

CHAPTER IX SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Population and Housing

- Conduct a Town buildout analysis using parcel-based Geographic Information System (GIS) technology. The buildout analysis can provide a more accurate estimate of the amount of developable land remaining in the Town. The results of the buildout analysis can be used to predict the level of public services required when the Town is fully developed.
- Using the results of the buildout analysis and the Natural Resources Inventory, conduct a study of the potential need for public water and/or sewer in certain sections of the Town.
- Develop regulatory measures that will facilitate the provision of affordable housing, such as: 1) review and consider revising the Housing for Older Persons Ordinance to further encourage the provision of such housing; 2) review and consider revising the requirements for Accessory Dwelling Units to allow for one-bedroom market rate rental housing; and 3) review and consider revising the zoning ordinance to further encourage the provision of mixed residential/commercial units in the Business Districts.

2. Natural Resources

a. Topography

- Consider an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, subdivision and site plan regulations to adopt a Slope Conservation Overlay District to protect the most severe slopes in Town from unsuitable development. Development of land with slopes greater than fifteen percent should be approached with extreme caution, giving consideration to the problems presented by these slopes. Active use or development of slopes greater than twenty-five percent should be avoided. As these areas are best suited for open space, reserving them for that purpose will minimize the potential for erosion and allow for maximum absorption of surface water run-off thus protecting down-slope residents.

b. Soils

- The Planning Board should continue to consider soil potentials and limitations when reviewing the intensity of development.
- The Town's agricultural lands are recognized as an important and endangered resource with few State or local incentives for keeping viable agricultural lands in production. To protect this valuable resource, the Town should take steps to protect active and idle agricultural lands from development for other uses and create incentives which encourage agricultural lands to be kept in, or returned to, productive farm use. The Trust for New Hampshire Lands Program or the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program may assist the Town in this endeavor.
- New development should be focused in large areas with slopes of less than fifteen percent, giving consideration to the other factors which affect the development suitability of these areas.
- Site Specific Soil Mapping Standards and enforcement actions should continue to be required in the subdivision regulations as a means of verifying actual site conditions, to determine the extent to which development is feasible and to ensure that approved development is constructed according to the approved site and subdivision plans. The non-residential site plan regulations should be reviewed and revised as necessary to require the use of SSSMS.

c. Water Resources

- Land adjacent to surface water resources is restricted from development or strictly monitored in its active use. As these areas are a vital interface between surface and groundwater supplies, they are best suited for open space and have the potential for forming the basis of an open space system serving all developable areas of the community.
- Enforce the Shoreland Protection Act around all great ponds.
- Consideration is given to the protection of surface water and groundwater supplies within the Town's boundaries as they are the life-blood of the community. Groundwater supplies exist which are capable of supporting higher intensities of development. However, these must be protected from contamination in the absence of a municipal waste treatment system.
- Protect existing wetlands and surface waters by amending the Wetlands Ordinance to increase the 50' buffer from the edge of the wetland or surface water. This buffer will protect the natural habitat surrounding wetlands and surface waters that is crucial to the proper functioning of these water resources.
- Continue to implement the Floodplain Overlay Zoning District to reduce losses due to flooding.
- Water supply wells located on till deposits are shallow in depth and very susceptible to land use related contamination (septic systems, fuel storage, fertilizers, road salt, etc.). The Town should consider increasing the setback of future land-uses to these water supply wells.
- Take advantage of the University of New Hampshire's Community Environmental Outreach Program (CEOP)¹ and Natural Resources Senior Projects to continue prime wetland evaluations and designations.
- It is recommended that development of wetland areas continue to be restricted in the future through the Town's Wetland Conservation ordinance. This, combined with active enforcement of State regulations governing the location of septic system and along with the possibility of the Town adopting greater setback distances than the State's minimum, will ensure that these areas may continue to perform the natural functions for which they are best suited.
- Improve the licensing checklist to include the review of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit, especially the facility's Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.
- Enforce licensing requirements of all junkyard facilities.
- Prepare a stormwater management plan that addresses the 6 minimum controls outlined under the EPA's Phase II Stormwater Regulations.
- Pursue further protection measures through the Department of Environmental Services.

d. Forests and Wildlife

- Utilize the Forestland Evaluation and Site Assessment (FLESA)² for future forest planning and components of the program on all Town owned lands.
- Maintain 50 foot undisturbed, shady buffer around vernal pools and 100 foot buffer on property lines abutting forests and all surface waters.
- Consider legal easements on all Town Forests to preserve the land for recreation and permanent protection.

¹ <http://ceinfo.unh.edu/Water/Documents/WRcomcon.htm>

² North Country and Southern New Hampshire Resource Conservation and Development Area Councils, *Planning for the Future of Local Forests*, 2001.

- Inventory all existing trails using Geographic Positioning System (GPS) and create a trail system map signage for all Town forests.
- Initiate a long-term insect monitoring plan for Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, weevils, and others.
- Take advantage of the University of New Hampshire's Community Environmental Outreach Program (CEOP) and Natural Resources Senior Projects for a plant biodiversity survey. These are inexpensive programs and the range of possible projects is limited only by the needs of the community and the availability of students to match those needs.

e. Conservation

- Pursue the fee purchase, purchase of development rights or other conservation measures to protect the remaining open space properties. Legal easements should be placed on all conservation properties.
- Allocate 100% of the Land Use Change tax to the Conservation Fund to help contribute towards increasing the number of protected open space parcels and provide matching funds for potential funding sources.
- Farm protection should be pursued for existing or undeveloped lands with Prime or State designated soils.
- Establish a Capital Reserve Fund to raise funds for land protection.
- The Conservation Commission and interested citizens should consider participating in the "Keeping Track" Program. This program uses animal tracks to identify habitats and feeding grounds in a systematic manner for a variety of animals. The information gained can be the start of an inventory and a monitoring system of prime habitats for future conservation.
- Take advantage of the University of New Hampshire's Community Environmental Outreach Program (CEOP) and Natural Resources Senior Projects. These are inexpensive programs and the range of possible projects is limited only by the needs of the community and the availability of students to match those needs.
- The Pelham Fish and Game land, the golf course, Camp Runnels and the watershed of the pond, Little Island Pond Prime Wetland and the surrounding uplands along with the Peabody Town Forest and the surrounding lands with powerline easements should be recognized as a greenway corridor and expanded so that movement of wildlife can continue to the Dracut.

3. Transportation

- The Town should conduct a townwide traffic study immediately to look at future transportation and traffic issues in the community in detail. Specific recommendations should be developed that could be implemented over the course of time to address the anticipated conditions. The Town should then budget for these improvements in its Capital Improvement Program and undertake a systematic transportation system improvement program
- The Town should develop a town-wide hiking and walking trail system utilizing Class VI roads and Town Center sidewalks.
- New roads in the Town should be local roads in function and classification, limited to providing access to adjacent parcels in subdivisions.
- The Town should employ access management techniques for the purpose of preserving roadway capacity and ensuring safe movement for vehicles entering and exiting curb cuts and side roads. Access management techniques that should be pursued include implementing

minimum driveway separation distances based on roadway speed and entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the NH DOT.

- The Town should re-assess existing site plan, subdivision and zoning requirements based on recommendations included in NRPC, *Non-Residential Development Community Character Guidelines* and *Compatibility Guidelines for the Town of Pelham*. Any revisions based on these site design guidelines could also enhance the access management goals.
- The Town should update its Road Surface Management System study as soon as possible and every five years hence in order to plan for future road maintenance and reduce the future cost of extensive repairs to deteriorated roadways.
- The Town should utilize traffic calming measures and roundabouts where appropriate based on traffic flow and right of way constraints to channelize and control traffic through neighborhoods and the Town Center.
- The Town should request that the NH DOT consider design options for the NH38/Old Gage Hill Road N. intersection in order to ensure traffic safety. In addition, the Town should monitor the accident rate at the recently redesigned NH128/Keyes Hill Road/Tallant Road intersection to ensure that improvements are successful in reducing accidents.
- The Town should conduct a Buildout Analysis by TAZ using the NRPC's parcel-based Geographic Information System technology.
- The Town should participate in the Greater Derry Greater Salem Regional Transit Council (GDGSRTC) in order to increase public transportation options those who cannot afford it or are unable to meet their own transportation needs due to physical disability or infirmity.
- The Planning Board should maintain close contact with the State of NH to ensure ample opportunity for public and Town input regarding any planned changes to state roads within Pelham or feeding traffic into Town.

4. Community Facilities

a. Town Hall

- Construct and maintain the new Town Hall facility as approved by voters in 2002 and expand into the shell space as needed to serve population growth through the planning period.

b. Library

- Construct and maintain the new library as approved by voters in 2002.
- Reserve land adjacent to the new library for possible future expansion.
- Retain and continue to utilize the former historic library building for public use in keeping with deed restrictions on the property.

c. Police Department

- Construct and maintain the new police facility as approved by voters in 2002 and expand into the shell space as needed to serve population growth.

d. Fire Department

- Continue planning for new sub-station(s) and an expansion or replacement of the existing fire station in order to limit response times and provide adequate space for additional fire fighters.
- Continue to use impact fees as a source of revenue for new Fire Department facilities.

- e. **Parks and Recreation**
 - Perform an in-depth facility study of recreation needs to serve the existing and projected population.
 - Complete and implement a Parks and Recreation Department Long Range Plan.
 - Continue planning for the design and construction new recreation facilities based on the results of the study.
 - Consider using impact fees as a source of revenue for new recreation facilities.
- f. **Solid Waste**
 - Continue to encourage the use of recycling as a method of limiting the cost of transfer station facilities.
- g. **Highway Department**
 - Continue planning for the design and construction of a new highway department garage.
 - Consider a new location for Highway Department offices.
- h. **Schools**
 - Conduct a study of the potential to provide public kindergarten.
 - Continue to plan for, design and construct additional middle and high school facilities based on NH Department of Education standards to meet the needs of the current and projected enrollment.
 - Implement recommendations of the high school systems study.
- i. **Water Supply**
 - Consider updating and/or expanding existing water studies to determine whether groundwater supplies remain of a quality and quantity suitable for a public water source.
 - Consider conducting a survey of underground storage tanks with capacities below 1,100 gallons.
- j. **Sewer**
 - Consider further study of municipal sewer system if demand is generated.
- k. **Cultural/Recreation Center**
 - Conduct a study of the feasibility of developing a community cultural/recreation center.
 - A volunteer non-profit organization, perhaps a Pelham Arts Council, could be established to foster the arts as a vital component of Pelham's community fabric. This council could also provide guidance in the design and management of a future cultural/recreation center to ensure adequate facilities for arts programs in addition to sports and entertainment facilities
- l. **Re-Use of Old Buildings**
 - Conduct a study to determine the most appropriate re-use of the former library, Town Hall and Town Hall annex buildings.

5. **Historic Resources**

- Conduct a comprehensive townwide historic resources survey using a Geographic Information System. Information should be updated periodically to indicate changes to buildings, including remodeling, fire, demolition or changes to surroundings.

- The Town should continue to encourage the protection, enhancement and rehabilitation of significant architectural and historic resources such as the Town Hall, Library, Butler Monument, Town Common and cemeteries. Any building changes, site improvement or other alteration (especially to town owned buildings) should respect the historical qualities of the structure.
- The Town should consider the establishment of a heritage commission to encourage the protection and appropriate use of Pelham's cultural and esthetics as well as historic resources. Attention in particular, should be focused on Town Center.
- Historical interest and pride should be promoted in a variety of ways including:
 - photographs and exhibits in public places;
 - markers and dates at historic structures;
 - brochures describing local history;
 - tours of historic structures and sites;
 - local history courses in the school curriculum;
 - oral history projects; and
 - support of the Pelham Historical Society.
- Copies of literature from the State Historic Preservation Office regarding appropriate rehabilitation techniques should be placed on file in the Town Hall and made available by the Historical Society to encourage the sensitive rehabilitation/renovation of older homes and buildings.
- Encourage National and State Register listing for eligible local structures, including appropriate private residences and the former Library building.
- Continue to locate, identify, catalogue, preserve and protect Town records, documents, manuscripts and artifacts and provide a suitable and safe repository for them. Early handwritten records should be reproduced (transcribed or microfilmed but not photocopied) and copies kept in more than one location. Make collected historical information (in a protected environment) accessible to Town residents and future generations.
- Encourage the use of innovative land use controls including cluster development and partial development to conserve open space and minimize the visual impact of new development on significant historic areas, open space and scenic views.
- Consider the creation of a local Historic District for the Town Center.
- Strengthen incentives for historic preservation in the zoning ordinance and site plan and subdivision regulations, including the adoption of an "open space development" ordinance.
- Consider the adoption of a Scenic Road ordinance, per RSA 231:157, in order to help preserve the scenic and historic qualities of Pelham's rural roads.
- Investigate protection measures for Pelham's Class VI roads, which were often the location of historic development, and which today can serve as recreational trails for Pelham's citizens. The stone walls, cellar holes, and large trees that are often located along these Class VI road should be safeguarded from destruction or removal.
- Consider the acquisition of available, significant property for conservation and preservation purposes in limited but critical cases.
- Promote the donation of easements by historic property owners to a designated authority such as the conservation commission, or established land trust such as the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests.
- Encourage archaeological investigation/documentation in Pelham including historic and prehistoric sites and cemeteries.
- Promote the work of the Town cemetery trustees and the preservation and protection of the Town's historic graveyards and private burying grounds including retention of the natural

vegetation, preservation of the dry laid stonewalls and retention of the small stones used as footstones and children's headstones.

- Promote the collection, preservation and protection of oral histories and early photographs and encourage the continued recording of townspeople and structures for permanent reference.

6. Future Land Use

a. Natural Resource Protection

- Actively pursue the permanent protection those land areas in Pelham that exhibit two or more of the following resources: steep slopes, large forest blocks, surface water resources, ground water resources, soils with high limitations for septic systems and/or agricultural

b. Town Center

- Continue to permit institutional uses in the Residential Zoning District to allow for mixed uses while protecting residential amenities.
- Continue to located additional community facilities in the town center, when appropriate.
- Protect historically significant buildings within the town center through sensitive redevelopment.
- Pursue a double-lane roundabout or other traffic control measure for the NH 111A/Nashua Road/Old Bridge Street intersection to reduce traffic delay and improve traffic, pedestrian and bicycle safety.

c. Residential Development

- Consider amending the Residential District of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for lower densities in areas of undeveloped land with significant natural resources while increasing the density in areas with fewer development constraints.
- Consider committing to and implementing a system of transfer of development rights.

d. Commercial Development

- Update to the 1991 Route 38 Corridor Study to include access management techniques and best practices in vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian circulation, urban design and stormwater management.
- Further implement the Compatibility Guidelines for the Town of Pelham 3 and apply the guidelines to all new commercial development and redevelopment.
- Consider amending the sign ordinance to improve the aesthetics of commercial development. Consider a requirement that signs must be compatible with architectural treatments and prohibit the use of moving, flashing or electronic changing signs.
- Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to allow for shared parking and shared access where appropriate.

e. Industrial Development

- Continue to implement the provisions of the Industrial Zoning Districts.

³ NRPC, *Compatibility Guidelines for the Town of Pelham, NH*, June 15, 1999.

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