



Town of Richmond
MASTER PLAN

PURPOSE OF THE MASTER PLAN

In sections I. and II. of **RSA 674:2** (See Appendix A) which is the state guide to the development of a town Master Plan, we read: *“The purpose of the master plan is to set down as clearly and practically as possible the best and most appropriate future development of the area under the jurisdiction of the planning board to aid the board in designing ordinances that result in preserving and enhancing the unique quality of life and culture of New Hampshire, and to guide the board in the performance of its other duties in a manner that achieves the principles of smart growth, sound planning, and wise resource protection. The master plan shall be a set of statements and land use and development principles for the municipality with such accompanying maps, diagrams, charts and descriptions as to give legal standing to the implementation of ordinances and other measures of the planning board. Each section of the master plan shall be consistent with the others in its implementation of the vision section. The master plan shall ne a public record subject to the provisions of 91-A.”*

I. GENERAL VISION STATEMENT

RSA 674:2, II(a) (See Appendix A) states that a vision section *“serves to direct the other sections of the plan”* and that it contains *“a set of statements which articulate the desires of citizens affected by the master plan, not only for their locality but for the region and the whole state. It shall contain a set of guiding principles and priorities to implement that vision.”*

The Town of Richmond, New Hampshire’s **Master Plan** is a **vision of life in a small southwestern rural town that endorses sustainability and conservation as its fundamental guiding values for land use and development, housing, transportation, utilities and public services, community facilities, and recreation.** Guided by **RSA 674:36, II(m)** and **674:44, II(i)** --- (See Appendix A)--- such an essential vision of sustainability and conservation, therefore, becomes the ecological and environmental basis for including innovative land use controls in both the town’s subdivision and site plan review regulations where necessary to maintain a quality of life which makes us a community that respects the land we live on, the water we drink, and the air we breathe, or as **RSA 674: 2 (I)** ---(See Appendix A)---states, *“smart growth, sound planning, and wise resource protection.”*. All of this serves and echoes the results of a community

survey referenced in the previous 2004 edition of the Master Plan which states: “*The community survey has shown that Richmond citizens want to preserve the town’s rural character, its forests, open spaces, wetlands, and historic sites, and create and preserve trails and abandoned roadways.*”

A. SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability refers to policy and action which holds up and supports the environment through agriculture, land use, and overall planning that helps communities and individuals therein to participate in an economy that is environmentally and socially friendly resulting in the reduction and eventual elimination of a destructive footprint left on Planet Earth globally, regionally, and locally.

B. CONSERVATION

Following the encouragement given by **RSA 672:III-a** ---(See Appendix A)---, conservation efforts refer to reducing energy use through behavioral habits, efficient technology, and recycling. Conservancy itself, when implemented, reduces the energy load needed to accomplish a task. Such efficiency means that what you use delivers what you want at a lower cost per unit. Sustainability and conservation are directly related to community health and well being. Energy efficiency, in the long term, produces economic savings and economic growth as well as the overall health and well being of our town community as a whole.

C. GOAL

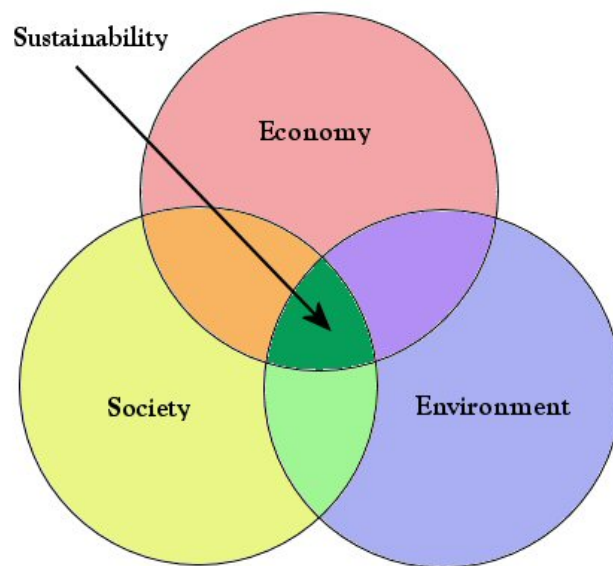
To foster the values of sustainability and conservation in order to maintain and improve a quality of life in Richmond that will continue to allow Richmond residents to live, work, participate in recreation, raise a family, and honor diversity while simultaneously sharing a proud unity of purpose which enriches our sense of community. In short, the Master Plan Goal is to help our rural town of Richmond, New Hampshire, to plan for sustainable, conservation based efficient growth and development.

D. POLICIES AND PRACTICES

We will achieve this goal through policies and practices that preserve Richmond’s rural atmosphere, tap available resources, control growth that is supportable and economically fair. Our GOAL must guide the regular updating of our Subdivision and Site-Plan Regulations as well as our Zoning Ordinances. Our GOAL and POLICIES AND PRACTICES provide us with the vision contained in each section of the Master Plan and the recommendations that follow.

E. NEW HAMPSHIRE RSA

Each year **new** laws are passed which amend current sections in the **New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated (RSAs)**, insert **new** sections, reenact sections or repeal sections. An RSA documents the enabling legislation and context out of which Planning and Land Use Regulation are developed and maintained in each town. It is very important for the Master Plan to reflect particular RSAs when a town creates its vision for development. RSAs which promote important changes in the rural town vision for Richmond will be referenced. The RSA can be read in Appendix A.



II. ENERGY

OVERVIEW: Embracing and intertwined with all elements of **RSA 674:2** (See Appendix A) is energy use. Specifically, RSA 674:2, III(n) states that the energy section of the Master Plan “*includes an analysis of energy and fuel resources, needs, scarcities, costs, and problems affecting the municipality and a statement of policy on the conservation of energy.*” Consumption of energy everywhere, including small rural towns like Richmond, is a challenge. The effect it has on our natural environment, our pocketbook, and our overall lives has raised it to a necessary central focus of our every day lives. Carbon Dioxide is a pollutant. How do we protect ourselves from its destructive effect on climate and the environment, yet heat and air condition our homes, cook our food, drive our cars, and carry out all the basic necessities of life in a small town here on Planet Earth?

The Climate Change Resolution (Town of Richmond's Warrant Article 41)
Passed at the 2007 Town Meeting Which Became the Basis for the Formation of the Town of Richmond Voluntary Energy Committee. Article 41 reads as follows: "To see if the Town will go on record in support of effective actions by the President and the Congress to address the issue of climate change which is increasingly harmful to the environment and economy of New Hampshire and to the future well being of the people of Richmond. These actions include: (1) Establishment of a national program requiring reductions of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions while protecting the U.S. economy. (2) Creation of a major national research initiative to foster rapid development of sustainable energy technologies thereby stimulating new jobs and investment. In addition, the Town of Richmond encourages New Hampshire citizens to work for emission reductions within their communities, and we ask our Selectmen to consider the appointment of a voluntary energy committee to recommend local steps to save energy and reduce emissions." The VEC (Voluntary Energy Committee) was formed with the following goal: “As stated in the Climate Change Resolution, our goal is ‘to recommend local steps to save energy and reduce emissions.’ Those recommendations are submitted to the Board of Selectmen.

Members of VEC have attended quite a few workshops and made a number of recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. In effect, our town is moving forward in a formal way to address Article 41, and in that spirit, the Master Plan vision for Richmond is an energy future that is environmentally clean, economically wise in the long run, and made possible by our coming together as a locally united small town rural community. In other words, our energy future depends on us all being in this together.

A. ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABLE DESIGN ZONING ORDINANCE

Embracing **RSA 672:III-a.**, the Town of Richmond’s vision of sustainability and conservation encourages distributed generation, onsite generation of energy like solar, wind, cogeneration and other innovative measures. In this context, we want developers to focus on energy efficiency at the pre-design level. With this in mind, it is the hope of the Master Plan that, in accordance with **RSA 674:18**, the Richmond Planning Board will develop an Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Design Zoning Ordinance that the local legislative body may adopt that not only applies to land use across the town but also embraces changes needed in our municipal buildings.

III. LAND USE

Introduction: Following guidelines of the NH Office of State Planning, this Land use section will provide a description and analysis of past and present trends and establish the basis for making future decisions. This is for the extent and location of Land Use districts including the density and type of development activity that should occur in these districts.

As per **RSA 674:2** (See Appendix A), the Land Use section “*shall translate the vision statements into physical terms. Based on a study of population, economic activity, and natural, historic, and cultural resources, it shall show existing conditions and the proposed location, extent, and intensity of land use*”

The importance of this Land Use plan cannot be over emphasized. As per **RSA 674:18** (See Appendix A), the local legislative body may adopt a Zoning Ordinance only after the Planning Board has adopted the general statement of objectives and the Land Use section of the Master Plan.

A. PAST AND PRESENT LAND CLASSIFICATION

The pattern of land use in any community reflects the efforts of private enterprise and public responsibility as they continue to create a “Pattern for Living” that meets the economic and social requirements of the community within the limitation of its physical features. The joining of developmental forces form and create the character of Richmond.

Richmond’s development has gone through several changes as economic emphasis has shifted from one period to the next. Like many early New Hampshire communities, the character of Richmond was predominantly agrarian with numerous small farms scattered over the landscape. Later there was some mill development, commercial and industrial activity which encouraged the development of a village center. The town became a bustling community. Community services including meeting halls, inns, churches, and schools gave Richmond the appearance of a typical New England town.

Today, Richmond is considered a “bedroom” community of commuters along with some self-employed and retired people. Commercial and industrial development is almost nonexistent; however, there are numerous “cottage” businesses. The number one industry is logging with recreational services second. There are no public schools in Richmond.

Although some **86%** percent of Richmond’s land remains undeveloped, it cannot be assumed that all of this land is available or suitable for future development. To facilitate identification of which areas were most suitable for future development, a Density Location Map was prepared, based on data from a soil survey conducted by the USDA Soil Conservation Service. The map identifies good building sites by locating features such as wetlands, steep slopes and ledge.

Table 1 summarizes these data:

<u>TABLE 1</u>	
<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Approximate % of Total</u>
Wetlands	8.8%
Ledge and Steep Slopes.....	62.2%

B.EXISTING LAND USE

An examination of existing land use patterns in a community is one of the most important elements in the planning process. The following information is from these sources—Town Report, Selectmen’s Office, 1982 Master Plan, Office of State Planning, Department of Environmental Services, Southwest Regional Planning Commission, Conservation Commission, Monadnock Conservancy, NH Planning and Land Use Regulations, and the Society for Protection of NH Forests.

TABLE II
EXISTING LAND USE

<u>Type</u>	<u>Area in Acres</u>	<u>% of Total Area</u>
Residential.....	1,300.....	5.3
Commercial.....	173.....	0.71
Industrial.....	6.....	0.02
Agricultural (Tree Farms, Taylor Farm, Martin Farm).....	316.....	1.30
Governmental.....	403.....	1.65
Institutional.....	14.....	0.06
Roads.....	298.....	1.22
Protected Conservation Land.....	2100.....	8.61
Protected Land		
Great Ponds (Cass, Larry Sandy).....	83.....	0.34
Developed Recreation (Town Beach, 2 YMCAs, Shir-Roy Campground, Town Park).....	805.....	3.30

All above figures are approximate as of January 2001

Note: Current Use acreage is estimated to be 79% (19,296 acres as of the the 12-31-08 Town Report) of Richmond’s total acreage of 24,377 acres.

- B.1** The foregoing table indicates that the major use of land in Richmond is Protected Conservation Land: Pierce property 1400 +/- acres, Morgan Reserve 400 +/- and the Town Forest 300 +/- acres.
- B.2** Next in order of use is the residential component of Richmond’s existing land use Pattern. As in most rural communities, residential uses are scattered throughout the Town in a sparse density pattern. Many of the present residential uses were, undoubtedly, early farms. There are approximately 1,300 acres of land in Richmond in residential use with the greatest concentration occurring near the intersection of Routes 119 and 32. There are mobile homes, single-family, multi-family and two family homes in town.
- B.3** Recreational land consists of a commercial campground, the Cheshire County YMCA , and the Town Beach located on Cass Pond. Also, the Athol YMCA on Sandy Pond, and the Town Recreation Area near the intersection of Routes 119 and 32.
- B.4** Agricultural uses are located primarily in the North-Central and Eastern part of Town and generally consist of pasture and tree farms.

- B.5** Commercial and industrial development in Richmond is quite minimal. Many Commercial users operate as home-based businesses. The commercial activities include agriculture, antique and craft shops, convenience store with gas station, automobile maintenance, machine shops, building contractors and consulting services.
- B.6** Richmond's road network covers 298 acres or 1.22% of the Town's developed land. Richmond's 48 miles of roads are discussed in greater detail in the Traffic and Transportation section of this Master Plan.

C. FUTURE LAND USE

The principal goal of the Land Use Plan is to develop a plan that maintains the rural character considered by residents to be so important. This Land Use Plan shall encourage compatible land use relationships, minimize environmental conflict and discourage the indiscriminate location of commercial and industrial use.

The rate, location and type of land development directly affects the physical appearance of the community as well as its need for public services and facilities and the cost of providing these amenities. Therefore, sound planning practice dictates that both environmental and economic concerns be considered in the preparation of any plan to guide the development of Richmond.

A community survey of Richmond residents was conducted as part of the process for the 2004 update of the Master Plan. It indicated a strong desire on the part of the residents to see the community maintain its rural, small town atmosphere and environmental quality. That desire continues and is part of the soul of the Richmond community. While no community can stay the same, the type and location of future development can and should be managed to assure that it is consistent with the community goals and environment.

The State of New Hampshire Regional Planning Commissions (includes SWRPC, Southwest Regional Planning Commission) along with the NHDES (New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services) with input from experts and stakeholders developed *Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques: A Handbook for Sustainable Development* to help municipalities in the management of sustainable growth in their communities. The enabling legislation is **RSA 674:21** (See Appendix A). The Town of Richmond Master Plan encourages implementation of **RSA 674:21** through the suitable development of ordinances, site-plans, and subdivision regulations.

D.GOALS

(1) Encourage low-density development by considering lot size and compatibility of land use. (2) Update the wetland conservation map. (3) Create a water resource management and protection plan.

E. POLICIES

(1) Maintain the rural character of the Town of Richmond. (2) Promote sound practices to preserve our forest, wetlands, historic sites, trails, and abandoned roadways. (3) Water resources, whether above or below ground, should be protected, conserved and managed in the interest of present and future generations.(4) Forest resources must be

recognized as vital to proper development of land and should be managed wisely. (5)
Encourage commercial growth at a scale consistent with the rural nature of Richmond
and in harmony with the natural environment.

F. RECOMMENDATION

- (1) Create a Central Village District that designates an area for small retail shops
centered on the four corners area and retains the Town's rural character.

IV. HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

A. INTRODUCTION

RSA674:2, III(i) (See Appendix A) states that the housing section “*assesses local housing conditions and projects future housing needs of residents of all levels of income and ages in the municipality and the region as identified in the regional housing needs assessment performed by the regional planning commission pursuant to RSA 36:47, II, and which integrates the availability of human services with other planning undertaken in the community.*” Like many early New Hampshire Communities, Richmond’s development has gone through several changes as economic emphasis has evolved. Originally agricultural with some mill and industrial development, the bustling community of Richmond was a collection of farmsteads, gristmills and sawmills.

Quaint architecture, meeting halls and churches added to this landscape and in the 1800’s many homes were built while the population peaked at 1391, but declined significantly during the industrial revolution and western expansion which left empty dwellings that fell into disrepair.

Today, Richmond is primarily a commuter, retirement and recreational community dealing with what it means to possess a rural and residential landscape in a modern information age of advancing technology, environmental awareness, diversity, and great economic as well as political challenges.

According to the 2000 census, there are 1077 people living in Richmond with 461 dwelling units, or about 2.35 people living in each unit. The areas in town that have the greatest concentration of dwelling units are shown on the Suitable Building Areas Based On Soil Survey and Driveway Density Location Map. Based on population growth over the last 40 years of 2.3% per year, we can expect to have a demand of an additional 106 dwelling units during the next 10 years. The Suitable Building Areas Based on Soil Survey and Driveway Density Location Map and Land Use Table show that there is adequate space for this demand to be met.

The housing needs of the general population are currently being met by new construction. The requirements for affordable housing are being fulfilled by allowing manufactured housing throughout the town. **SB342 (codified at RSA 674:58 to 61)** on Workforce Housing has been currently evaluated in Richmond. 52.5% of homes in Richmond are worth \$177,000 or lower making it the median value of Richmond homes. To purchase a fixed rate (6%) 30 year mortgage for such a home would cost a family of 4 approximately \$1463/month (\$1061 for Principle and Interest, \$354 for Taxes, and \$50 for Insurance). So that this monthly fiscal outlay would not be more than 30% of income, such a family would have to earn \$58, 000/Year. The median income in Richmond is \$66,000. We meet the standard for available Workforce Housing.

RSA 674:2, III(j) (See Appendix A) states that a neighborhood section “*focuses on a specific geographical area of local government that includes substantial residential development. This section is part of the local master plan and shall be consistent with it. No neighborhood plan shall be adopted until a local master plan is adopted.*”

B. POLICIES

The Planning Board is committed to ensuring that current zoning, subdivision and building regulations meet housing and development needs in Richmond.

C. GOALS

(1) To help Richmond residents become familiar with Town zoning ordinances and both state and national building codes. (2) To ensure that the Town zoning ordinances and state and national building codes are enforced. (3) To enact rules and regulations to accommodate the expanding and aging population in Richmond.

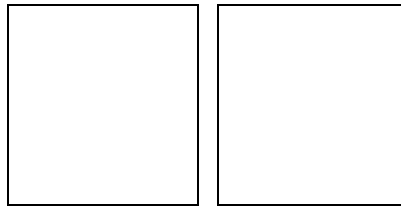
D. RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) Ensure that zoning and building regulations address the needs of an expanding and aging population. One important aspect of ensuring this is to conduct a yearly evaluation of our compliance with **SB342** Workforce Housing. (2) Pay closer attention to the recently passed (March 2006) Zoning Ordinances on Cluster Development. (3) That the position of Zoning Compliance Officer, which the town voted for in March 2009 and has filled, ensure compliance with Richmond's zoning regulations. (4) Create the position of Building Inspector to ensure compliance with building and safety codes.

E. RESPONSIBILITIES

(1) Development of zoning ordinances is the responsibility of the Planning Board. (2) The Board of Selectmen is responsible for compliance with zoning and building regulations.

V. TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION



Introduction: **RSA 674:2,III(a)** (See Appendix A) states that this section of the Master Plan “*considers all pertinent modes of transportation and provides a framework for both adequate local needs and for coordination with regional and state transportation plans. Suggested items to be considered may include but are not limited to public transportation, park and ride facilities, and bicycle routes, or pats, or both.*”

An assessment of traffic, the use of town and state roads and other transportation patterns in the community is closely related to understanding existing land use. Like most towns, the growth of Richmond is reflected in its transportation network and especially in its roads as they provide accessibility to schools, employment and shopping, and various other points within and outside the town. This section of the Master Plan identifies not only the local and state highway network but also the other facilities associated with the movement of people, goods and services. It provides a basis for studying future transportation needs in light of past trends and present conditions. Public transportation may someday be a concern.

A. ROAD NETWORK

Richmond’s road network presently extends approximately 49.6 miles and includes two numbered state highways—Route 32 (Class II) which runs North from the Massachusetts border and Route 119 (Class II) which runs East and West across Richmond. A complete description of Richmond’s road system, including the various classifications of road network mileage and surface types, appears in table III which follows.

Table III
RICHMOND ROAD NETWORK AND SURFACE TYPES

<u>Road Network Mileage</u>	
<u>State Maintained</u>	
Class I.....	Primary Road System.....0.0
Class II.....	Secondary Road System.....13.7
Class III.....	Recreational Roads.....0.0
<u>Town Maintained</u>	
Class IV.....0.0
Class V.....25.4
<u>Non-Maintained</u>	
Class VI.....9.0
Private Roads.....1.5
<u>Surface Types</u>	

<u>Types</u>	<u>Total / Paved / Gravel / Graded-Drained / Unimproved</u>						
State Maintained Primary System.....	0.0	/	0.0	/	0.0	/	0.0
State Maintained Secondary System.....	13.7	/	13.7	/	0.0	/	0.0
State Maintained Recreation Roads.....	0.0	/	0.0	/	0.0	/	0.0
Town Maintained (V).....	25.4	/	6.9	/	12.8	/	5.7
Non-Maintained Town Roads (VI).....	9.0	/	0.0	/	0.0	/	0.0
Private Roads.....	1.5	/		/	1.5	/	
Totals.....	49.6	/	20.6	/	14.3	/	5.7

SOURCE: New Hampshire Department of Public Works and Highways

B. ROAD MAINTENANCE

Richmond does not have a formal highway department but rather contracts its road maintenance and construction work to private contractors. Expenditure for the maintenance and repair of town roads has increased markedly over then years. This is evidenced by the fact that in 1981 the Town of Richmond spent \$55,797 for road maintenance and repairs. In 1991, expenditures on roads amounted to \$90,730 and in 2001, \$106,676 was spent, a 91% increase since 1981.

Table IV, which follows, reflects comparative costs illustrating the trend in highway expenditures. The amounts of total expenditures for work undertaken on town roads reflects the use of town funds, the town's share of subsidy as well as other road aid funds which have also increased over the years as shown on Table IV.

TABLE IV
RICHMOND HIGHWAY EXPENDITURES*

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount (Includes State)</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>S/Person</u>	<u>State Subsidy</u>
1960-----	\$9,882-----	293-----	\$33.50-----	\$4,665-----
1970-----	\$17,347-----	287-----	\$60.44-----	\$7,876-----
1981-----	\$55,797-----	518-----	\$107.72-----	\$22,928-----
1991-----	\$90,730-----	877-----	\$103.46-----	\$27,205-----
2001-----	\$106,676-----	1077-----	\$99.05-----	\$40,751-----

NOTE: In 2001, there were 1,465 registered vehicles in Richmond.

*SOURCE: Town Reports

C. GOALS

1. Make a map of existing roads showing the surface type, width of traveled way and road classifications.

2. Develop a schedule for upgrading existing roads to Town standards as defined in the Town of Richmond subdivision regulations.

D. POLICIES

Discourage major development in areas of the Town that are remote or on substandard roads as defined in the Town of Richmond subdivision regulations.

VI. UTILITY AND PUBLIC SERVICES

Introduction: RSA 674:2, III(g) guides this section of the Master Plan informing towns that we need to be “*analyzing the need for and showing the present and future general location of existing and anticipated public and private utilities, both local and regional, including telecommunication utilities, their supplies, and facilities for distribution and storage.*”

Richmond’s residents have a long history of providing their own power, heat and water for the houses and mills they lived and worked in before electricity and central heating became available. Today, Richmond has electricity for everyone who wants it to pump their water as well as light and heat their homes. Although many heat with wood, only a few cook all their meals on a wood stove.

A. ELECTRICAL SERVICES

PSNH (Public Service of New Hampshire) provides electrical services to Richmond. Richmond’s power lines are subject to damage and interruption from weather and accidents. Public Service conducts a tree-trimming program within guidelines of our scenic road ordinance.

B. COMMUNICATION

Richmond has telephone service and Internet access throughout the Town. High Speed Internet access is available through satellite and cable. Cellular telephone reception is, with a few isolated exceptions, very poor in Richmond due to the lack of cellular telephone towers in the region. There are Zoning Regulations in place to allow for the erection of towers by “Special Exception” (see **Zoning Ordinances 313, 1001.1, and 604**). Cable television is available to a few homes along Route 32 in the northern part of Town. It is not likely to be extended because Richmond’s low population density makes it uneconomical.

C. WATER RESOURCES

All of the water used in Richmond comes from private, on-site wells that are dug, pounded, or drilled. Dug wells are either done by hand or machine and are relatively shallow. Drilled or pounded wells are those that penetrate into ledge and are usually 100 feet deep or more.

There has recently been some pollution of private wells in Richmond due to leaks from gasoline storage tanks. The State Water Pollution Control Commission monitors these wells and the ground water in the immediate area. SWPCC provides water filtration systems and bottled water for people in affected areas.

Richmond does not have a public water supply nor any apparent need for one in the near future. During their recent studies for potential well sites, the state of NH identified a stratified drift aquifer in the North Central part of Richmond that would support public wells.

D. GOALS

(1) Provide the residents of Richmond with inexpensive and reliable power. (2) Maintain clean and dependable water source availability. (3) To maximize Goal #2, develop an Aquifer Protection Ordinance reflecting **RSA 4-C:22** (See Appendix). (4) Guard against privatization of our public water supply. (5) Seriously address both what is necessary to update and improve cell phone and high speed internet service.

D. POLICIES

Continue to cooperate with PSNH in their maintenance of the power lines by allowing them to trim trees as necessary. Following the guidelines of **RSA 674:2, III-d** and **RSA 4-C:22, I, II, III---**(See Appendix A)---, protect our aquifer through zoning regulation (see Goal #3 above) and by careful monitoring of building permits and septic system locations.

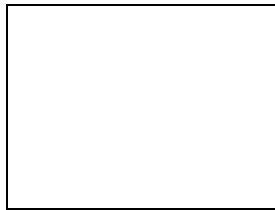
VII. COMMUNITY FACILITIES, EDUCATION, AND THE STRUCTURE OF TOWN GOVERNMENT

Introduction: RSA 674:2, III(b) informs us that this section “*identifies facilities to support the future land use pattern of subparagraph II(b), meets the projected needs of the community, and coordinates with other local governments’ special districts and schools districts, as well as with state and federal agencies that have multi-jurisdictional impacts.*” This section is an important part of the Comprehensive Plan. It consists of reports on public buildings, lands, and services provided by the town to its residents. It also includes recommendations for improvement or expansion if necessary. These recommendations may be made part of a Capital Improvement Plan on a priority basis.

A. PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Town Hall is located on Route 32 approximately 0.6 miles North of the Four Corners. Built in 1781, the building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. The building was closed for the first time in 207 years for repairs and renovation in 1988. It was reopened on May 3, 1990. The one and a half story post and beam structure contains approximately 1,500 square feet of space divided into offices for the Selectmen, Tax Collector, Town Clerk, and a public waiting room. It is used for the Selectboard meetings, small public hearings, and storage of vital town records in both the Town Clerk’s and Selectmen’s offices.

Recommendations regarding the Town Hall are: (1) Build a municipal center with the time and place to be determined by the Selectmen. (2) Restore the Town Hall as an historic place when a municipal center is built. (3) Pave the Town Hall parking lot. (4) Given recommendation #1, make the Town hall as energy efficient as possible in the meantime.



Veteran’s Memorial Hall, built in 1837, is located on Route 32 slightly North of the Town Hall. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in the 1980’s. The two-story post and beam structure contains approximately 2, 725 square feet on the first floor divided into a large meeting room, a kitchen, two newly rebuilt bathrooms, and a hallway. The roof was stripped down in September 2008 and replaced with new slate along with original slate that was still in good shape. The attic, above the renovated balcony and its renovated stairway leading to it, contains approximately 2,080 square feet used for storage. The building is used for Town Meetings, but Planning and Zoning Board meetings are usually held in the CD building to save energy costs.

Recommendations regarding Veteran’s Memorial Hall are: (1) Use abutting lot on the South for parking. (2) Follow through on recommendations for energy efficiency as a result of the building energy efficiency assessment recommended by the Voluntary Energy Committee (VEC) and agreed to by the Selectmen whether or not the stimulus money application draws a positive response or not.



The **Richmond Public Library**, built in 1896, is located on Route 119 just west of the Four Corners in schoolhouse #6. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in the mid-1980’s. An addition was built in 1976 that included a basement. A children’s room was added in 1990. The one story structure contains approximately 2,500 square feet and has about 15,000 volumes in the library section. The library circulated 2,990 books in 2001. In addition, 620 non-book items were checked out. The library is staffed by a librarian and managed by a Board of Trustees. It is currently open to the public 12 hours per week. The Richmond Archives are located in the lower level of the building. The archives were founded in 1977 as part of Richmond’s bicentennial project, and contain documents and artifacts related to the development of the community. The archives are protected by dehumidifiers and smoke detectors. They are open to the public by appointment and are staffed by volunteers.

Recommendations for the Richmond Public Library are: (1) Additional space for Archives; (2) Upgrade smoke detectors and climate control devices; (3) Additional parking.

B. RICHMOND SAFETY SERVICES



The **Richmond Fire Station**, built in 1962, is located on Route 119 west of the Four Corners. It is an one and one-half story wood frame and concrete block building with an original 1,900 square feet which was expanded by a 2,000 square foot addition in 1990. Fire department equipment includes the following:

- 1979 International pump truck, 1970 GMC fire engine.
- 1986 tanker truck, 1989 Chevrolet squad and service truck.
- 1986 GMC brush fire truck.
- 1988 Chevrolet rescue truck.
- 2005 Kenworth pumper truck.

In addition, the Fire Department is responsible for and maintains many fire ponds throughout the town, many of which have “dry hydrants”.

An all-volunteer force of 20-24 men and women staff the Fire Department. They are dispatched through the Southwestern N.H. Fire Mutual Aid System headquartered in Keene. This System is primarily a dispatch center that receives all emergency calls for police, fire and ambulance services in the region. Fish and Game and County Sheriff’s departments are also linked to the Mutual Aid System. Richmond is part of the enhanced 911 system. The Fire Department also maintains a Rescue Section that responds to accidents, medical emergencies and fires. This Section consists of licensed EMTs and trained volunteers who are dispatched by the Mutual Aid System to emergencies in the Richmond area.

The **Richmond Forest Fire Warden** is recommended by the Board of Selectmen and appointed by the state. Duties include of issuing burn permits, reporting and responding to forest fires, making reports to the district forest ranger, keeping old roads and trails passable for fire fighting purposes, and other related duties as directed by the state director of emergency management.

Recommendations for the Richmond Fire Station and Forest Fire Warden are: (1) Additional communication equipment; (2) Additional training equipment; (3) Additional fire ponds.

The **Richmond Police Department** is housed on the east end of the Safety Services Building west of the Four Corners. A 1,000square foot addition to house the Police Department was completed in 1990. A new fully-equipped four-wheel drive vehicle was purchased in 2001. The old cruiser has been retained and is still being used for patrolling in the Town. Richmond’s police force consists of a part-time chief and several part-time officers. Other law enforcement agencies serving Richmond include State Police from Troop C and the Cheshire County Sheriff’s Department, both located in Keene.

The **Richmond Civil Defense Building** is located on Route 119 west of the Four Corners. It is a one-story wood-frame building of approximately 750 square feet built in the 19th century. It is divided into a meeting room, a newly renovated accessible lavatory completed in February 2008, and Civil Defense Headquarters. The Planning Board, the Conservation Committee, Supervisors of the Checklist, and the Historical Society use the building for their regular meetings. Planning Board records are also stored here. The Richmond Civil Defense Director’s office is here. The primary duty of the **Civil Defense Director** is to coordinate civil defense planning activities with other officials and implement such plans should an emergency arise.

Recommendations for the Civil Defense Building are: (1) Continued maintenance and repairs; (2) Updating communication equipment.

C. PUBLIC SERVICES

Richmond's Highway Department is housed off the north side of Route 119 several blocks east of the Four Corners. The Highway Garage project was completed in early 2009. A 16 X 16 building for the road agent and any staff under the road agent's supervision will meet, plan and communicate from this location. A part-time road agent and several seasonal laborers staff the department. The town does not own any major pieces of equipment. All major road work, including snowplowing, is privately contracted. Further information on the highway department, including budget information, is contained in the Transportation section of the Master Plan as well as the Road Agent Report section of the Town of Richmond Annual Report.

D. CEMETERIES

Richmond has many cemeteries, most of them private, dating back to the early years of the town. At present, the town maintains three cemeteries. South and Middletown are filled, and the Earl Howard Cemetery has about 200 remaining plots. The town's cemeteries are maintained and administered by a **Cemetery Committee**.

Recommendations for Cemeteries are: (1) acquire additional land.

E. SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

Richmond and Winchester belong to the same solid waste management district. The transfer and recycling station are in Winchester. There are also several private contractors who provide curbside trash pick up.

F. POSTAL SERVICE

At one time, Richmond had two post offices in town, but now is served by Rural Free Delivery originating from the post office in Winchester.

Recommendation for Postal Service is: (1) Petition USPS for a Richmond post office and acquire a separate zip code.

G. CHURCHES

There are two churches in Richmond: (1) The Richmond United Methodist Community Church located just east of the Four Corners; (2) The Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel at the St. Benedict Center on Fay Martin Road.

H. EDUCATION

There was a time when Richmond had as many as twenty schools located in various neighborhoods throughout town. As our population shrank, so did the need for

these widely scattered, mostly one-room schools. The last school in Richmond closed in 1962.

Richmond is now part of the Monadnock Regional School District which also includes the towns of Fitzwilliam, Gilsum, Roxbury, Sullivan, Swanzey, and Troy. Formed in 1961, the Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD) includes nine school buildings with four in Swanzey and one each in Fitzwilliam, Gilsum, Troy, and Sullivan. MRSD along with the Winchester and Hinsdale School Districts forms School Administrative Unit #38 with offices in Swanzey Center.

A private Catholic school is operated at the St. Benedict Center on Fay Martin Road for grades 1-12.

As of the 2001/2002 school year, Richmond had 188 students in the Monadnock School system and another 28 at the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) School at the Saint Benedict Center. All public school students are bused while the students attending IHM School are brought to school by private transportation.

Average daily membership (ADM)* in residence for Richmond:

Year	Elementary**	Jr. High	High School	Total
1999-2000	107.4	36.1	51.8	195.3
2000-2001	90.1	39.5	58.5	188.1
2001-2002	93.2	42.7	61.2	197.1

*ADM is a measure of children physically attending school each day.

**Includes preschool and kindergarten.

Home schooling has become popular in recent years. We have no reliable data on the number of Richmond children being taught in their homes.

The school population grew from 104 in 1981 to 216 in 2002, an increase of 104%. This corresponds closely with the rate of growth in the general population (107%) during the same period.

The cost of education comprises the largest single expenditure of public funds at the local level. Of the total valuation tax rate of 24.40 in 2001, 84% was earmarked for school costs. In the Monadnock School District, the assessment of costs to the individual towns is divided into two categories. Operating costs are assessed per capita on the basis of average daily membership while capital costs are assessed according to the equalized valuation of the individual towns.

Recommendation regarding Education is: (1) Explore the possibility of establishing a local school.

I. ADMINISTRATION

The term, “administration”, relative to the functions of government, refers to the executive and management duties which provide control of and direction for the town’s

affairs. The Town of Richmond operates under a Town Meeting/Selectmen form of government, with the Town Meeting being the legislative body of the community, and the Board of Selectmen representing the administrative arm of that body. This form of government is appropriate for the town and can meet the demands of change and growth through the time span of this plan.

Since this form of government relies heavily on part-time officials serving in a wide range of capacities on various boards and commissions, much of the town's vital work is the responsibility of persons not necessarily trained in the field.

One of the important recommendations of this plan, therefore, is to make more effective use of the existing program of orientation for new members of each board, committee or commission. This program covers legal scope of powers, authority and responsibilities of the board and its members.

The Southwest Region Planning Commission ((SWRPC) offers member communities an important course to acquaint local officials with information and materials to assist in the administering of their responsibilities. The Municipal Law Lectures sponsored by the New Hampshire Municipal Association and presented both in Manchester at the LGC (Local Government Center) as well as nearby in adjacent towns as well as other timely programs held periodically throughout the state can also provide valuable training to newly elected as well as veteran town officials.

The chairman of each board or commission will have a list of applicable orientation and training resources. New board and commission members are encouraged to use these resources to gain a better understanding of their responsibilities.

Action and priorities beyond the five-year period are difficult to project with accuracy. As the town grows, there will be an increasing demand for more services, staff and town facilities. It is important to monitor the growth of the community and then evaluate the demands placed on town government to service this growth.

With the anticipated growth of Richmond and the increasing complexity of some of the projects envisioned in the comprehensive plan, some skilled technical assistance in the administration of town affairs may be necessary at certain times in the future. One possible method of dealing with such situations is represented by the availability of the "circuit rider" administrative assistant/planner service which the SWRPC currently provides to several of its member communities. This program provides technical planning and administrative assistance to the town on a shared basis with other communities having similar requirements for personnel service. It is possible, through the use of a circuit rider, to bring much needed relief to towns which are in need of a degree of assistance but can neither afford nor require full-time personnel or professional consultants. By sharing with other towns in the costs of such a program, Richmond could avail itself of the amount of time and assistance it specifically requires.

The circuit rider is a professional staff member of the SWRPC who provides aid to towns in planning and administrative matters. The program offers more intensive

professional services that are presently available to the town including the actual scheduling of office hours in the community to deal with specific issues. The circuit rider could work closely with the planning board, board of selectmen, and board of adjustment and provide liaison with other town boards and committees in considering issues related to the future development or the day-to-day operation of the community.

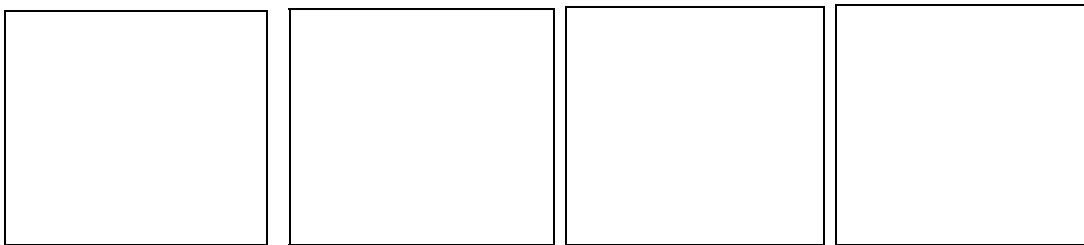
In an effort to cut costs in the purchase of necessary supplies and equipment, the town may wish to consider the use of a cooperative purchasing program. Through such a program, the town could band together with other communities and purchase needed supplies in bulk. The increased volume of these purchases will, in most cases, lower the cost for each community. Under such a program, the town could purchase anything from pencils and paper to road salt and motor oil.

Recommendations regarding Administration are: (1) Given the fact that the administration of the town is mostly composed of volunteers who donate their time and energy to move the town forward, and given the nature of the legal framework within which they conduct town business, and given the fact that without such volunteers, town operations would come to a halt as we know it or become more expensive, the vision of continuing our form of town government should be nurtured by developing a goal of safeguarding our volunteers from forms of harassment that will, in effect, discourage the continuation of a volunteer based small town government process. (2) To help our town government operate more efficiently, communication between the various boards, commissions, and committees needs to improve. Thus, it is recommended that all these town governing bodies meet together in toto once a year, and another meeting be had with selected representatives from each of these groups with town counsel present.

J. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Realizing that the anticipated growth of Richmond over the next 15 years will require some expansion of town services and facilities, our Capital Improvements Program has been a fiscal step in the right direction. It allows town officials and departments to anticipate future needs for major building and/or equipment purchases and develop a logical, cost effective program to meet the financial requirements of such expenditures so as not to create an excessive burden on the tax payers in any given year. The Capital Improvements program must continue.

VIII. CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES



Introduction: RSA 674:2, III(h) describes this part of the Master Plan as “A section which identifies cultural and historic resources and protects them for rehabilitation or preservation from the impact of other land use tools such as land use regulations, housing, or transportation. Such section may encourage the preservation or restoration of stone walls, provided agricultural practices, as defined in RSA 21:34-a, are not impeded.” Our town Master Plan vision includes “sustainability”. This concept applies to our historic and cultural continuity which injects a sense of place, a rootedness in a previous time and space that provides a sense of valued common sense, our baseline for community development. Maintaining historic buildings through local labor and local spending reinforces economic sustainability which is an essential part of sustainable development. By remaining true to such historic restoration and adaptive continued use of such structures, the character of the town is honored which, in turn, maintains cultural sustainability which is also another aspect of sustainable development. Included, also, in historical sustainability is archival maintenance and care.

IX. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Introduction: RSA:674:2, III©, tells us that “*An economic development section which proposes actions to suit the community’s economic goals, given its economic strengths and weaknesses in the region.*”

X. NATURAL RESOURCES

Introduction: **RSA 674:2, III(d)** (See Appendix A) tells us that this section of the Master Plan “*identifies and inventories any critical or sensitive areas or resources, not only those in the local community, but also those shared with abutting communities. This section provides a factual basis for any land development regulations that may be enacted to protect natural areas. A key component in preparing this section is to identify any conflicts between other elements of the master plan and natural resources, as well as conflicts with plans of abutting communities. The natural resources section of the master plan should include a local water resources management and protection plan as specified in RSA 4-C:22.*”

XI. NATURAL HAZARDS

Introduction: RSA 674:2, III(e) (See Appendix A) states that this section “documents the physical characteristics, severity, frequency, and extent of any potential natural hazards to the community. It should identify those elements of the built environment at risk from natural hazards as well as extent of current and future vulnerability that may result from current zoning and development policies.”

XII. REGIONAL CONCERNS

Introduction: **RSA 674:2, III(i)** (See Appendix A) explains that this section “describes the specific areas in the municipality of significant regional interest. These areas may include resources wholly contained within the municipality or bordering, or shared, or both, with neighboring municipalities. Items to be considered may include but are not limited to public facilities, natural resources, economic and housing potential, transportation, agriculture, and open space. The intent of this section is to promote regional awareness in managing growth while fulfilling the vision statement.”

XIII. COMMUNITY DESIGN

Introduction: RSA 674:2. III(k) (See Appendix A) tells us that this section is meant to “*identify positive physical attributes in a municipality and provide for design goals and policies for planning in specific areas to guide private and public development.*”

XIV: OPEN SPACE, RECREATION AND CONSERVATION

Introduction: The concepts of open space and conservation has its foundation in the previously cited **RSA 674: 2, I**, where the "*principles of smart growth*" is cited, and also in RSA 674: 2, III(n) which is also cited in the Energy section of the Master Plan. **RSA674:2, (f)** states that the recreation section of the Master Plan "*shows existing recreation areas and addresses future recreational needs.*" Many recreational opportunities are afforded by the State's abundance of open space and natural resources. Fishing, hiking, hunting, cross-country skiing and snow mobiling are most noteworthy. In this regard, Richmond is no exception.

A. RECREATION

Richmond's recreation programs are the responsibility of two committees: the Beach Committee and the Recreation Committee. The members of the Beach Committee are responsible for keeping the town beach on Cass Pond in good repair. Their activities include monitoring beach stickers, periodically cleaning the beach area and seeking citizen support to discourage vandalism. The Recreation Committee is responsible for sponsoring various activities throughout the year. These have included swimming lessons, the Richmond Fair Day and various social events. A Parks Subcommittee has assumed supervision of the development of Amidon Park as a recreational site. A complete list of Richmond's recreational resources can be seen in Table V below.

TABLE V

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Ownership</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Leon H. Amidon				
Memorial Park.....	Back of Fire Station ...	Municipal	Field Sports.....	3
S.Ralph Whitney				
Memorial Park.....	Left of Fire Station.....	Municipal.....	Field Sports.....	1
Richmond Town				
Beach.....	Cass Pond.....	Municipal.....	Swimming..... Fishing. Boating	1
Camp Takodah	Cass Pond.....	Private-Non-Profit ...	Youth Camp.....	460
Richmond Town				
Forest.....	Route 32.....	Municipal.....	Hiking..... Cross Country Skiing	450
Shir-Roy				
Camping Area.....	Cass Pond.....	Private.....	Camping.....	150
Camp Wiyaka	Sandy Pond.....	Private-Non-Profit	Youth Camp.....	40
Bennett Gorge.....	Route 119.....	Municipal Easement...	Hiking.....	?

The community will continually monitor the recreational needs of its citizens and strive to provide adequate and accessible facilities through citizen input and participation, and appropriate town agencies.

B. CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Town of Richmond Conservation Commission was authorized and established in 1971 to assist and advise municipal bodies, groups and individuals in the protection of Richmond's undeveloped land and natural resources. The Commission is made up of 3-7 members, each serving an alternating 3-year term. The Conservation Commission holds regularly scheduled meetings that are open to the general public. The commission receives no municipal funds, sustaining on past donations and funds received through timber improvement and selective harvesting operations in the town forest. All funds are invested with MBIA, the New Hampshire Public Deposit Investment Pool (NHPDIP), for safety, liquidity and return on investment.

The Commission oversees undeveloped land owned by the Town of Richmond and is concerned with protecting open spaces and natural resources of the community. The Commission actively assists residents with wetland issues and permits required by the State of NH. The Commission contracted with the Monadnock Conservancy in a conservation easement for the protection and preservation of the Town Forest. It has been active in promoting conservation interests within the community by offering Conservation Camperships and Internships through Project Serve, a division of UNH Cooperative Extension Service and Monadnock Regional High School. The Conservation Commission keeps abreast of changes in laws and conservation issues through newsletters, seminars and professional networking.

The goals of the Conservation Commission include proper utilization of land owned by the state or the town and protection of natural and aesthetic open spaces. It researches local land and water areas, and prepares maps, charts and plans to index marshlands, swamps and other wetlands.

XVI. IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction: RSA 674: 2, III(m) (See Appendix A) states that this section “*is a long range action program of specific actions, time frames, allocation of responsibility for actions, description of land development regulations to be adopted, and procedures which the municipality may use to monitor and measure the effectiveness of each section of the plan.*”

XVI. A FINAL WORD

In the section, “A Final Word”, from our 2004 edition of our Master Plan, Dick Drew so aptly and wisely wrote: *“Change and growth are inevitable. Citizens must decide whether they want to sit by and just let change happen as it will or whether they will take an active role in directing change and, thus, manage growth to best meet the community’s goals for the future. It should be an accepted matter of policy that the completion of the formal Master Plan for the Town of Richmond is the beginning point in a continuing planning process for the town. It will require cooperation, coordination and public awareness to maintain for Richmond the qualities its citizens desire.”*

Upon this bedrock principle of calling upon town folk to *“manage growth to best meet the community’s goals for the future”* that the following comments have their hope and strength for what many call “smart growth”, a sense of the flow of time in which the past gives the town a sense of place, the present asks the town to be both true to its roots while simultaneously allowing for change based on the wisdom of experience, and the future whispers to us as a community to decide what do we want to both preserve as well as change for the sake of the coming generations and the survival of our town.

Harold J. Dickinson’s story, Gaskill’s Haven, takes place here in Richmond over two decades, 1800-1820. Mr. Dickinson tells us that his book is “about the people of a small town in the early eighteenth century, how they lived and what they lived for, their struggles to build a nation out of the wilderness; their fights and their frolics; and their simple heroism.” He continues by telling us that the “gaping cellar holes along the back roads now locate the houses on what were once productive farms.” In his “Foreword”, Mr. Dickinson writes, “It is written in an attempt to bring to the people of today a picture of the simple pleasures---the help-one-another attitude, the character developed in these good people of a nearly forgotten generation in their struggle for existence.” Gaskill’s Haven was published in 1962. Now, 47 years later, more than ever before, we need to honor our forebears by securing a vision of the kind of town we want and serving each other on the journey toward fulfilling the Master Plan of the Town of Richmond.

Lastly, Hosea Ballou (1771-1852), often referred to as the “son of Richmond” said that “Tears of joy are like the summer raindrops pierced by sunbeams.” How often have we appreciated the natural landscape of our beautiful town and as a result compared the fundamental human experience of joy to an equally fundamental experience of the splendor that surrounds us. We have so much to be thankful for as we shape and implement our Master Plan. That thankfulness is the experience that nurtures and nourishes our vision of sustainability and conservation as the basic responsibility of life in Richmond, N.H.

APPENDIX A: IMPORTANT NEW HAMPSHIRE RSA'S AND HOUSE BILLS

RSA 4-C:22 ---I. A municipality may include in its master plan a local water resource management and protection plan, hereafter referred to as the local water plan. Once the local water plan has been adopted, it shall be placed on file with the office in accordance with RSA 675:9. The plan shall be made available to the public upon reasonable request and payment for any costs incurred in the duplication of the report.

II. Implementation of local water plans shall be through the adoption and enforcement of municipal ordinances consistent with the plan and through such other measures as are appropriate and legally available to municipal government as tools to further the water protection objectives set forth in the plan. Assistance shall be available through the water protection assistance program established in RSA 4-C:19 and programs of the department of environmental services as provided in RSA 21-O:3, IX, to advise municipalities on appropriate implementation measures.

III. If a municipality determines there is an immediate need to develop or amend subdivision or site plan review regulations in the manner provided by RSA 675:6 or to prevent deterioration of a critical water resource through a zoning ordinance or amendment in the manner provided by RSA 674:23, II, it may adopt such temporary measures for protection of water resources. Such measures shall be valid as provided in RSA 674:23, III.

Source. 1987, 283:3. 1989, 346:2, 3. 1997, 196:3, eff. Aug. 17, 1997.

RSA 33:7,1 Tax Anticipation Notes. – CITIES AND TOWNS. Cities and towns may incur debt in anticipation of the taxes of the financial year in which the debt is incurred, in order to pay current maintenance and operation expenses, and may issue notes therefore to an aggregate **principal amount not** exceeding the total tax levy during the preceding financial year, provided that after the tax levy of the current year has been determined any city or town may borrow an amount not exceeding in the aggregate the total tax levy of the city or town for the current financial year. In order to meet necessary expenses which may arise during the period from the beginning of the financial year to the date of the annual town meeting, the treasurer of any town, with the approval of the selectmen, may issue notes, without a vote of the town therefor, to an aggregate principal amount not exceeding 30 percent of the total receipts from taxes during the preceding financial year.

RSA 672:III-a. Proper regulations encourage energy efficient patterns of development, the use of solar energy, including adequate access to direct sunlight for solar energy uses, and the use of other renewable forms of energy, and energy conservation. Therefore, the installation of solar, wind, or other renewable energy systems or the building of structures that facilitate the collection of renewable energy shall not be unreasonably limited by use of municipal zoning powers or by the unreasonable interpretation of such powers except where necessary to protect the public health, safety, and welfare;

III-b. Agriculture makes vital and significant contributions to the food supply, the economy, the environment and the aesthetic features of the state of New Hampshire, and the tradition of using the land resource for agricultural production is an essential factor in providing for the favorable quality of life in the state. Natural features, terrain and the pattern of geography of the state frequently place agricultural land in close proximity to other forms of development and commonly in small parcels. Agricultural activities are a beneficial and worthwhile feature of the New Hampshire landscape and shall not be unreasonably limited by use of municipal planning and zoning powers or by the unreasonable interpretation of such powers;

III-c. Forestry, when practiced in accordance with accepted silvicultural principles, constitutes a beneficial and desirable use of New Hampshire's forest resource. Forestry contributes greatly to the economy of the state through a vital forest products industry; and to the health of the state's forest and wildlife resources through sustained forest productivity, and through improvement of wildlife habitats. New Hampshire's forests are an essential component of the landscape and add immeasurably to the quality of life for the state's citizens. Because New Hampshire is a heavily forested state, forestry activities, including the harvest and transport of forest products, are often carried out in close proximity to populated areas. Further, the harvesting of timber often represents the only income that can be derived from property without resorting to development of the property for more intensive uses, and, pursuant to RSA 79-A:1, the state of New Hampshire has declared that it is in the public interest to encourage preservation of open space by conserving forest and other natural resources. Therefore, forestry activities, including the harvest and transport of forest products, shall not be unreasonably limited by use of municipal planning and zoning powers or by the unreasonable interpretation of such powers;

III-d. For purposes of paragraphs III-a, III-b, III-c, and III-e, "unreasonable interpretation" includes the failure of local land use authorities to recognize that agriculture, forestry, renewable energy systems, and commercial and recreational fisheries, when practiced in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, are traditional, fundamental and accessory uses of land throughout New Hampshire, and that a prohibition upon these uses cannot necessarily be inferred from the failure of an ordinance or regulation to address them;

III-e. All citizens of the state benefit from a balanced supply of housing which is affordable to persons and families of low and moderate income. Establishment of housing which is decent, safe, sanitary and affordable to low and moderate income persons and families is in the best interests of each community and the state of New Hampshire, and serves a vital public need. Opportunity for development of such housing shall not be prohibited or unreasonably discouraged by use of municipal planning and zoning powers or by unreasonable interpretation of such powers;

III-f. New Hampshire commercial and recreational fisheries make vital and significant contributions to the food supply, the economy, the environment, and the aesthetic features of the state of New Hampshire, and the tradition of using marine resources for fisheries production is an essential factor in providing for economic stability and a favorable quality of life in the state. Many traditional commercial and recreational fisheries in New Hampshire's rivers and estuarine systems are located in close proximity to coastal development. Such fisheries are a beneficial and worthwhile feature of the New

Hampshire landscape and tradition and should not be discouraged or eliminated by use of municipal planning and zoning powers or the unreasonable interpretation of such powers.

IV. The citizens of a municipality should be actively involved in directing the growth of their community;

V. The state should provide a workable framework for the fair and reasonable treatment of individuals;

V-a. The care of up to 6 full-time preschool children and 3 part-time school age children in the home of a child care provider makes a vital and significant contribution to the state's economy and the well-being of New Hampshire families. The care provided through home-based day care closely parallels the activities of any home with young children. Family based care, traditionally relied upon by New Hampshire families, should not be discouraged or eliminated by use of municipal planning and zoning powers or the unreasonable interpretation of such powers; and

VI. It is the policy of this state that competition and enterprise may be so displaced or limited by municipalities in the exercise of the powers and authority provided in this title as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this title.

Source. 1983, 447:1. 1985, 68:1; 335:3; 369:1. 1989, 42:1; 170:1. 1990, 174:1; 180:1, 2. 1991, 198:1. 2002, 73:1, eff. June 30, 2002. 2008, 299:3, eff. July 1, 2009; 357:2, 3, eff. July 11, 2009.

674:2 Master Plan; Purpose and Description. –

I. The purpose of the master plan is to set down as clearly and practically as possible the best and most appropriate future development of the area under the jurisdiction of the planning board, to aid the board in designing ordinances that result in preserving and enhancing the unique quality of life and culture of New Hampshire, and to guide the board in the performance of its other duties in a manner that achieves the principles of smart growth, sound planning, and wise resource protection.

II. The master plan shall be a set of statements and land use and development principles for the municipality with such accompanying maps, diagrams, charts and descriptions as to give legal standing to the implementation ordinances and other measures of the planning board. Each section of the master plan shall be consistent with the others in its implementation of the vision section. The master plan shall be a public record subject to the provisions of RSA 91-A. The master plan shall include, at a minimum, the following required sections:

(a) A vision section that serves to direct the other sections of the plan. This section shall contain a set of statements which articulate the desires of the citizens affected by the master plan, not only for their locality but for the region and the whole state. It shall contain a set of guiding principles and priorities to implement that vision.

(b) A land use section upon which all the following sections shall be based. This section shall translate the vision statements into physical terms. Based on a study of population, economic activity, and natural, historic, and cultural resources, it shall show existing conditions and the proposed location, extent, and intensity of future land use.

III. The master plan may also include the following sections:

(a) A transportation section which considers all pertinent modes of transportation and provides a framework for both adequate local needs and for coordination with regional and state transportation plans. Suggested items to be considered may include but are not

limited to public transportation, park and ride facilities, and bicycle routes, or paths, or both.

(b) A community facilities section which identifies facilities to support the future land use pattern of subparagraph II(b), meets the projected needs of the community, and coordinates with other local governments' special districts and school districts, as well as with state and federal agencies that have multi-jurisdictional impacts.

(c) An economic development section which proposes actions to suit the community's economic goals, given its economic strengths and weaknesses in the region.

(d) A natural resources section which identifies and inventories any critical or sensitive areas or resources, not only those in the local community, but also those shared with abutting communities. This section provides a factual basis for any land development regulations that may be enacted to protect natural areas. A key component in preparing this section is to identify any conflicts between other elements of the master plan and natural resources, as well as conflicts with plans of abutting communities. The natural resources section of the master plan should include a local water resources management and protection plan as specified in RSA 4-C:22.

(e) A natural hazards section which documents the physical characteristics, severity, frequency, and extent of any potential natural hazards to the community. It should identify those elements of the built environment at risk from natural hazards as well as extent of current and future vulnerability that may result from current zoning and development policies.

(f) A recreation section which shows existing recreation areas and addresses future recreation needs.

(g) A utility and public service section analyzing the need for and showing the present and future general location of existing and anticipated public and private utilities, both local and regional, including telecommunications utilities, their supplies, and facilities for distribution and storage.

(h) A section which identifies cultural and historic resources and protects them for rehabilitation or preservation from the impact of other land use tools such as land use regulations, housing, or transportation. Such section may encourage the preservation or restoration of stone walls, provided agricultural practices, as defined in RSA 21:34-a, are not impeded.

(i) A regional concern section, which describes the specific areas in the municipality of significant regional interest. These areas may include resources wholly contained within the municipality or bordering, or shared, or both, with neighboring municipalities. Items to be considered may include but are not limited to public facilities, natural resources, economic and housing potential, transportation, agriculture, and open space. The intent of this section is to promote regional awareness in managing growth while fulfilling the vision statements.

(j) A neighborhood plan section which focuses on a specific geographical area of local government that includes substantial residential development. This section is a part of the local master plan and shall be consistent with it. No neighborhood plan shall be adopted until a local master plan is adopted.

(k) A community design section to identify positive physical attributes in a municipality and provide for design goals and policies for planning in specific areas to guide private and public development.

(l) A housing section which assesses local housing conditions and projects future housing needs of residents of all levels of income and ages in the municipality and the region as identified in the regional housing needs assessment performed by the regional planning commission pursuant to RSA 36:47, II, and which integrates the availability of human services with other planning undertaken by the community.

(m) An implementation section, which is a long range action program of specific actions, time frames, allocation of responsibility for actions, description of land development regulations to be adopted, and procedures which the municipality may use to monitor and measure the effectiveness of each section of the plan.

(n) An energy section, which includes an analysis of energy and fuel resources, needs, scarcities, costs, and problems affecting the municipality and a statement of policy on the conservation of energy.

Source. 1983, 447:1. 1986, 167:2. 1988, 270:1. 1989, 339:28; 363:15. 2002, 178:2. 2007, 40:1, eff. July 20, 2007. 2008, 269:1, eff. Aug. 25, 2008.

RSA 674:18 Adoption of Zoning Ordinance. – The local legislative body may adopt a zoning ordinance under RSA 674:16 only after the planning board has adopted the mandatory sections of the master plan as described in RSA 674:2, I and II.

RSA 674:21 Innovative Land Use Control - 674:21 Innovative Land Use Controls. –

I. Innovative land use controls may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Timing incentives.
- (b) Phased development.
- (c) Intensity and use incentive.
- (d) Transfer of density and development rights.
- (e) Planned unit development.
- (f) Cluster development.
- (g) Impact zoning.
- (h) Performance standards.
- (i) Flexible and discretionary zoning.
- (j) Environmental characteristics zoning.
- (k) Inclusionary zoning.
- (l) Accessory dwelling unit standards.
- (m) Impact fees.
- (n) Village plan alternative subdivision.

II. An innovative land use control adopted under RSA 674:16 may be required when supported by the master plan and shall contain within it the standards which shall guide the person or board which administers the ordinance. An innovative land use control ordinance may provide for administration, including the granting of conditional or special use permits, by the planning board, board of selectmen, zoning board of adjustment, or such other person or board as the ordinance may designate. If the administration of the innovative provisions of the ordinance is not vested in the planning board, any proposal submitted under this section shall be reviewed by the planning board prior to final consideration by the administrator. In such a case, the planning board shall set forth its

comments on the proposal in writing and the administrator shall, to the extent that the planning board's comments are not directly incorporated into its decision, set forth its findings and decisions on the planning board's comments.

III. Innovative land use controls must be adopted in accordance with RSA 675:1, II.

IV. As used in this section:

(a) "Inclusionary zoning" means land use control regulations which provide a voluntary incentive or benefit to a property owner in order to induce the property owner to produce housing units which are affordable to persons or families of low and moderate income. Inclusionary zoning includes, but is not limited to, density bonuses, growth control exemptions, and a streamlined application process.

(b) "Accessory dwelling unit" means a second dwelling unit, attached or detached, which is permitted by a land use control regulation to be located on the same lot, plat, site, or other division of land as the permitted principal dwelling unit.

V. As used in this section "impact fee" means a fee or assessment imposed upon development, including subdivision, building construction or other land use change, in order to help meet the needs occasioned by that development for the construction or improvement of capital facilities owned or operated by the municipality, including and limited to water treatment and distribution facilities; wastewater treatment and disposal facilities; sanitary sewers; storm water, drainage and flood control facilities; public road systems and rights-of-way; municipal office facilities; public school facilities; the municipality's proportional share of capital facilities of a cooperative or regional school district of which the municipality is a member; public safety facilities; solid waste collection, transfer, recycling, processing and disposal facilities; public library facilities; and public recreational facilities not including public open space. No later than July 1, 1993, all impact fee ordinances shall be subject to the following:

(a) The amount of any such fee shall be a proportional share of municipal capital improvement costs which is reasonably related to the capital needs created by the development, and to the benefits accruing to the development from the capital improvements financed by the fee. Upgrading of existing facilities and infrastructures, the need for which is not created by new development, shall not be paid for by impact fees.

(b) In order for a municipality to adopt an impact fee ordinance, it must have enacted a capital improvements program pursuant to RSA 674:5-7.

(c) Any impact fee shall be accounted for separately, shall be segregated from the municipality's general fund, may be spent upon order of the municipal governing body, shall be exempt from all provisions of RSA 32 relative to limitation and expenditure of town moneys, and shall be used solely for the capital improvements for which it was collected, or to recoup the cost of capital improvements made in anticipation of the needs which the fee was collected to meet.

(d) All impact fees imposed pursuant to this section shall be assessed at the time of planning board approval of a subdivision plat or site plan. When no planning board approval is required, or has been made prior to the adoption or amendment of the impact fee ordinance, impact fees shall be assessed prior to, or as a condition for, the issuance of a building permit or other appropriate permission to proceed with development. Impact fees shall be intended to reflect the effect of development upon municipal facilities at the time of the issuance of the building permit. Impact fees shall be collected at the time a

certificate of occupancy is issued. If no certificate of occupancy is required, impact fees shall be collected when the development is ready for its intended use. Nothing in this subparagraph shall prevent the municipality and the assessed party from establishing an alternate, mutually acceptable schedule of payment of impact fees in effect at the time of subdivision plat or site plan approval by the planning board. If an alternate schedule of payment is established, municipalities may require developers to post bonds, issue letters of credit, accept liens, or otherwise provide suitable measures of security so as to guarantee future payment of the assessed impact fees.

(e) The ordinance shall establish reasonable times after which any portion of an impact fee which has not become encumbered or otherwise legally bound to be spent for the purpose for which it was collected shall be refunded, with any accrued interest. Whenever the calculation of an impact fee has been predicated upon some portion of capital improvement costs being borne by the municipality, a refund shall be made upon the failure of the legislative body to appropriate the municipality's share of the capital improvement costs within a reasonable time. The maximum time which shall be considered reasonable hereunder shall be 6 years.

(f) Unless otherwise specified in the ordinance, any decision under an impact fee ordinance may be appealed in the same manner provided by statute for appeals from the officer or board making that decision, as set forth in RSA 676:5, RSA 677:2-14, or RSA 677:15, respectively.

(g) The ordinance may also provide for a waiver process, including the criteria for the granting of such a waiver.

(h) The adoption of a growth management limitation or moratorium by a municipality shall not affect any development with respect to which an impact fee has been paid or assessed as part of the approval for that development.

(i) Neither the adoption of an impact fee ordinance, nor the failure to adopt such an ordinance, shall be deemed to affect existing authority of a planning board over subdivision or site plan review, except to the extent expressly stated in such an ordinance.

(j) The failure to adopt an impact fee ordinance shall not preclude a municipality from requiring developers to pay an exaction for the cost of off-site improvement needs determined by the planning board to be necessary for the occupancy of any portion of a development. For the purposes of this subparagraph, "off-site improvements" means those improvements that are necessitated by a development but which are located outside the boundaries of the property that is subject to a subdivision plat or site plan approval by the planning board. Such off-site improvements shall be limited to any necessary highway, drainage, and sewer and water upgrades pertinent to that development. The amount of any such exaction shall be a proportional share of municipal improvement costs not previously assessed against other developments, which is necessitated by the development, and which is reasonably related to the benefits accruing to the development from the improvements financed by the exaction. As an alternative to paying an exaction, the developer may elect to construct the necessary improvements, subject to bonding and timing conditions as may be reasonably required by the planning board. Any exaction imposed pursuant to this section shall be assessed at the time of planning board approval of the development necessitating an off-site improvement. Whenever the calculation of an exaction for an off-site improvement has been predicated upon some portion of the cost of that improvement being borne by the municipality, a refund of any collected

exaction shall be made to the payor or payor's successor in interest upon the failure of the local legislative body to appropriate the municipality's share of that cost within 6 years from the date of collection. For the purposes of this subparagraph, failure of local legislative body to appropriate such funding or to construct any necessary off-site improvement shall not operate to prohibit an otherwise approved development.

VI. (a) In this section, "village plan alternative" means an optional land use control and subdivision regulation to provide a means of promoting a more efficient and cost effective method of land development. The village plan alternative's purpose is to encourage the preservation of open space wherever possible. The village plan alternative subdivision is meant to encourage beneficial consolidation of land development to permit the efficient layout of less costly to maintain roads, utilities, and other public and private infrastructures; to improve the ability of political subdivisions to provide more rapid and efficient delivery of public safety and school transportation services as community growth occurs; and finally, to provide owners of private property with a method for realizing the inherent development value of their real property in a manner conducive to the creation of substantial benefit to the environment and to the political subdivision's property tax base.

(b) An owner of record wishing to utilize the village plan alternative in the subdivision and development of a parcel of land, by locating the entire density permitted by the existing land use regulations of the political subdivision within which the property is located, on 20 percent or less of the entire parcel available for development, shall grant to the municipality within which the property is located, as a condition of approval, a recorded easement reserving the remaining land area of the entire, original lot, solely for agriculture, forestry, and conservation, or for public recreation. The recorded easement shall limit any new construction on the remainder lot to structures associated with farming operations, forest management operations, and conservation uses, and shall specify that the restrictions contained in the easement are enforceable by the municipality. Public recreational uses shall be subject to the written approval of those abutters whose property lies within the village plan alternative subdivision portion of the project at the time when such a public use is proposed.

(c) The submission and approval procedure for a village plan alternative subdivision shall be the same as that for a conventional subdivision. Existing zoning and subdivision regulations relating to emergency access, fire prevention, and public health and safety concerns including any setback requirement for wells, septic systems, or wetland requirement imposed by the department of environmental services shall apply to the developed portion of a village plan alternative subdivision, but lot size regulations and dimensional requirements having to do with frontage and setbacks measured from all new property lot lines, and lot size regulations, as well as density regulations, shall not apply.

(1) The total density of development within a village plan alternate subdivision shall not exceed the total potential development density permitted a conventional subdivision of the entire original lot unless provisions contained within the political subdivision's land use regulations provide a basis for increasing the permitted density of development within a village plan alternative subdivision.

(2) In no case shall a political subdivision impose lesser density requirements upon a village plan alternative subdivision than the density requirements imposed on a conventional subdivision.

(d) If the total area of a proposed village plan alternative subdivision including all roadways and improvements does not exceed 20 percent of the total land area of the undeveloped lot, and if the proposed subdivision incorporates the total sum of all proposed development as permitted by local regulation on the undeveloped lot, all existing and future dimensional requirements imposed by local regulation, including lot size, shall not apply to the proposed village plan alternative subdivision.

(e) The approving authority may increase, at existing property lines, the setback to new construction within a village plan alternative subdivision by up to 2 times the distance required by current zoning or subdivision regulations, subject to the provisions of subparagraph (c).

(f) Within a village plan alternative subdivision, the exterior wall construction of buildings shall meet or exceed the requirements for fire-rated construction described by the fire prevention and building codes being enforced by the state of New Hampshire at the date and time the property owner of record files a formal application for subdivision approval with the political subdivision having jurisdiction of the project. Exterior walls and openings of new buildings shall also conform to fire protective provisions of all other building codes in force in the political subdivision. Wherever building code or fire prevention code requirements for exterior wall construction appear to be in conflict, the more stringent building or fire prevention code requirements shall apply.

Source. 1983, 447:1. 1988, 149:1, 2. 1991, 283:1, 2. 1992, 42:1. 1994, 278:1. 2002, 236:1, 2. 2004, 71:1, 2; 199:2, 3. 2005, 61:1, 2, eff. July 22, 2005. 2008, 63:1, eff. July 20, 2008.

RSA 674:36, II(m)--- (Note- This RSA is from the section on Subdivision Regulations)
Require innovative land use controls on lands when supported by the master plan.

RSA 674:44, II(i)---- (Note-This RSA is from the section on Site Plan Regulations)
Require innovative land use controls on lands when supported by the master plan;