham Park
- Controlled industrial growth with active searches for these industries by our government
- Keep industry on Route 140 - infrastructure already in place
- Relocate Exit 19 to be less centralized
- Make a decision - Do we curb growth before or after we look at additional industry?
- Stop 4-way Interchange at Exit 19
- Stop any further development of Exit 19

### Monday, September 16

- Encourage recycling
- Recycling needs to improve - should we move towards a mandatory system? As it is the town pays way too much to get rid of its trash
- Show our appreciation for our community more!! Positive image, kids picking up trash, Skateboard Park
- Manage how population has an effect on Level of Service
- We don't need a gas station or Wendy's downtown that pay \$6.00 per hour - Look for businesses that will pay people enough money to live here
- Promote industry that pays a livable wage
- Before we open the downtown up to industry we should wait to see what happens with the State and School Funding
- No more chain stores and restaurants. Development needs to be useful business (jobs, etc.)
- Preserve meadows etc. in town with realistic setbacks of at least 500 feet undisturbed
- Stop expansion of Exit 19
- Effort to preserve the large unfragmented area on Bean Hill
- Keep the Village District and promote its growth
- Limit the number of building permits per year
- Keep fast food out
- Recycling made available curbside - eventually mandatory
- Industry is GOOD, commercial is NOT GOOD
- Our schools are a significant resource and growth has hampered, not enhanced, their ability to provide quality education
- Effect better traffic control through enforcement of existing ordinances
- Assess impact fees for large development projects
- Preserve open space (farmland) via purchasing conservation easements
- Celebrate the character of the town
- Increase recreational opportunities (i.e. purchase ski area and turn into a year-round recreation center)
  - Community involvement is a valuable community resource. We would do well to figure out more ways to get citizens involved and participating
  - Cluster Zoning - rather than minimum acre lot size - for example, a 20 acre development instead of 10 homes on 2 acres each, put 10 homes on 5 acres and protect 15 acres

- Maintain our Police and Fire department to the quality we have gotten used to
- Promote our Police and Fire Departments
- Designate specific resources and services for increased teen population (33% growth since 1990)
- Scott Hilliard for Governor 2004
- More opportunities for recreation for all ages, especially ages 11 - 18 after school
- More development of community opportunities for programs and activities for middle school and high school students
- Control growth - larger tracts
- Encourage the clean-up of Elm St. along River, etc.
- I like the idea of a wildlife preserve as in Belmont
- 100% Current Use Penalty to Conservation
- No backlot development at all
- Create a place for the children
- To preserve and replant the "Pines"
- Controlled development of commercial and light industrial tax base
- Utilize more fully the talent pool of retired seniors
- We have the resources so many other communities want. They may always be greener, but remember that we have the raw materials to be a modern rural town in NH
- Village district for businesses - "storefronts" to conform with village 1-2 story and architecturally village like
- Small business that can be an attraction and destination
- Low impact commercial development park
- Need to balance amount of commercial and residential permits. We need both. Not all of one and not the other.
- Business and art facilities