

OUR PELHAM OUR PLAN



DRAFT
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A Master Plan for the Town of Pelham, NH

Adopted ____, 2023

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Town of Pelham would like to thank all those who helped shape Our Pelham, Our Plan, which is Pelham's long-range plan to guide future land use, growth, and development. Gratitude is extended to the Master Plan Sub-Committee, Town Staff (special thanks to Jenn Beauregard, Planning Director), the consultant (Resilience Planning and Design), and the community at large.

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INTRODUCTION

“Our Pelham, Our Plan” is Pelham’s Master Plan. The purpose of this Plan is to inform and guide land use changes, related policy decisions, infrastructure investments, and other initiatives in Pelham over the next decade (2024-2034).

As a southern New Hampshire community on the border with Massachusetts, Pelham serves as a gateway to the Granite State. While this proximity gives residents access to additional employment opportunities and services, it also places Pelham within a rapidly growing and changing region. How Pelham decides to care for its natural lands, neighborhoods, municipal infrastructure, and other defining resources now and into the future will directly impact its residents, businesses, transportation system, housing opportunities, natural and recreational assets, and overall quality of life.

This Master Plan will be used to guide these efforts in Pelham over the next decade in order to:

- Maintain Pelham’s small-town heritage and rural character,
- Plan for changing housing and economic realities,
- Support a multi-generational community,
- Support ongoing farming, forestry, and resource conservation initiatives,
- Provide diverse recreational opportunities and programs,
- Increase transportation alternatives,
- Promote sustainable energy production, and
- Deliver high quality community services.



What is a Master Plan?

Municipal master plans are long-range planning documents that help guide the location, type, and intensity of development activity. This is usually accomplished through land use regulations and policies, strategic land conservation initiatives, and by prioritizing infrastructure investments and capital improvements.

The Master Plan is informed by a comprehensive analysis of existing conditions within the community, the creation of a vision statement, and the development actions for the town to implement over the next ten years. Our Pelham, Our Plan includes all of these key elements and was created with input and ideas from the public to ensure it best reflects Pelham's priorities, needs, and desires in the future. Pelham's Master Plan is a policy document that includes actions specific enough to provide clear direction, while also allowing some level of flexibility in how these efforts are implemented. In some cases, the Plan identifies issues and projects that will require further analysis, study, and discussion. The vision and overarching planning framework in this document were shaped by the community

Master Planning in New Hampshire

The State of New Hampshire authorizes municipalities to maintain a regularly updated master plan (RSA 674:2) to guide future growth, land use, and development in communities. While the master plan is not a regulatory document, it does provide the legal basis for zoning and other land use regulations. It also provides a big-picture view of where a community is today and a community vision for where it wants to be, along with actions necessary to achieve the community's goals and vision.

members themselves through robust public engagement throughout the planning process.

To achieve this vision, collaboration among town staff, local officials, community partners, non-profit organizations, local businesses, developers, property owners, residents, regional organizations, state agencies, and others will be required. Together, this will build the momentum needed to accomplish the projects that will help Pelham remain a viable, vibrant, and resilient place to live. As projects, policies, and programs are evaluated and created, Pelham should ensure that these initiatives are consistent with the vision and policies found in this planning document.

Pelham's vision was inspired by extensive public feedback and community engagement.



Our Vision for the Future

Pelham strives to maintain its small-town heritage and rural character by balancing the need to plan for changing housing and economic realities with the protection of its historic charm, natural resources, and rural neighborhoods. Pelham encourages and endorses support of farming, and we support land conservation.

We are a vibrant and collaborative community that provides support and opportunities for its older and younger residents, and all ages in between. Pelham is a community where residents can safely walk and bike between destinations throughout the community. Pelham is forward-looking and works to address critical issues, like climate change, by promoting renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements. Pelham promotes sustainable water quality and water quantity.

A dynamic school system, diverse and affordable housing options, an active town center, access to the outdoors, a variety of local businesses, and high-quality Town facilities make Pelham a great place to live, learn, work, visit, play, and retire.

How Did We Get Here?



The Planning Process

In the Spring of 2022, the Town of Pelham began work on the creation of its Master Plan as an update to the 2002 Master Plan. The planning process was guided by a Master Plan Subcommittee which was composed of 15 volunteers. A single member from each Board and Committee in Pelham was appointed to this Master Plan Subcommittee to advise the Town's planning staff and the consultant, Resilience Planning & Design. This eighteen-month project was broken into four distinct phases, which are pictured to the right.

Public Participation

Public outreach and engagement play a critical role in master planning, and an inclusive community engagement process informed by a diversity of community members is the most effective way to create a compelling vision of the future. Pelham committed to this level of outreach and engagement early on in this planning process to ensure that community priorities, desires, and feedback on key issues and opportunities helped to inform and shape the writing of Our Pelham, Our Plan.

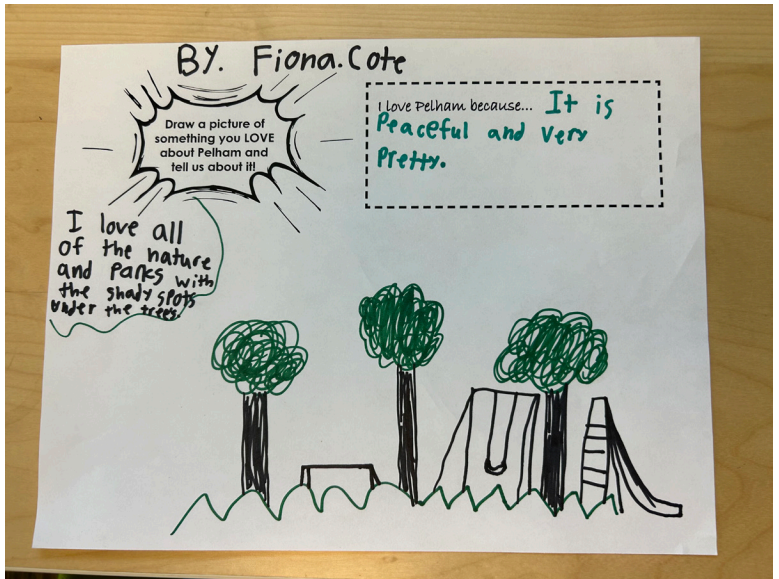


To engage the public, a variety of outreach techniques were used throughout this project including:

- Tabling at community events such as the Concerts on the Green, Old Home Day, and the Farmer's Market.
- Community group discussions at the Hobbs Community Center.
- One in-person, evening community forum event at the Town Hall.
- One in-person, afternoon community forum event held at the Hobbs Community Center.
- An online version of the community forum events.

These public participation opportunities were advertised through:

- The Pelham Evergreen Town Newsletter
- Fliers at town facilities
- Project email subscriber list
- Project website, town website, and social media accounts
- Public Access TV
- Announcements at the Pelham High School



What Did We Learn?


The key findings and raw feedback collected through these public outreach activities were reported in an Outreach and Engagement Report that is included in the Appendix of this Plan. Key findings were generated by identifying notable and reoccurring themes and topics reported by community members during these public outreach opportunities.



Community members identified the following as priorities for planning for Pelham's future.

- Protect the town's more rural areas and "small town feel".
- Encourage a diversity of housing types in appropriate areas of the community, and consider how best to preserve the character of the town as housing development happens in the future.
- Identify opportunities to increase housing opportunities for older adults, low-income families and individuals, and the workforce population.
- Build on the town's water protection and land conservation efforts by continuing these in the future.
- Create a vibrant town center area specific to Pelham, including more small local businesses.
- Attract and retain younger people and families to live in Pelham.
- Expand sidewalks in key areas of Pelham that link places of interest, neighborhoods, and destinations, add more bicycle infrastructure, and increase access to public transportation.
- Address potable water scarcity issues in areas of town currently impacted by water resource issues.
- Consider implementing public infrastructure on NH Route 38 to support higher density commercial development and make this area more desirable to businesses.
- Create more recreation programming and activities geared toward both youth and older adults, and add new indoor and outdoor recreational facilities to better meet the needs of Pelham residents.
- Explore renewable energy production in town and implement energy efficient measures during renovations of municipal buildings and facilities.
- Consider expanding social services and support to better accommodate the older population.
- Improve the accessibility of Pelham's community facilities and buildings to accommodate those with accessibility needs.





Summary of Key Issues, Opportunities , and Challenges

Pelham's distinct character and sense of community are qualities that residents want to retain over time.

Some of the contributing factors include the commitment to land conservation that has enabled the preservation of stonewalls, historic structures, forest lands, and fields. The significant surface and groundwater resources throughout town, and the fact that more than half of Pelham's roadways are local routes that have low traffic volumes and low posted speed limits contribute to the small-town character of the community. Pelham's thirty miles of trails, numerous recreation areas, and extensive recreation programming are also very popular with residents that add to the quality of life in town. Pelham has also been very forward thinking in its investments in municipal facilities and as a result has no major building needs in the near term. Another contributing factor includes the number of active cultural organizations and popular community events that bring residents together, and build a greater sense of community.

Pelham's population continues to grow and change.

As it does, the residential population is getting older, and school enrollment is decreasing. Most of the housing units in Pelham are owner-occupied single-family homes, and have also increased in size over time. Over 90% of the population in Pelham is on a private well, and yet some portions of the community are now experiencing water quality and quantity related issues. Pelham's median household income now exceeds that of surrounding communities. This has resulted in Pelham having relatively high home purchase prices, a low vacancy rate, and a lack of affordable units. Pelham does not have an adequate housing inventory for the range of potential residents seeking homes in the years to come including the existing residential population that may have different housing needs over time.

Pelham's future is bright.

There are opportunities for enhanced connectivity/walkability from existing and future residential and commercial developments to the Town Center. There are also opportunities for the community's open space network to be a part of this expanded pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and to provide more accessible alternatives to parks and green spaces for a larger percentage of the population. Pelham's largest areas of commercial development are located along NH 38 and NH 128. Over time, these areas of the community have the potential to accommodate additional commercial development/redevelopment and a mixture of housing development types, including multi-family units that will house new and existing residents.

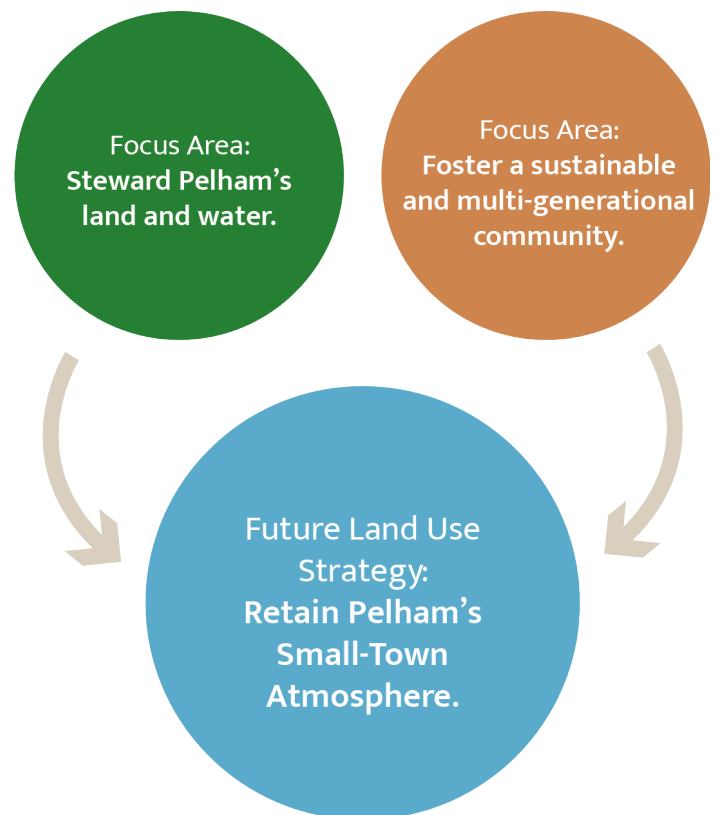


How This Plan Is Organized

Pelham's Master Plan is organized in four main sections. These include:

1. Pelham's Future Land Use Strategy – Retaining Pelham's Small-Town Atmosphere
2. Focus Area – Stewardship of Pelham's Land and Water
3. Focus Area – Fostering a Sustainable and Multi-Generational Community
4. Implementation Plan

As Pelham guides land use over the next ten years, it aims to retain its small-town character by stewarding its natural lands and by fostering a vibrant, sustainable, and multi-generational community. Each section of this Plan describes key initiatives and planning tools Pelham hopes to undertake and utilize over the next decade to achieve its vision and future land use goals. The implementation plan at the end of the document outlines specific implementation strategies the town will collaboratively act on as it implements the Plan.



FUTURE LAND USE STRATEGY

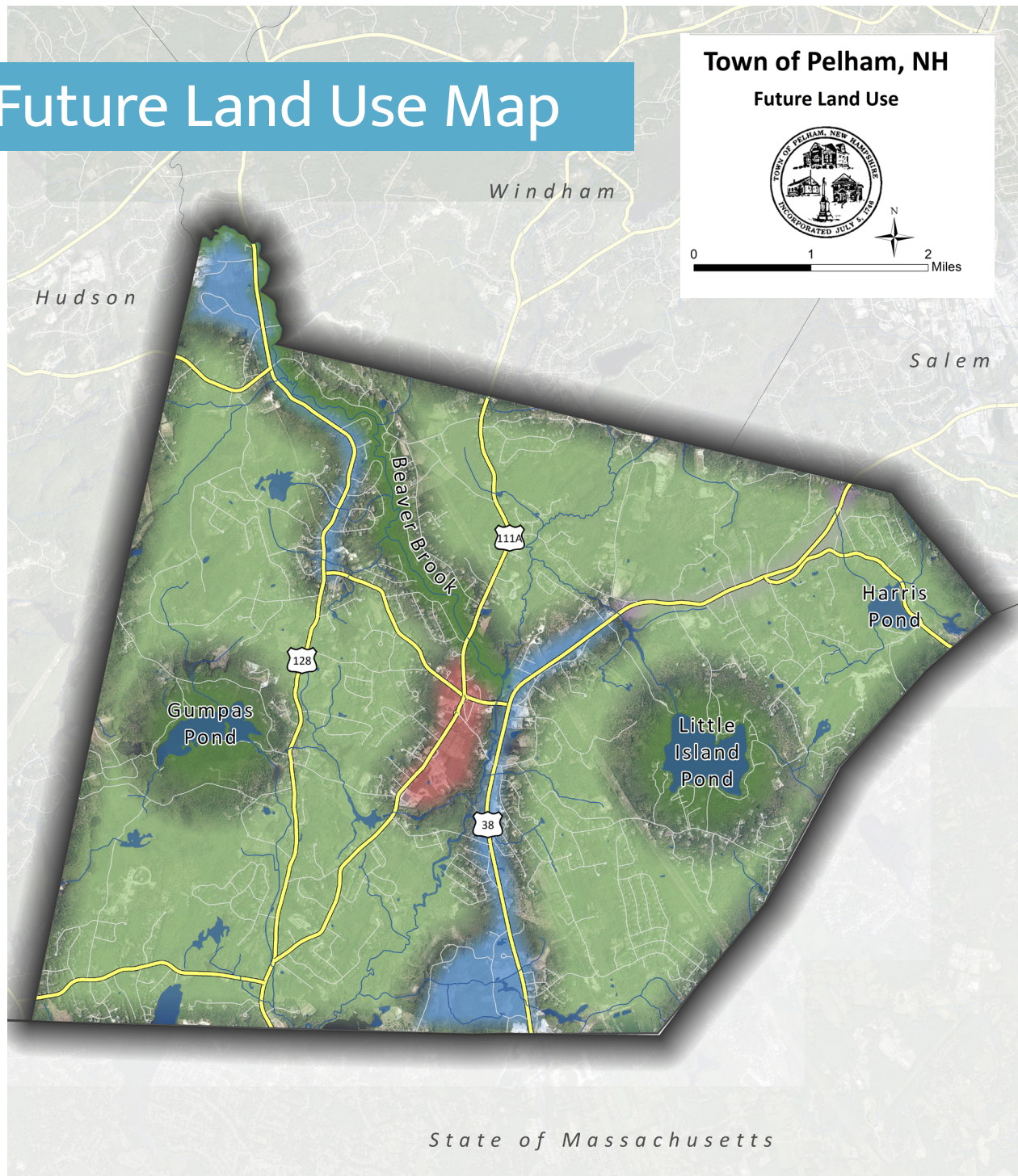
Retain Pelham's Small-Town Atmosphere.

How should Pelham grow? Where should we grow? What should we preserve? What could be improved? Pelham's future land use strategy provides a broad spatial overview of how land use, new development, infrastructure investment, and resource protection will be guided to achieve Pelham's vision of the future.

Pelham's future land use strategy is community-driven and analysis-based. It is intended to ensure Pelham retains its small-town atmosphere as it grows. The aspirations for each area of town will be dependent on available municipal services and infrastructure, the suitability of soils to support development, and efforts to protect natural resources.



Future Land Use Map



NOTE: RP&D WILL ADD CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCE AREA AROUND LONG POND.

Pelham's future land use map illustrates five major future land use areas in town. The land use related goals and aspiration for each area are described in greater detail on the following pages. The future land use strategy will guide future decision making related to land use regulations and capital investments over the next decade.

-  Residential, Open Space, Agriculture, and Conservation
-  Critical Natural Resource Area
-  Town Center and Mixed Use Area
-  Commercial and Industrial Area
-  Waterbody
-  Stream

Future Land Use Areas



Residential, Open Space, Agriculture, and Conservation Area

This area of Pelham currently has low and moderate density residential development, conserved lands, forestlands, the remaining farmland, water bodies, and recreation resources. Its natural areas provide many benefits including habitat, recreation, stormwater filtration, air quality, food production, and groundwater protection. Looking to the future, this area of town should maintain its more rural character by continuing to balance residential development and open space protection, while limiting incompatible land use activities. Priorities include:

- The protection of natural resources and ecosystem services as development continues.
- The preservation of surface and subsurface water quality and quantity with an emphasis on the protection of Pelham's aquifers.
- The development of additional recreation trails on conserved lands and open space parcels, as appropriate, and developing connections from recreation areas to residential neighborhoods. These trails support the health, wellness, and quality of life for Pelham residents, community members, and future generations.
- Agricultural uses should be encouraged to ensure the remaining farmland in town is retained and can be actively used for farming operations.
- Renewable energy systems at varying scales should be encouraged by regulatory and non-regulatory initiatives.

Ecosystem services are generated by our forests, farms, wetlands, and other natural resources. These services include the ecological, recreational, and cultural value they provide our community and to other species. Ecosystem services are the benefits we obtain from nature - including clean air and water, carbon storage, flood control, food production, pollination, recreation, contemplative space, and many others.



Critical Natural Resource Areas

These are areas of Pelham where future development must meet an even higher standard of design to ensure the existing natural resources are protected. These areas include Gumpas Pond, Little Island Pond, Long Pond, and Beaver Brook and nearby upland parcels. While other water bodies are not specifically called out as critical natural resource areas in the context of this future land use plan, it is important to note that other small water bodies and streams like Golden Brook and Tony's Brook, are still very important resources and provide habitat for wildlife and other ecosystem services. Priorities include:

- Protection of natural resources, undeveloped land, and water quality through land conservation, land use regulations, regular water quality monitoring, and collaboration with neighboring communities and other partners.
- Adoption of performance standards to ensure development meets additional requirements in these areas and should be guided by industry best practices as well as federal, state, and regional environmental standards.
- Regular monitoring of all water bodies, especially those classified by NH Department of Environmental Services as impaired, is critical to ensuring the community has clean, fresh water.

Only a small portion of Long Pond, one of Pelham's critical natural resource areas, is within Pelham's municipal boundary. No boat launches and little residential or commercial development exist along Pelham's portion of the pond. Most of the development and boat access is from Massachusetts. Given that Pelham's only Town Beach is located on Long Pond, it is imperative that Pelham cooperate with neighboring municipalities to continually monitor and improve Long Pond's water quality to protect residents who utilize this resource as well as the wildlife that depends upon it. Currently, Long Pond is considered to be an impaired waterbody under the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit. The permit program authorizes towns/entities to discharge stormwater to the environment under the Clean Water Act. The impairments in Long Pond are targeted by the permit to be monitored and reduced or eliminated over time.



Town Center and Mixed-Use Area

This area includes Pelham's village center and Main Street, and consists of municipal, educational, commercial, and residential uses. Looking to the future, this portion of town should continue to be developed as a mixed-use area with enhanced walkability and bicycle friendly roadways, small businesses, denser housing, and accessible community spaces. The lack of available water and sewer infrastructure will influence the level of density that can be supported. Priorities include:

- Investment in new and enhanced infrastructure to ensure walkability and bikability.
- Adoption of regulatory and economic development tools that will support the growth of commercial activity in this area of town.
- Continue to encourage mixed use development including commercial, civic, and residential uses.
- Signage and landscaping at either end of this area should communicate to travelers that they are entering the center of town.
- Renewable energy systems, especially rooftop arrays, should be encouraged by regulatory and non-regulatory initiatives.

Pelham's town center is located on NH 111A and Main Street. The village green, town offices, library, local schools, churches, historical society, and small businesses are located within this mixed use area of town. Some parcels within the town center have recently been rezoned for mixed use development that could include a combination of retail and residential uses. The mixed use overlay district is intended to accommodate traditional, pedestrian friendly mixed use development including multi-use buildings with commercial on the first floor and residential on the second floor, providing increased and varied housing types, and increasing businesses opportunities. Looking to the future, the town should continue to promote the town center as an active mixed-use hub and regulations should support this type of development that Pelham hopes to encourage.



Mixed-Use Corridors and Industrial Areas

These areas include NH Route 38 starting at the southern portion of town and extending to Old Bridge Street, which is largely dominated by auto-oriented, strip commercial development. They also include NH Route 128 from the north towards Nashua Street, which currently has some commercial development with opportunities for more given its proximity to water infrastructure and limited development constraints. The two existing industrial areas in Pelham have also been included in this future land use area. Looking to the future, these areas have been identified to accommodate commercial development/redevelopment, and a mixture of housing development types, including multi-family housing. Priorities include:

- Access management strategies and other regulatory tools will be employed to limit sprawl.
- Regulations that preserve groundwater and natural resources are already enabled in some of these areas and will continue to guide development activity.
- Encourage mixed-use development strategically in these areas and adopt performance standards to ensure that future development or redevelopment activity protects natural resources, such as Beaver Brook, and utilize buffers and screening to ensure uses can coexist harmoniously.
- Industrial development will continue to be accommodated in the existing industrial parks in town with design standards to protect the character of the community and our shared resources.
- Future improvements will need to be made to the roadway corridors in these areas. This should include prioritizing traffic calming and improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that is well-connected to other areas of the community.

Strip development is auto-oriented development that sprawls along highway corridors outside community centers. It is often characterized by a linear pattern of individual commercial uses along rural highways, made up primarily of single-story buildings, each with a separate driveway and parking area. While these areas serve the community by providing space for a variety of commercial activity, they also have the potential to negatively impact the vibrancy of our town, the function and safety of our roads, and our town and state's carbon footprint.



FOCUS AREA

Steward Pelham's Land and Water.

To preserve its small-town character and the rural areas of town, Pelham must focus on the protection of its natural land and water including its forests, fields, ponds, streams, wetlands, and other natural resources. This requires fostering a sense of collective stewardship of our community's natural resources and open lands, and connecting people to Pelham's great outdoors through trails, outdoor recreation opportunities, and public education. Regulatory and non-regulatory strategies should help the town encourage environmentally sensitive development to ensure future growth does not negatively impact Pelham's rural landscape.

This section, which touches on the shared land and water resources in Pelham, is broken up into three parts:

- Open Space and Conservation: *Keeping Pelham Green*
- Water and Natural Resource Protection: *Safeguarding Ecosystem Services*
- Trails and Outdoor Recreation: *Connecting People to Nature*



1. Open Space and Conservation

Keeping Pelham Green



Pelham will build on its conservation and open space protection legacy by continuing to preserve undeveloped open space through land conservation in partnership with interested landowners and other organizations.

This commitment to keeping the landscape green is in response to increasing residential development which has resulted in land and habitat fragmentation over the last few decades. This has emphasized the need to prioritize the protection of Pelham's forests, waterways, fields and farms, and prioritizes the connectivity of unfragmented land. According to the 2022 Natural Resource Inventory, Pelham has committed to acquiring an additional 1,000 acres of land to achieve a goal of dedicating at least 25% of its land area to conservation. This will help the town create a connected network of habitat, natural resources, and outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the community, which will help retain the small-town, rural environment that residents enjoy today.

Pelham's Conserved Lands and the Value of Open Space

Conserved lands can be defined as “acres that are mostly undeveloped and are protected from development”. Currently, 22% of Pelham's land area is conserved. 75% of all conserved land in town is owned by the Town of Pelham, while 2% is owned by the state and 23% is owned by other entities or under private ownership. The town-owned conservation land is managed by the Conservation Commission.

Open space can be thought of as all of the protected and unprotected undeveloped land that exists in Pelham. These lands include forests, farms, fields (including athletic fields), wetlands, and other ecosystems. Open spaces benefit the community in many ways:

- Help to preserve the town's rural character.
- Protects the quality of Pelham's drinking water.
- Preserve Pelham's scenic vistas, forests, and wildlife habitat.
- Help to stabilize taxes – open space has less impact on municipal services than developed land.
- Encourage stewardship and the enjoyment of land and water resources.



Pelham has an active and engaged approach to conservation, and the town and its residents have demonstrated they are willing to invest in natural resource protection. Since 2002, open space lands have doubled as a result of the Town's ambitious investment in open space protection led by the Conservation Commission.

These efforts resulted in 1,410 acres of open space being acquired through fee simple acquisitions and the purchasing of development rights. Beyond this investment there have also been land donations and open space subdivisions which contribute to the network of protected open space in Pelham.

As of 2023, the Conservation Commission is working to create an update of the 2010 Conservation Plan to identify new conservation goals in line with the future of Pelham. This will further inform the town's strategic land conservation efforts in the future. This is important, as Pelham has many significant natural resource areas in town, such as Gumpas Pond and the Musquash Brook area (both of which are among the highest ranked habitat in the state by New Hampshire Fish and Game). The town also has some rarer natural communities, such as an area of pitch pine-scrub oak woodland habitat (or pine barrens) at the Wolven Conservation Area. These unique woodlands make up less than half of one percent of the state's land cover. Conservation of forestland, agricultural soils, field habitat, and land associated with groundwater and surface water resources continues to be a major priority for the town as it looks to the future.

Community Priorities

During the master planning process, public feedback was collected on how Pelham should guide growth, development, and land conservation in the future. The following were identified as key priorities the community identified during this process:

- There is strong support for the town's existing conservation activity, and many residents indicated a desire to see the town continue its land protection work in the future.
- Many community members are concerned about the impact of development on the town's forested areas. Preservation of forested areas in Pelham should be a future priority for protection.
- The town should focus additional protection efforts on Pelham's surface waters, such as Beaver Brook, and other subsurface drinking water resources.

Open Space and Conservation Tool

Land Conservation Techniques and Funding

Land conservation is one of the most effective ways to ensure open space remains protected in perpetuity. There are a variety of land conservation techniques that the town can use in collaboration with landowners to conserve land, and in some cases, in partnership with other land protection organizations, such as the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, the Piscataqua Land Conservancy, state agencies, and others. It is important to note that town ownership of open space does not necessarily protect it in perpetuity as “conservation land” unless one or more of the following methods are used.

LAND PROTECTION TOOL	DESCRIPTION
CONSERVATION EASEMENT	A permanent, legally binding agreement between a landowner and a qualified conservation organization or public agency that restricts the use of land to protect its significant natural features. Under a conservation easement, a landowner continues to own the property and maintains the right to manage the land while giving up the right to engage in certain uses. Activities prohibited by conservation easements usually include intensive uses of the land such as subdivision and residential development, commercial activities (except forestry and agriculture), mining, disturbance of wetlands, and disposal of manmade and hazardous materials. Conservation easements in New Hampshire typically allow you to continue to use the land for agriculture, forestry, wildlife habitat management, outdoor recreation, and education.
FEE OWNERSHIP	This is when a conservation organization or public agency purchases the land outright from a seller. In these situations, the land and all rights transfer to the conservation organization or public agency, which becomes the landowner.
EXECUTORY INTEREST	Is a secondary or backup easement interest in the land held by another conservation organization. The executory interest holder is responsible for ensuring that the primary easement holder monitors the property and enforces the terms of the easement. If the primary holder fails in these tasks, the executory interest can take action to restore the property.
DEED RESTRICTION	Is a legally binding restriction placed on the use of the property that limits certain activities on the property. These can vary widely and can be used to accomplish diverse goals including land conservation and open space protection. Example conditions include a requirement that the parcel be left as open land in perpetuity, or that usage of all or a portion of the land be restricted to certain uses such as forestry, wildlife habitat, or passive recreation.



Land Protection Funding Sources

There are a variety of ways for municipalities to fund land protection initiatives including:

LOCAL INVESTMENT – Land conservation can be funded through the development of a municipal conservation fund or through a municipal bond.

AGRICULTURAL LAND EASEMENT PROGRAM - Administered by the US Natural Resources Conservation Service, this program focuses on conserving highly productive agricultural soils. Landowners must partner with eligible conservation organizations or communities to apply for funding.

WETLANDS RESERVE EASEMENT PROGRAM - Administered by the US Natural Resources Conservation Service, this program is focused on wetland resources, especially resources that have been degraded or damaged. Landowners may apply directly to the program.

LAND AND COMMUNITY HERITAGE INVESTMENT PROGRAM (LCHIP) - Provides matching grants to communities and conservation organizations to protect significant natural and historic resources in New Hampshire. Landowners must partner with eligible conservation organizations or communities to apply for funding.

WATER SUPPLY LAND PROTECTION GRANT PROGRAM –Administered by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, this program offers competitive grants to projects that will permanently protect water supply lands. Grants may cover up to 50% of the total project costs to permanently conserve the property, with a maximum grant award of \$500,000.

Open Space and Conservation Toolbox

Climate Resilient Forest Management

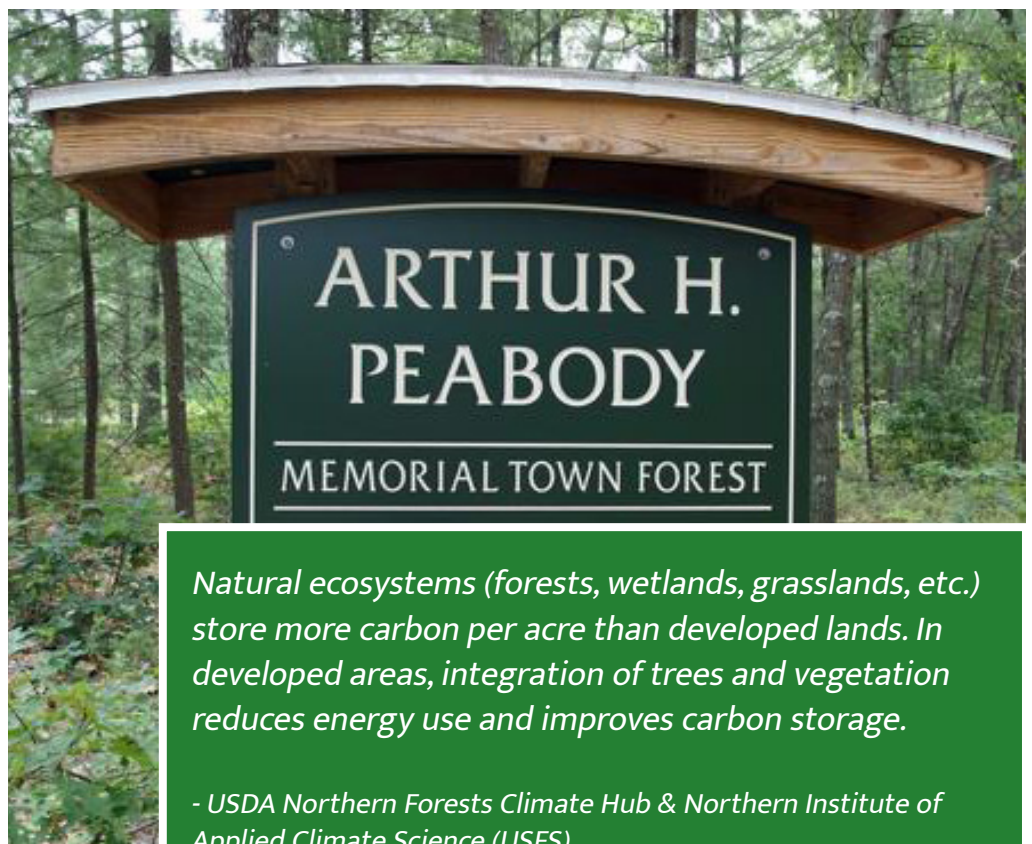
Climate change increases the uncertainty about future forest conditions, and the challenges the forests in Pelham will face. Climate resilient forest management strategies are actions that can be taken by the town to reduce forest vulnerabilities and increase resiliency. This will enable Pelham's forests to continue to provide the many benefits we and other species depend on. Our town forests represent an opportunity to mitigate the impacts of climate change and capitalize on the benefits of carbon storage and other ecosystem services, which include providing cooling in summer, recreation, storing water, and preserving biodiversity.

Pelham has eight town forests that total 1,791 acres, and one state forest (the 63-acre Jeremy Hill State Forest) all of which have a current

management plan prepared by a licensed NH Forester, or a management plan that is pending. The Pelham Forestry Committee maintains forest management plans for Pelham's town forests. Pelham has also adopted a Climate Adaptation Forestry Management Plan that is guiding an assessment of the resiliency of all town forests in Pelham and will guide future management activities. Strategies to make Pelham's town forests more climate resilient include reducing stressors, management of invasive species, promotion of forest regeneration, a variety of silviculture techniques, and maintenance of animal and plant diversity. Pelham should continue to utilize best climate resilient management practices as this research deepens to ensure its forests remain resilient in the future.

A changing climate poses risks to forests (and the carbon they sequester):

- Altered climate
- Extreme weather
- Chronic stress
- Disturbances
- Insect pests
- Forest diseases
- Invasive species
- Altered habitat suitability



Natural ecosystems (forests, wetlands, grasslands, etc.) store more carbon per acre than developed lands. In developed areas, integration of trees and vegetation reduces energy use and improves carbon storage.

- USDA Northern Forests Climate Hub & Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science (USFS)

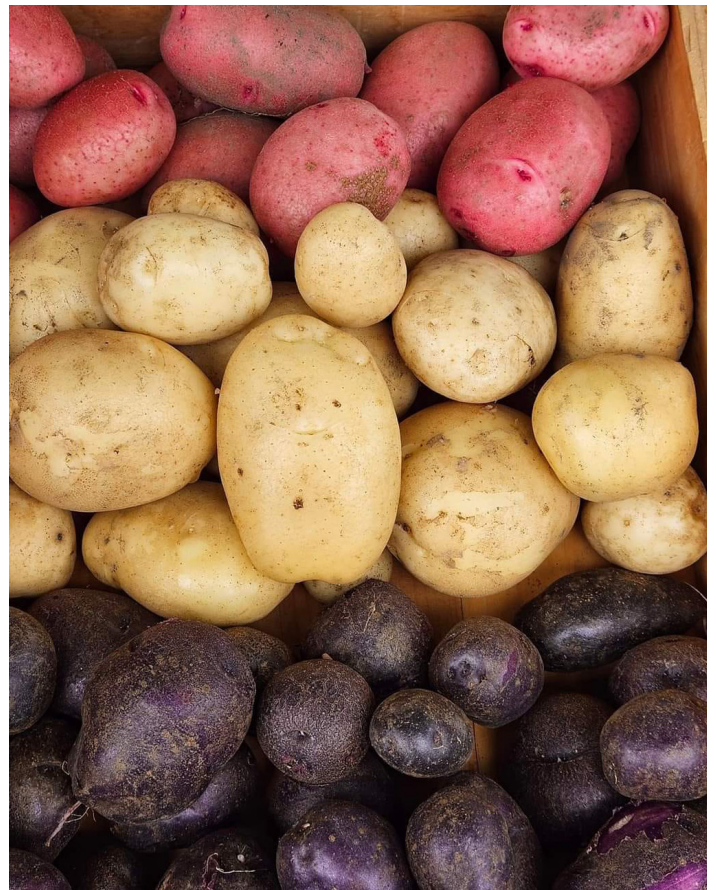
Open Space and Conservation Toolbox

Community Gardens

Local government leaders are in a unique position to promote healthy eating, active living, and the heritage of farming in their communities by supporting community gardens. Community gardens are places where neighbors can gather to cultivate plants, vegetables, herbs, and fruit. Such gardens, and associated programming, can improve nutrition, physical activity, and community engagement. They provide open space for community gatherings and family events, increase access to healthy food, provide ecosystem services like healthy soil, pollinator habitat, and clean water, offer educational opportunities and vocational skills for youth, and enable residents to grow food for themselves and their communities. Community gardens can also be integrated into broader community projects such as after-school programs for

children, activities for older adults, and can provide resources for food banks and homeless shelters.

Currently, the Pelham Agricultural Commission is building on their other efforts (which includes launching the Farmers Market) to create a community garden for the town. The Agricultural Commission works to protect the agricultural lands, preserve the rural character of the Town, encourage agriculturally based community events, provide mediation and conflict resolution on farm related disputes, and support farms and farming operations. The Commission does this while providing a voice for the farmers within the community, and serving as an educational bridge between the Town boards.



2. Water and Natural Resource Protection

Safeguarding Ecosystem Services



As development and redevelopment occurs in Pelham, safeguarding the quality and quantity of the town's water resources and other natural resources is imperative as they provide many ecosystem services that benefit nature and our community.

Pelham's natural resources consist of its waterways, including ponds, lakes, and streams, drinking water supplies, wetlands, and its soils, wildlife habitat, and natural landscapes. Looking to the future, water protection will continue to be a major focus for the town, as well as general natural resource protection, as growth occurs.

According to the 2022 Natural Resource Inventory, there are two key issues affecting water resources in the region. The first is the increased amount of impervious surfaces in town, which increase stormwater runoff, and reduce natural stormwater infiltration and the recharge of groundwater resources. Stormwater runoff from streets, parking lots, and lawns picks up and carries untreated

Pelham's MS4 Permit and Stormwater Management

Because Pelham contains significant areas that are defined as "urbanized" by the US Census, the community is subject to federal Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) stormwater management regulations under the EPA Clean Water Act. A municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) consists of the stormwater collection, conveyance, and outfall structures within the town. Pelham has taken significant steps toward addressing stormwater management and complying with the EPA's MS4 Permit requirements, including adopting a Stormwater Management Plan that outlines diverse strategies to reduce stormwater pollution.

contaminants as it moves across the ground before entering local drainage systems. Chemicals in this runoff can also lead to long term pollution of groundwater. Additionally, development increases evaporation and the export of surface water, and both contribute to a decrease in groundwater resources.

The second issue is the overall demand for water. The continued growth of Pelham and the broader region has placed more

Beaver Brook

A Critical Natural Resource Area

Beaver Brook is a significant and critical water body within Pelham, and is also identified as impaired under the MS4 Program. The Brook and its watershed traverse Pelham from north to south, essentially bisecting the Town. The Brook passes through communities north of Pelham that contribute to water quality impacts from development along the Brook, adding to the challenge of reducing or eliminating the identified contaminants. While many properties abutting the Brook within Pelham have been developed, any additional development or redevelopment activity should be closely reviewed and required to follow best environmental practices for site design and development.

pressure on the town's existing water resources. This makes it imperative to monitor and maintain the quality of all water resources in Pelham and the surrounding region. Currently, 9% of Pelham residents are served by Pennichuck Water Works, which is a privately owned public water system. The other 91% (approx. 4,809 properties) of Pelham's population is on private well water. There are also a total of sixty-eight public water supply systems in Pelham and fifty-one of these are currently active. Approximately 56% of Pelham's active public wells have a below average supply which is a concern for the town. Though this information provided by the NH Department of Environment Services only pertains to the public water supply sources in Pelham, many of Pelham's residents in the Sherburne Road and Spaulding Hill Road areas are seeing water supply issues with very low yields derived from their wells. To address water scarcity issues, the town recently put out a request for a water feasibility study that will evaluate the potential for additional public water infrastructure. Therefore, protection of Pelham's groundwater resources is critical to the future of the town.

Beyond water resources, Pelham's other natural resources are critical to shaping the town's character. Pelham's town forests, farms, and other undeveloped lands provide significant ecological, recreational, and cultural value to the town. Natural resources provide clean air and water, carbon storage, flood control, food production, pollination,



and many other services. This should inform changes to Pelham's land use regulations to protect these natural systems and services to the greatest extent possible.

While many of Pelham's ecosystem services are provided by land in its natural state, each property owner has the potential to protect and restore ecosystem services as well, whether that's by keeping or restoring vegetative buffers during development projects, designing rain gardens and green infrastructure systems for stormwater management, utilizing native landscaping, or using permeable pavement to reduce impervious surface on site. Pelham's land use regulations also have the potential to encourage these activities when development proposals are submitted to the town. As development occurs, Pelham should ensure that the land use regulations protect or create additional ecosystem services.

Community Priorities

During the master planning process, public feedback was collected on community concerns related to natural and water resource protection in the future. The following were identified as key issues the community identified during this process:

- Many community members wanted to see growth slowed in town, and future development to be balanced with natural resource protection standards to protect natural resources on site.
- Protection of water resources were identified as a critical natural resource to focus on in the future.



Pelham Bluebird Society

As development fragments our natural landscapes, creating sanctuary spaces in our developed spaces can have a great impact on providing food, forage, and shelter for wildlife in our community. The Pelham Bluebird Society is a group of individuals who are interested in creating nesting spaces for Eastern Bluebirds throughout town to support and grow the population of bluebirds in Pelham. The Bluebird Society is installing and maintaining nesting boxes for the Eastern Bluebird at the Merriam Farm Conservation Area and elsewhere in Pelham. These birds need tree cavities for nesting. In the past, tree cavities were more prevalent, but now old and rotting trees are often removed from landscaped environments and nesting boxes are required to survive. Eastern Bluebirds eat mostly insects, wild fruit, and berries. The adjacent field habitat provides a perfect feeding ground for these birds.

Water and Natural Resource Protection Toolbox

Green Infrastructure

Stormwater runoff from the built environment is a primary source of untreated pollutants in surface waters. This includes pathogens such as E. Coli, phosphorous, pesticides, herbicides, and many other pollutants. This has already resulted in impairments to Pelham's waterbodies. According to the NH Department of Environmental Services, Beaver Brook, Tony's Brook, and Long Pond have all had contaminants and pH impairments which impact water quality for aquatic habitat.

Green infrastructure systems are natural or human made vegetated systems that can be protected or constructed on private and public property, near parking lots, and as part of the town's street network. They capture, temporarily store, and treat stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces at the source. Additional infiltration on site can be achieved using permeable paving options. The town can encourage or incentivize green infrastructure systems through its land use regulations, and can incorporate these systems as part of its stormwater management plans to comply with its MS4 permit.

Examples of green infrastructure techniques include:

BIORETENTION AREAS: are vegetated depressions that collect and filter runoff and include vegetated strips, rain gardens, bioswales, shallow surface ponds, tree box filters, and underground drainage systems. Bioretention areas increase the amount of rainwater a property can absorb.

RAIN GARDENS: are a very popular bioretention technique that are being incorporated into residential, municipal, and commercial property

landscaping plans. They are sunken, flat-bottomed gardens that use soil and plants to capture, absorb, and treat stormwater, helping to reduce stormwater runoff and recharge groundwater. They include a combination of vegetation, such as trees, shrubs, and perennial plants that collect, slow down, and filter runoff, while also providing visually appealing landscaping and habitat.

BIOSWALES: are shallow channels that slow runoff and direct it to an area where it can infiltrate. They use a combination of plants to stabilize the soil, reduce erosion, slow the flow, and absorb runoff.

PERMEABLE PAVING: offers an alternative to traditional asphalt and concrete and allows rainwater to percolate into the ground. Permeable pavement options have been used successfully to build parking lots, driveways, and bicycle paths. Although typically more expensive to construct than traditional pavement, this solution could be effective strategically for specific development and redevelopment projects.

NATURAL VEGETATIVE BUFFERS: along stream corridors preserve the existing hydrological pattern of drainage and percolation, provide shade, stabilize slopes, clean and filter stormwater, and provide habitat. These can be protected through land use regulation requirements

Water and Natural Resource Protection Toolbox

Public Outreach and Education

Public outreach and education on the value of natural resources and natural lands in Pelham is already happening by many groups in town. Utilizing a variety of outreach and education methods has the power to connect Pelham residents with the natural landscapes that make the town special and help shape its character. This also helps to boost broader community support and engagement for future natural resource protection efforts, encourages use and connection to Pelham's natural lands, and increases the collective knowledge on the importance of Pelham's natural resources to people and wildlife. These initiatives should continue to be supported, fostered, and in some cases, grown over the next decade as a mechanism for the town to achieve its resource protection goals. Some of these initiatives include:

TOWN BOARDS: Including the Conservation Commission, Agricultural Commission, and Forestry Committee all provide education to the public on the town's open space and natural resources.

FOREST FRIENDS OF PELHAM, NH: Operate a robust website documenting the beauty and value of Pelham's natural lands, and provide significant education on the importance of backyard habitat solutions and the wildlife that exists throughout town.

PELHAM BLUEBIRD SOCIETY: Provides education on the importance of nesting boxes to support the Eastern Bluebird population in town.

PELHAM GARDEN GROUP: Gathers monthly to share knowledge, a common interest in gardening, and regularly host workshops on various topics related to gardening.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT EDUCATION: Pelham has a significant webpage on stormwater management. This webpage includes resources for property owners, educational materials on lawn care, composting, the town's clean water initiative, and more. The Town of Pelham is also engaged in more creative methods of stormwater outreach including the creation of a contest for environmentally themed murals to be painted on stormwater drains throughout Pelham. In 2022, there were two winners, and their murals are now visible at Pelham High School and on Common Street.



Water and Natural Resource Protection Toolbox

Performance Standards

Historically, zoning was implemented as a technique for separating incompatible land uses. This protected low-intensity uses from the harmful or disagreeable impacts of high-intensity uses. Performance standards allow a town's regulations to focus more on the design and configuration of the development (i.e. reducing negative impacts and increasing positive impacts) rather than focusing merely on separating land uses.

Performance standards measure the quantifiable impacts of each proposed development rather than prohibiting certain land uses. This type of zoning offers an alternative method for implementing the community goals of this Master Plan and the future land use strategy,

while also protecting the rights of private property owners to utilize their land according to the highest and best use. Performance standards can regulate aesthetics to maintain community character, but they can also regulate impacts to natural resources by providing standards for landscaping, open space protection, buffer requirements, and impervious surface management.

Currently, Pelham uses performance standards to guide the development of wireless service facilities, but there is also an opportunity to consider utilizing this practice to guide development and redevelopment within the mixed-use corridor future land use areas of town.



3. Trails and Outdoor Recreation

Connecting People to Nature



Pelham will continue offering diverse outdoor recreation opportunities to all its residents and community members, from older adults, to families, our youth, and everyone in between.

There are approximately 2,400 acres of land that support recreation in Pelham, both publicly and privately owned. These outdoor recreation resources include town forests and conservation areas, schools and athletic fields, playgrounds, parks, camps, a shooting range, a golf course, and the town beach. Since 2002, with the assistance of the Conservation Commission, the town has purchased parcels of land to expand the network of parks and trails, created more recreational programming for residents of all ages, and have implemented new recreation infrastructure to expand recreation diversity in Pelham.

There are approximately 30 miles of trails in Pelham offering a diversity of recreational opportunities that include but are not limited

Pelham's Trail Network

Pelham's existing recreation trail network includes the following open spaces.

- Costa Conservation Area
- Cutler Spalding Conservation Area
- Cutter Merrian Conservation Area
- Elmer G. Raymond Memorial Park
- Gumpas Pond Conservation Area
- Kirby-Ivers Town Forest
- Little Island Pond Conservation Area
- Peabody Town Forest
- Sprint St Town Forest/Moose Pond Conservation Area/Calitri Conservation Area
- Woven Park

Trail maps for each property are available on the Town of Pelham website.

to walking, bicycling, cross-country skiing/snowshoeing, mountain biking, horseback riding, hunting, and snowmobiling on over ten unique trail systems. Most of Pelham's established trails are on conserved land owned by the town. This extensive trail system includes well-mapped and signed trails in most of the town forests and conservation lands. The Town sees value in this trail network as it provides recreation opportunities for residents and community members, and connects people



to Pelham's natural lands. In the future, the town will focus on maintaining and improving the existing trail system and expanding trails in town as opportunities arise.

Pelham's efforts to expand the trail network since 2002 have included acquiring abutting parcels, extending existing trails, and creating new trails. In 2021, the Forestry Committee worked with its volunteers to extend the Gumpas Pond Conservation Area trail network to connect to Hudson's trail system. Additionally, to spread awareness of the town's trail network, the Forestry Committee is involved in community outreach efforts which include creating a trail challenge to increase trail usage. Individual maps of different trail systems are also available on the Pelham Forestry Committee website. The Forestry Committee and its citizen volunteers primarily maintain the trail network in Pelham. The Boy Scouts also assist with trail maintenance and various larger projects on the trails such as the newly constructed pedestrian bridge over Beaver Brook.

Community Priorities

During the master planning process, public feedback was collected on how Pelham should guide trail and outdoor recreation planning in the future. The following were identified as key priorities during this process:

- Many community members expressed a desire for the town to continue maintaining and improving existing public trails in town and to add more trails in the future.
- Some community members indicated they would like to see new types of outdoor recreation infrastructure in town including a pump track, bike paths, mountain biking trails, and multi-use paths.
- More ADA accessible recreational facilities, programs, and activities are desired due to the increase in older residents.



There are additional opportunities to improve the maintenance of Pelham's existing parks and recreation facilities, and to expand outdoor recreation resources for all Pelham residents. Over the last twenty years, Pelham has demonstrated its commitment to diverse recreation opportunities by investing in its recreation facilities and programs to expand accessibility to all residents.

Examples of this investment include the addition of public athletic fields to the Pelham Schools and the updating of the Fieldhouse at Raymond Park. Looking ahead, there is demand for the Parks and Recreation Department to provide more recreation programming for older adults, which is an increasing population in town, and youth to meet emerging and changing

Bike Parks and Pump Tracks

According to the Outdoor Foundation, bicycling is the number one gateway activity that gets kids outside and ultimately interested in other outdoor recreation such as hiking, camping, fishing, and other physical activities. A bike park is a piece of land specifically designed for mountain biking. Bike parks can be built in developed areas, on public lands, or integrated with existing trail systems.

A bike park may include skills courses, pump tracks, jumps, trails, and other features. Bike parks are fun, challenging, and healthy places for people to exercise. They provide riders of all ages with challenging, interesting, and progressively more difficult features. They support riders - from toddlers on balance-bikes to advanced professionals, and well-built facilities become a draw for many. Bike parks accommodate a wide range of abilities. A bike park could allow Pelham to increase its public recreational opportunities and deter unauthorized trail-building by giving people a great place to ride.

Trails and Outdoor Recreation Toolbox

Trail Stewardship

Continued maintenance and strategic improvements to these trail systems will be necessary over time to address the impacts of age, usage, and erosion. As improvements are made, it is important that best management practices are followed. These could include:

- Prioritizing stewardship attention on the busiest trails.
- Exploring partnerships to help restore trails or fix problems within highly impacted areas.
- Continuing to strengthen the network of local volunteers to build social capital in the community while widening volunteer recruitment by targeting local community members.
- Promoting user safety through tactics such as high-quality mapping, reliable signage and wayfinding, user education, and systems for reporting trail safety incidents.

In addition, consideration should be given to assessing existing trails for potential impacts to wildlife. Funded by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (NHFG) recently published *Trails for People and Wildlife - A Guide to Planning Trails that allow People to Enjoy Nature and Wildlife to Thrive*. As noted on the NHFG website, this guide is:

“a statewide tool that can be used to assess existing trails and site new trails in the most wildlife- friendly way. This mapping tool highlights areas particularly important for wildlife and areas that would be more suitable for trail development. The guidebook explains in more detail how recreation can impact wildlife, how to use the tool to minimize

those impacts, and provides some real-world examples of how conservation organizations are using it to make their trail planning efforts most effective.”

As new trails are planned or improvements to existing trail networks are proposed, Pelham should use the Trails for People and Wildlife mapping tool to minimize adverse impacts to wildlife while maximizing outdoor recreational opportunities for the people of the town.



Trails and Outdoor Recreation Toolbox

Accessibility of Parks, Open Spaces, and Trails

Parks, trails, and recreational facilities provide critical benefits to the residents of Pelham. They provide space for exercise, socialization, relaxation, and make the town an attractive place to live. However, not all individuals have equal access to these spaces. People with disabilities often face physical, social, and attitudinal barriers limiting their participation and enjoyment of parks and trails in town.

To promote inclusion and ensure that there are trails in town that are accessible to all, it is essential to take proactive steps to improve accessibility of existing open spaces and trails, and to create new accessible recreation infrastructure in town.

The Pelham Council on Aging and the Senior Programs at the Hobbs Community Center are teaming up with the Conservation Commission, Forestry Committee, and Parks and Recreation Department to modify some trail networks to be more age accommodating. This includes making trails more accessible for all ages, and to ensure town parks offer activities for older adults and children.

Accessible parks and trail improvements might include the strategies listed on the right. However, it is important to note that each trail and trail system is unique. Many of these strategies may not be appropriate for open spaces with more secluded or rugged trail systems. Improvements should be evaluated to determine if any of the existing parks and open spaces could accommodate accessibility improvements, and should serve as a guide when designing new outdoor recreation facilities in the future.

- **Providing accessible parking:** Provide sufficient space and a smooth surface near the park or trail entrance. This makes it easier for people with disabilities to get in and out of their vehicles. The ADA specifies the acceptable width, depth, slope, and location for accessible parking spaces.
- **Accessible trails and paths:** Are designed to accommodate mobility devices, with ample width, even surfaces, and gentle slopes that make enjoying them possible for individuals with disabilities. The trail surface should be firm, stable, and slip-resistant, with a maximum slope of 1:20. Additional ADA trail design specifications are available online.
- **Tactile signage:** Also known as ADA signage, provides information about open spaces and trails, directions, and safety information through touch, allowing individuals with visual impairments to navigate the towns natural lands and trails more easily.
- **Accessible seating:** Allows park visitors with disabilities to rest, relax, and enjoy the outdoors. Accessible seating areas should be conveniently located and have level and smooth pathways for approach. The seating area should be level, with sufficient clear floor space for maneuverability per ADA guidelines.
- **Inclusive communication:** Communicates to people what's waiting for them before they arrive. Providing accurate and comprehensive information about accessibility features and programs available in outdoor spaces is vital. That means telling visitors what they will find before they arrive—such as trail condition, limitations to accessibility, etc.



FOCUS AREA

Foster a sustainable and multi-generational community.

The vibrancy of any community is dependent on the people who live, work, play, and visit the town. For Pelham to maintain its vibrancy as a community, residents must be able to:

- Have adequate housing options for different stages of their lives,
- Participate in community activities, events, and have diverse things to do,
- Visit public spaces and facilities that provide community services they need,
- Get around parts of town in a variety of different ways, such as by vehicle, walking, or biking,
- Have access to commercial services compatible with Pelham's small-town character, and
- Have the opportunity to participate in climate change and sustainability initiatives as part of the town's effort to steward its shared resources

This section, which touches on the different components that contribute to a sustainable and multi-generational community, is broken into five parts:

- Housing Opportunities: A Place to Live
- Community Services and Facilities: Supporting Our Residents
- Multi-Modal Transportation, Walkability, and Bikeability: Creating Safe Streets for All
- An Active Town Center and Local Economy: Memorable and Enduring
- Climate Change and Sustainability: Reduce And Then Produce

4. Housing Opportunities

A Place to Live



Pelham is committed to having a variety of housing options for existing and potential residents, while also retaining the small-town rural character of the community.

Pelham is a desirable community to live in for many reasons. However, over time, some of the available rental units have transitioned to being owner occupied homes and that has changed who can live in Pelham. Most homes in Pelham are now owner-occupied single-family homes, and very few units are available for rent. Given the price of housing, lack of available housing units, and the need of residents for different types of housing at various stages of their lives, Pelham's housing inventory is no longer adequate for existing and future residents. These realities are clear to residents and decision makers. During public feedback sessions, residents suggested that Pelham identify opportunities to increase housing alternatives. To accomplish this, many residents suggested encouraging a diversity of housing types in appropriate areas of the community while maintaining its commitment

Community Priorities

During the master planning process, public feedback was collected on how Pelham should plan for housing and residential development in the future. The following were identified as key priorities during this process:

- Many community members expressed a concern for the lack of housing options in Pelham for older adults, low-income households, and the workforce.
- The top concerns identified by community members related to future housing development included overpopulation and uncontrolled development (and their effects on the character of the community and town services), deforestation to accommodate new development, the need for water infrastructure to support development, and the lack of affordable housing options for low-income households and the younger generations.

to land conservation and working to preserve the character of the community. The Vision for Pelham is of a vibrant and collaborative community that includes residents from all age groups, but recent Census figures indicate that



this is at risk. While some age groups in Pelham have increased over time, including residents under the age of 15 years old and residents 55 and older, there has been a decline in 34- to 44-year-olds which make up a significant percent of the “family forming age group.” Currently, older residents wishing to remain in the community have few housing alternatives, and as a result some of their homes are not becoming available for younger families.

This need for new housing units is further complicated by the limited land area and infrastructure available to support new development. These realities informed and shaped the Future Land Use Strategy presented in this Master Plan. As Pelham works to accommodate new housing opportunities and choices, additional regulatory tools will need to be adopted that can thoughtfully guide this development activity. As this work gets under way, this Master Plan should guide the increase in housing opportunities to ensure it is coordinated with increases in transportation alternatives, and the protection of important natural resources. Together, these will help preserve the character of the community while ensuring it remains a desirable community to live in.

The NH Housing Toolbox is a resource that describes many of the strategies available to New Hampshire communities to create housing that is aligned with community needs. This toolbox is an excellent resource for Pelham decision makers during implementation of this Master Plan. Some of these tools are broad approaches to development that municipalities can consider, while others are specific regulations or programs that municipalities can implement.

Nashua Regional Planning Commission

2023 Regional Housing Needs Assessment

The demand for housing in the region surrounding Pelham has far outstripped supply over the past several years resulting in significant increases in housing costs for both owners and renters. The lack of available housing, especially rental units, is challenging the ability of many people to find housing at all. The home-buying market is also suffering from an extremely low inventory of homes available for sale. The Multiple Listing Service (MLS) Housing Inventory indicates the average number of months to absorb current properties listed for sale dropped from over nine months in 2011 to less than one month by 2023. Generally, a six-month supply is considered to be a healthy housing market. For the housing market to return to a healthy balance, an increase in the availability of housing units of all types will be required.

This Regional Housing Needs Assessment provides a comprehensive overview of housing- and demographic- data and analyses, a review of the needs of certain subpopulations such as people and families experiencing homelessness, as well as housing development targets for each community in the Nashua Region. The Assessment culminates with a series of alternative housing strategies for meeting the region’s diversity of housing needs while protecting the character of our communities and the quality of life for our residents. This assessment should be used to further inform future changes to land use policy to meet Pelham’s goals.

Housing Opportunities Toolbox

Open Space Cluster Development

This type of subdivision is often referred to as a conservation subdivision because it effectively balances the need for additional development activity and continued land protection. Pelham already has a clustering provision in its land use regulations, but changes and additional incentives could make this regulatory tool more appealing and effective for future developments. It is important to note that open space cluster developments can include different types of homes (single family, duplex, and multi-family units), and even non-residential uses depending on where they are in the community. These smaller, sensitively placed, and clustered lots require less total land coverage, thereby requiring shorter lengths of utilities and streets to access the lots and buildings created. This is important in Pelham where less land remains for development and natural resource protection is an important community consideration. In areas without water and sewer infrastructure this approach to development also provides opportunities for shared well and septic systems.

Some of the other benefits of this regulatory tool for future developments in Pelham include:

- Reduced land disturbance and infrastructure costs for the same number of units.
- Protected water resources and wildlife habitat.
- Increased recreation connections with neighboring properties.
- Reduced construction and maintenance costs.
- Clustered homes create a sense of community.
- This is the preferred development type for Cohousing Developments.

While many New Hampshire communities have examples of cluster developments, a couple of notable examples include Watson Woods in Exeter and the Nubanusit Neighborhood and Farm in Peterborough. Both neighborhoods include a mix of single family and multi-family housing units, and conserved forests and farmland.



Housing Opportunities Toolbox

Inclusionary Zoning

Inclusionary zoning is a regulatory strategy that encourages the creation of deed restricted affordable housing (homes that must be rented or sold at a price affordable to the typical household) within market-rate developments. The name “Inclusionary Zoning” is meant to reference and counteract “exclusionary zoning,” the practice of crafting zoning rules that limit opportunities for low-income households, racial and ethnic minorities, and other groups to become members of the community. Inclusionary regulations specify that certain zoning rules (maximum density, dimensional rules, minimum parking) can be relaxed for new developments of a certain size as an incentive if that development rents or sells a portion of its units at an affordable rate to income-eligible households. The affordable housing units must be provided on the same site as the market-rate development.

Under New Hampshire law, Inclusionary Zoning provisions must be voluntary (i.e., a developer elects to provide the affordable units in exchange for zoning relief). In most cases, the market rate housing units “cross-subsidize” the affordable units, making up for any financial

loss that below-market-rate prices create. For these cross-subsidies to work, there must be sufficient market-rate rent or sales, and enough market rate units to cover the affordable units and deliver the profit developers need for the project’s success. This real estate balancing act is tricky and should be further evaluated for Pelham before any efforts to adopt new zoning language.

Inclusionary Zoning can also:

- Increase affordability without reliance on government funding.
- Encourage workforce housing production.
- Create more community support for housing development generally.
- Produce more diverse housing options.
- Produce affordable units even when costs are rising.

To increase affordable housing options in town, Pelham should review its zoning and consider the development of an inclusionary zoning provision to offer developers incentives to produce the type of housing the town wishes to see.



Housing Opportunities Toolbox

Accessory Dwelling Units

These types of residential units are desirable in many communities because they more easily blend into the community. Pelham already allows the construction of both attached and detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs), but there is interest in reviewing and revising the existing regulatory requirement to make them even more flexible and appealing to property owners. This could include a clear provision for tiny homes, removing the requirement that one of the units be occupied by the owner, or other changes.

Creating a non-regulatory initiative to educate land owners on the benefits of constructing an ADU, and streamlining the permitting process may also help to increase the number of ADUs constructed in Pelham. Such an initiative could include tours of constructed ADUs, educational materials, pre-permitting site plans and ADU designs based on local conditions, and could even include efforts to identify financing opportunities (e.g. low-interest loans) for ADU construction.

Accessory Dwelling Units are part of Pelham's housing strategy because they:

- Provide an age-friendly housing option for older adults, as they can down-size while aging in place.
- Provide rental opportunities for younger adults, single parents, and others.
- Accommodate multi-generational families and other household structures that are not well-served by conventional development.
- Reduce demand on assisted living facilities by providing homes to caregivers for older homeowners.
- Create more housing without changing the character of an existing neighborhood.
- Create more housing affordability and options without the need for additional water and sewer infrastructure.
- Provide more units no additional land costs.
- Create income-support opportunities for homeowners in expensive housing markets.
- Generate increased tax revenue (over the long term) for municipalities.



5. Community Services and Facilities

Supporting Our Residents



Pelham is committed to creating and managing community facilities and services that are accessible to all residents, while also being high quality, sustainable, and fiscally responsible.

Pelham's community facilities, such as the town offices, library, and transfer station, and community services, including town government, police and fire, elder services, and parks and recreation, are utilized by residents throughout the community. Future planning for these facilities and services will need to consider the needs of all community members and the realities of the facilities themselves.

To maintain high-quality community facilities, the town should perform detailed assessments of all municipal buildings and infrastructure. Facility condition assessments prepared for each town-owned building will create a

Pelham's Commitment to Community Services and Facilities

In 2002, the Town of Pelham had the vision and public support to make a significant and long-lasting municipal investment that included the conversion of the old Sherburne School into a Municipal Complex and Village Green. This investment has greatly improved and addressed municipal space needs and is now the location of Pelham's town offices, police and fire departments, public library, and the location of many indoor and outdoor events that contribute to the identity and sense of community in Pelham.

record of all internal and external building components, their useful life, and replacement schedules. This effort should be paired with an initiative to conduct assessments of all existing municipal infrastructure. Because there is no municipal water or sewer infrastructure, the emphasis will be on creating a record of the



stormwater and transportation infrastructure's condition and needs. This will assist Pelham with the planning for improvements and investment over time.

This critical asset management planning will inform facility and infrastructure maintenance, replacement, and prioritization in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). These efforts are critical to managing municipal expenses because they help forecast and proactively plan for and even stagger capital expenditures. Pelham has elected to take this a step further by also considering the changes necessary to make these municipal sites and structures universally accessible, more energy efficient, renewable energy powered, and a reflection of nature-based design solutions.

This holistic approach to the management of municipal facilities and services considers the needs of residents while ensuring that Pelham's municipal properties and structures continue to support critical community building activities. Residents are actively involved in municipal operations and community events throughout the year, and this time together builds personal relationships and a sense of community. These relationships and personal connections make the community more resilient to external challenges and ensure Pelham is a wonderful place to live.

Community Priorities

During the master planning process, public feedback was collected on how Pelham should plan for its community services and facilities in the future. The following were identified as key priorities during this process:

- Invest in maintenance of community facilities upfront rather than waiting to ensure the longevity of buildings and grounds.
- Many community members would like to see Pelham's community buildings become more accessible to residents by making them more ADA compliant, and by extending the hours to better accommodate the general public.
- Many community members would like to see Pelham's municipal buildings become more energy efficient and utilize renewable energy systems.

Community Services and Facilities Toolbox

Asset Management

Long-range monitoring and maintenance of municipal assets (buildings and infrastructure) will ensure consistent and timely investment is made and will guide investment decisions in the future. The municipal infrastructure in Pelham is the legacy of multi-generational investments, and stewarded by municipal staff and volunteers. Increasingly, we are recognizing the value of tracking and monitoring this investment to better plan for future upgrades and replacements. To accomplish this, many municipalities are now turning their attention toward asset management programs as a process for making informed decisions to achieve the goal of delivering services, managing risks, and getting greater value for the money invested.

Asset management helps municipal departments confidently evaluate and communicate trade-offs between service, cost, and risk. This provides the community with a way of prioritizing projects and resources and can be used to inform the capital improvement planning process. In doing so, it helps the community decide what infrastructure needs to be replaced or renewed, and how many years they can get out of the investment. It also helps the community figure out how much they should be saving for future infrastructure investments and can demonstrate accountability to residents and businesses in the community.

Asset information, condition rankings, and maintenance history can be assigned to each of the individual buildings and infrastructure components being monitored. Each distinct asset can also be linked to service requests, work orders, repair costs, and other information. These items can also be queried to identify prior repair histories, recurring or pending maintenance needs, or pending inspection needs. Asset management plans often include the following components:

- **Existing Facilities and Infrastructure:** inventorying and documenting the current condition of each asset.
- **Level of Service:** defining how the system or asset should be performing over the long term.
- **Risk Exposure:** identifying and prioritizing recommended improvements to the various facilities and infrastructure.
- **Financial Implementation Plan:** identifying the potential impacts to user rates and taxes based on the proposed capital improvements recommended.
- **Asset Management Program and Maintenance Plan:** documenting next steps and recommended workflows for the continued maintenance and support of the asset management program.
- **Communication Plan:** creating a summary of internal and external communications to educate and inform all stakeholders on the development and use of the asset management program.

Community Services and Facilities Toolbox

Accessible Communities

As Pelham's population ages, accessible designs will become increasingly important throughout the community. For individuals, either born with or who later develop physical impairments, these features may be essential to their ability to live in and participate fully in the community. Making public spaces more inclusive also prevents older adults from becoming isolated in their homes. During public engagement, residents indicated support for improving the accessibility of Pelham's community facilities and buildings to accommodate those with accessibility needs. According to the US Census, 15% of Pelham residents are now 65 or older, and by 2030, the New Hampshire State Plan on Aging calculates that more than a third of the state's population will be over 65. Approximately 7% of Pelham's population (944 individuals) also identify as living with a disability.

An accessible community is barrier-free and does not limit anyone's participation in everyday life. Envisioning Pelham as an accessible community means that older adults, children, and people with disabilities can all be active participants. This commitment to accessible buildings, sites, modes of transportation, and even public process is important because everyone benefits from the increased participation and sense of community. Creating such a community will require a commitment to universal access in the design of new facilities, expanded wayfinding and communications, and investments in expanded programming and available spaces for community activities.



Community Services and Facilities Toolbox

Energy Conservation and Production

Energy efficiency is widely understood to be the cheapest, cleanest, most plentiful energy resource. This is largely because investments in energy efficiency, and renewable energy production, reduce the reliance on imported fuels, boosts the state's economy, provide stability, and reduce overall energy consumption. Paired with renewable energy production, Pelham can reduce annual energy costs and reduce emissions. Installed efficiency measures, renewable energy systems, and related conservation efforts also have a significant impact locally as “lead by example” efforts due to community involvement and high visibility.

According to the New Hampshire 10-Year State Energy Strategy, schools, public safety, and municipal buildings tend to be some of the largest energy users in municipalities, and efforts to improve their efficiency saves taxpayers money. Efficiency measures can also improve the overall comfort and health for building occupants—something that is particularly important for schools. Many New Hampshire towns have been pursuing benchmarking and efficiency initiatives in recent years, often in collaboration with Local Energy Committees/ Commissions, and utility, federal, and state incentive programs.



Pelham residents and municipal departments have already been investing in energy improvements and installing solar panels. In recent years the number of solar panel permits granted has steadily increased. Additionally, the town has invested in the installation of solar panels on all three schools.

6. Multi-Modal Transportation, Walkability, and Bikability

Creating Safe Streets for All



Looking to the future, Pelham strives to create a safe and accessible multi-modal transportation network serving all potential users of the roadways.

Pelham's transportation network is a critical component of the community. The local streets and state routes in Pelham connect residents to services, schools, and employment throughout town and into the surrounding region. Like many New Hampshire communities, this transportation system was designed primarily for automobiles, but now needs to be reimagined to accommodate a broader array of transportation modes. We refer to more holistic transportation systems like this as multi-modal. Multi-modal transportation planning considers the different needs of various modes (walking, cycling, automobiles, public transit, etc.), and the need for infrastructure and safe connections between modes.

Pelham's land use pattern is typical of small, New England communities, and would

Recent Transportation Improvements

In collaboration with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, the Town of Pelham constructed two roundabouts and corresponding sidewalks along NH Route 111A. One is located at the intersection of Nashua Road, and the other at the intersection with Acorn Lane and the Municipal Complex. This project improved safety and access for a variety of transportation modes, and serves as a positive example of multi-modal transportation infrastructure appropriate for a village center.

benefit from improved bicycle and pedestrian connectivity at strategic places in town. The village center is more compact and includes a mix of civic, residential, and commercial uses. Improving walkability and bikability within the village center and providing for safe connections to other key destinations outside the village center, such as neighborhoods and other places of interest, will provide



Pelham residents with more opportunities to get around town without using a car. Addressing key areas in town that are unsafe for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists should also be part of the town's transportation planning strategy.

Pelham will also be looking at how it can play a role in serving the transportation needs of specific populations in town. To age in place, older adults that no longer drive will need adequate access to transportation options in order to travel to appointments and complete other daily trips. As this population expands and demand increases, the town should explore options for expanding elder service transportation alternatives in Pelham.

Creating a more comprehensive, multi-modal transportation network that services the full spectrum of Pelham residents will require a variety of approaches. A central approach for this work in many communities is the adoption of a Complete Streets Policy. A Complete Streets policy specifies how the community will plan, design, and maintain streets so they are safe for users of all ages and abilities. Such a policy can then be used to review and transform the community's practices, processes, and plans. This often results to changes to the land use regulations so that new developments contribute to this improved transportation network, and planning for future infrastructure investments.

It is important for these transportation planning efforts to be guided by the Future Land Use Strategy outlined in this Master Plan, and to work in harmony with access management and other transportation related initiatives. Together these important land use and transportation related implementation efforts can be used to preserve the community's character, preserve the capacity of existing roadways, and improve the quality of life in Pelham.

Community Priorities

During the master planning process, public feedback was collected on how Pelham should plan for its transportation system. The following were identified as key priorities during this process:

- Many community members wish to see sidewalks expanded, and the creation of bike lanes in Pelham. Some indicated that the town should explore context-sensitive pedestrian infrastructure in more rural areas, such as gravel shoulders.
- Some community members said they'd like to see more public transit options offered regionally.
- There is a desire for regular road maintenance and pavement management.
- Many community members identified areas of the transportation network that were unsafe and needed to be addressed (such as the Mammoth Road/Sherburne Road intersection).

Multi-Modal Transportation, Walkability, and Bikeability Toolbox

Complete Streets

According to Smart Growth America, *Complete Streets* are “streets for everyone”. Communities that adopt a complete streets approach to transportation planning are clarifying their commitment to creating and maintaining a transportation system for all users. While complete streets can be configured many ways, what they have in common is safe access, convenience, and comfortable travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, and walk or bicycle to services or work.

Complete streets have arrived in New Hampshire with several communities having already implemented complete street design techniques, and many more in the planning stages of creating a complete streets policy or infrastructure. The New Hampshire Department of Transportation has also created a Complete Streets Advisory Committee. The Committee is working to support bicycling, walking and transit as safe, convenient, and sustainable forms of transportation that increase New Hampshire’s livability, increase economic activity, and improve public and environmental health.

In Pelham, residents have expressed interest in increasing sidewalk connectivity and expanding sidewalks in key areas of the community that link places of interest. Specific areas identified for sidewalk expansion include the areas around Pelham’s Schools, Town Center, and the Hobbs Community Center. There is also interest in providing more safe, accessible, and convenient bicycle infrastructure and access to public transportation in these areas, and out to services along NH Route 38, Mammoth Road, and Sherburne Road. This can be accomplished over time through the design and construction of complete streets.

Emerging Transportation Solutions

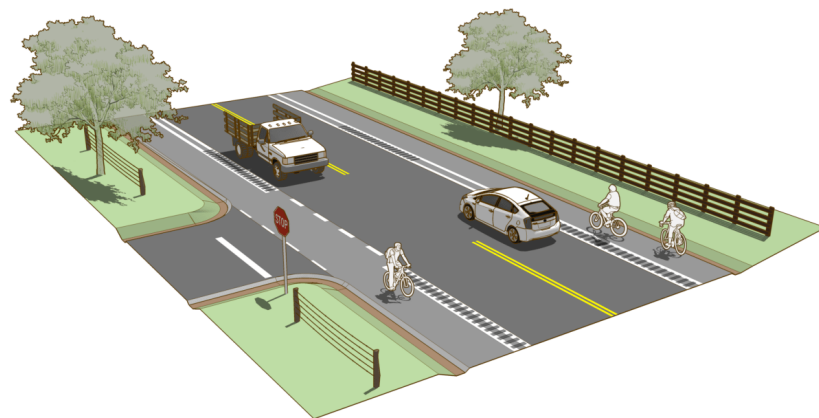
As individuals seek out transportation alternatives that are affordable and environmentally friendly, a new set of solutions are emerging. It is important for communities like Pelham to track these trends and identify which can be accommodated locally. This includes:

- **Car Sharing** - when consumers reserve and use company-provided cars.
- **Ride Sharing** – a service via websites and mobile apps which matches passengers with drivers of vehicles for hire.
- **Micro Mobility** – lightweight vehicles such as electric scooters, electric bicycles, and electric mopeds that are privately owned or available for shared public use.
- **Electric Vehicle Charging** – infrastructure made available to the public for a fee to charge electric vehicles.
- **Green Streets** - incorporate a wide variety of design elements including street trees, permeable pavements, bioretention areas, and swales.

Multi-Modal Transportation, Walkability, and Bikeability Toolbox

Rural Design Options

Many rural communities, like Pelham, are located on State maintained roadways that were built to design standards that favor high-speed motorized vehicles. This has created a transportation system that makes walking and bicycling less safe, and uncomfortable. However, these roadways can be retrofitted and redesigned over time to provide a transportation network that better serves the health, safety, and economic



interests of the community. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has created resources that can inform this re-design of small town and rural multimodal networks. This guidebook (Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks, 2016) and associated internet-based resources provide examples of the existing national design guidelines in a rural setting, and highlight small town and rural case studies. Using these resources provides:

- An opportunity to address the challenges specific to rural areas.
- Recognition of how these rural roadways are operating today.
- A focus on opportunities to make incremental improvements that accommodate a broader range of transportation alternatives over time.
- Recognition of the distinct geographic, fiscal, and other challenges that many rural communities face.

Amherst, NH Multi-Modal Transportation Plan

Amherst, New Hampshire used these resources to inform a public process that resulted in the development of the Amherst Multimodal Master Plan. This Plan provides a comprehensive vision for how the Town can objectively improve multimodal safety for all by:

- Utilizing physics-based systematic safety principles in road design;
- Developing a network of systematically-safe multimodal roadside infrastructure, optimally during scheduled road construction; and
- Working to expand Amherst's existing network of trails to provide a network of off-road multimodal options.

Amherst's work and the resulting Plan could serve as a model for Pelham. It provides a variety of solutions for accommodating additional transportation modes that fit the volume and context of the roadway in question.

Multi-Modal Transportation, Walkability, and Bikeability Toolbox

Access Management

Good access management promotes safe and efficient use of the transportation network. This preserves the public investment in roadways, and ensures these roadways will operate better because they are properly accessed. Implementing access management regulations and design strategies provides three major benefits to transportation systems:

- Increased roadway capacity
- Reduced crashes
- Shortened travel time for motorists

All three of these benefits are the result of minimizing or managing the number of conflict points that exist along a corridor. This is accomplished through the proactive management of vehicular access points to adjacent parcels of land. Shared driveways and connections between adjacent parking lots are examples of how this can be accomplished.

Some additional techniques used to control access to major arterials and other roadways include:

- **Driveway Spacing:** fewer driveways spaced further apart allows for more orderly merging of traffic and presents fewer challenges to drivers.
- **Signal Spacing:** increasing the distance between traffic signals improves the flow of traffic on major arterials, reduces congestion, and improves air quality for heavily traveled corridors.
- **Safe Turning Lanes:** dedicated left- and right-turn, indirect left-turns and U-turns, and roundabouts keep through-traffic flowing.
- **Roundabouts:** represent an opportunity to replace an intersection with many conflict points, or a severe crash history, to one that operates with fewer conflict points and less severe crashes if they occur.
- **Median Treatments:** two-way left-turn lanes (TWLTL) and non-traversable, raised medians are examples of some of the most effective means to regulate access and reduce crashes.
- **Right-of-Way Management:** as it pertains to preserving right-of-ways for future widenings, good sight distance, access location, and other access-related issues.

Access Management provides an important means of maintaining mobility and increasing safety. It calls for coordinated and effective access to properties, efficient spacing and design to preserve the functional integrity, and overall operational viability of street and road systems.

7. An Active Town Center and Local Economy

Memorable and Enduring



Home-Based Businesses and Remote Workers

An increasing number of Pelham residents are working remotely from home, and many have established home-based businesses. The US Census estimated that in 2021, about 53% of Pelham's employed residents worked from home. According to research completed by the Pelham Council on Aging, there are approximately 600 businesses in Pelham and 60% of these are home occupations. Most of these home occupations consist of computer, design, and technology related businesses. This is an interesting phenomenon, and may be an indication of new business opportunities within the community to support this local workforce.

Additional investment in Pelham's town center has the potential to make this area of town an active community hub with a mix of civic, commercial, and residential uses and increased community activity. Additionally, Pelham should continue to promote its local economy to ensure it supports the needs of its residents in the future. .

Pelham's commercial development is mostly located along NH Route 38 and along sections of NH Route 128. The location of this development provides businesses with easy access to nearby highways, and each of these areas are now also being envisioned for future mixed-use development, with the addition of future residential units. Pelham's local economy and future development opportunities extend beyond these areas and include an emerging

town center, and less visible home-based businesses and remote workers throughout the community. There are also opportunities to capitalize on the economic potential related to other goals such as open space and conservation. For example, additional trail



development and agritourism could bring visitors from throughout the region to Pelham and increase the desirability of the community to existing and potential residents.

To create a desirable and active town center in Pelham, the community has invested in roadway infrastructure improvements, municipal facilities, shared public spaces, and adopted Mixed-Use District regulations. Envisioned as a mix of business and residential uses within the same building or on the same parcel of land, this area of Pelham will accommodate a physical pattern that is pedestrian-friendly and traditionally found in neighborhoods within town centers throughout New England. Enhancing the walkability of the town center, increasing community events, exploring new space for public gathering, and supporting mixed use design are priorities for the future.

The results of these efforts are becoming more visible each year. Many community events are hosted on the Town Green, and the Planning Board has approved some recent mixed-use and medical office developments. As Pelham residents work together to create a memorable and enduring Town Center and support the local economy, new or additional regulatory tools and economic development incentives may be needed.

Community Priorities

During the master planning process, public feedback was collected on how Pelham should plan for its local economy and town center. The following were identified as key priorities during this process:

- Community members would like to see Pelham's small-town character retained while adding more sidewalks in the town center, and encouraging mixed use activity there to increase vibrancy.
- Residents also expressed interest in new commercial development being primarily concentrated along NH Routes 38 and 111, and in the Mixed Use Overlay District in the town center while protecting open space and rural neighborhoods elsewhere in the community,

An Active Town Center and Local Economy Toolbox

Form Based Codes

Traditional zoning regulations focus mostly on identifying permitted uses and dimensional requirements (minimum lot size, setbacks, etc.). This approach to land use regulation is widely used but does not emphasize the relationship of the building and site to the street, or to neighboring properties. In areas of the community where a mix of commercial, residential, and municipal uses is desirable and a lively streetscape is envisioned traditional zoning often falls short. In order to address these shortcomings communities often add layers of complexity to address a range of potential issues, and this makes the regulatory process cumbersome and confusing for applicants.

Form Based Zoning provides another alternative that has now been adopted in several New Hampshire communities of different sizes. A Form Based Code focuses on the relationship between building facades and the public right-of-way, and the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another. According to the Form-Based Codes Institute, form-based codes often include five main elements:

- A plan or map of the regulated area designating the locations where different building standards apply;
- Specifies elements in the public right of way, like sidewalks, travel lanes, on-street parking, street trees, and even benches;
- Building standards controlling the features, configurations, and functions of buildings;
- A clearly defined and streamlined application and project review process; and
- A glossary to ensure the precise use of technical terms.

Other elements can also be included in a form-based code, like architectural, landscaping, signage, and environmental standards. Most importantly, the resulting regulation is both visual and user friendly and can provide a template for how to summarize and communicate land use regulations elsewhere in the community where traditional zoning is still in place. While Pelham does not have public water and sewer in its town center, which impacts the level of density that can occur there, a form-based code can still be an effective set of regulations to get better mixed use development.



Above: Future rendering for the Town of Weston's Town Center that shows how a form based code could shape future development. *Source: Utile Design*

An Active Town Center and Local Economy Toolbox

Agritourism

New Hampshire's agricultural landscape and economy is changing and evolving. Agriculture as an industry is quite diverse, encompassing many crop, livestock, and specialty products, and agritourism has become an integral part of many farm operations. As a result, visits to New Hampshire by agriculture-related tourists has grown. However, agricultural operations are also extremely important to residents, the local economy, and the sustainability of the community. Farming activity provides the fields, pastures, and meadows that contribute to community character, access to local products, and in some cases areas to recreate. In Pelham, the Agricultural Commission is taking the lead in preserving and promoting farming in the community.

There are many ways to experience New Hampshire Agriculture including visits to local farms to pick apples, berries, flowers, cut a Christmas tree, attending a harvest festival, going to an open barn event, visiting the Pelham farmers' market, or visiting a certified local restaurant. However, if this type of land use and economic activity is desirable in Pelham it will be important to ensure that the local regulations are "farm friendly." Fortunately, a resource exists to inform such an effort. "Is Your Town Farm Friendly?" is a checklist to assist municipal planning efforts involving agriculture that was updated by The New Hampshire Coalition for Sustaining Agriculture in 2017.



8. Climate Change and Sustainability

Reduce and then Produce



Pelham is committed to enhancing energy efficiency of its town facilities, expanding opportunities for renewable energy production, and increasing its sustainability to serve as good stewards of the town's resources

As communities in New Hampshire continue to experience changes in weather events, there is a desire by Pelham residents to make the community more sustainable and resilient to future challenges. The most effective way to be a resilient community is to form strong relationships and foster a sense of community. Pelham does this very well through the many active community organizations, numerous community events, high levels of participation in local government, and by engaging all age groups.

Beyond this important community building work, there are other opportunities to act proactively. Ensuring that municipal facilities

Community Power in NH

Enabled by New Hampshire RSA 53-E, the adoption of Community Power by Town Meeting provides communities with a way to establish their own locally controlled electricity provider. This alternative was created because the New Hampshire Legislature found that allowing municipalities and counties the local control to aggregate retail electric customers for the purpose of accessing competitive markets for supplies of electricity and related energy services was beneficial for many reasons. The resulting benefits include lowering costs, creating cost effective and innovative energy solutions, and careful consideration of local conditions and opportunities. In the end, Community Power creates more choices for customers, the collective buying power to drive down cost, and the local control to allow New Hampshire communities to chart their own energy futures. Pelham has established a Community Power Committee that is leading the way to Pelham becoming a Community Power town.



and roadways are resilient to weather events, and that residents can receive emergency services in a time of need is a priority. It is also important to understand the annual energy consumption of the buildings in Pelham and work as a community to make them more energy efficient. This reduces energy consumption and saves tax dollars.

It is also important that Pelham stays ahead of current trends to ensure it is prepared as emerging technology becomes more accessible to a greater amount of people. An example of this is to continue expanding electric vehicle infrastructure, knowing that this market is going to continue growing in New Hampshire in the future.

During public outreach efforts, residents also expressed an interest in exploring renewable energy production opportunities in the community. Pelham did adopt a solar ordinance to guide future solar energy facility development, and permits for home and commercial scale solar installations are increasing in town. While this work is excellent, additional work needs to be done. This will require supporting the efforts of municipal leaders and local property owners, and working to reduce regulatory and financial barriers as a community. These are a few of the many things that Pelham can pursue as it works to become a more resilient and sustainable community ready to support its residents and businesses.

Community Priorities

During the master planning process, public feedback was collected on how Pelham should plan for future sustainability and climate change resilience. The following were identified as key priorities during this process:

- In general, community members would like to see more renewable energy production systems in town including solar farms/panels, geothermal systems, and others.
- Community members would like to see more electric vehicle charging infrastructure in town, and improvements to the energy efficiency of town facilities including LED lighting, better insulation, and energy efficient windows.

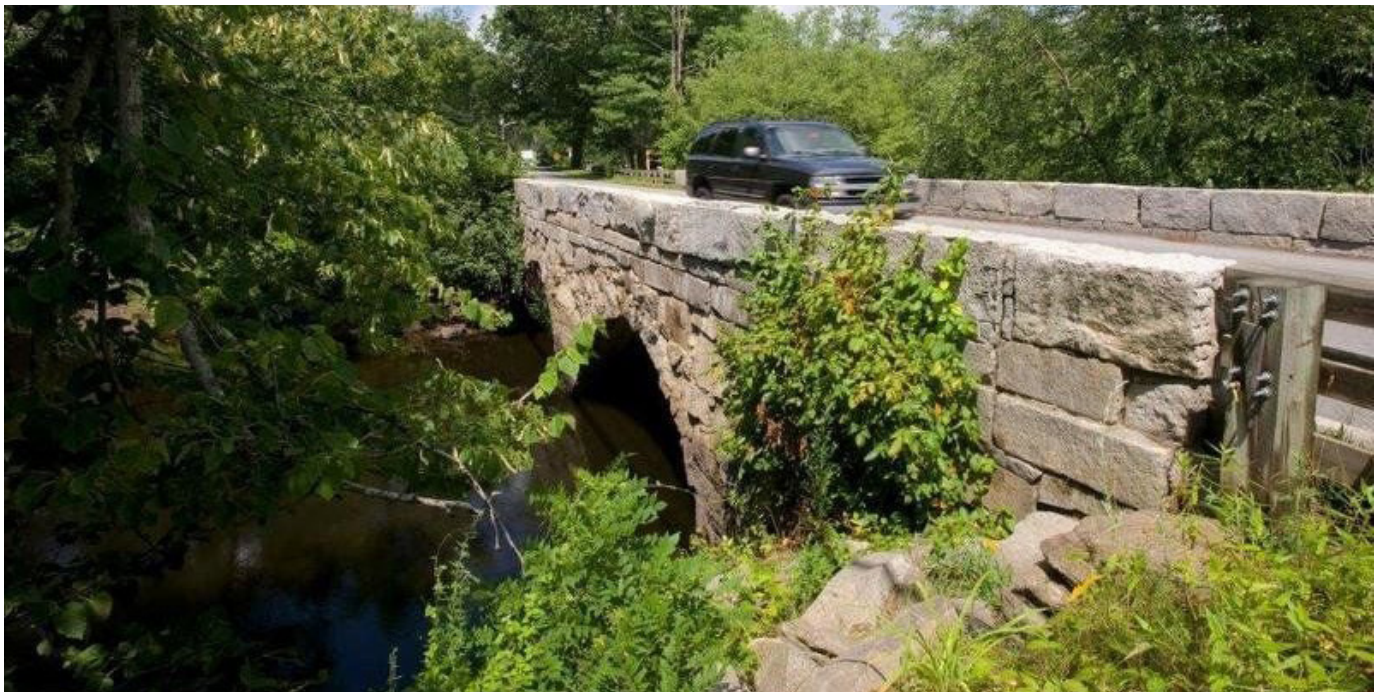
Climate Change and Sustainability Toolbox

Culverts and Flood Resilience

Pelham has a history of flooding, and this will continue to be an issue in the future as climate change and severe storm and precipitation impacts increase. Flooding impacts the town's infrastructure and can have significant financial impacts. Culverts are the essential pieces of infrastructure that allow water from rivers, streams, and storm events to pass under a bridge, road, or driveway without disrupting the flow of traffic. Many of these pieces of critical infrastructure were designed and installed many years ago and may no longer adequately accommodate the movement of floodwaters and debris necessary during current storm events. Additionally, even in cases where culverts can manage high floodwaters, narrow culverts may increase the velocity of water moving under roadways which increases downstream erosion in some river and stream systems. Whether simply out dated or inadequately designed, culverts can become pinch points during storm events and, potentially, result in flooding of adjacent

areas, homes, or roadways. Therefore, identifying undersized culverts, updating design standards to account for increased water flow, and replacing outdated or inadequate crossings will result in less flooding, erosion, and disruption to nearby properties.

In addition to improving the resilience of transportation infrastructure, improving the flow of water through culverts has tremendous ecological benefits, both in the restoration of habitat and in the reconnection of waterways for a variety of species. To assist with these efforts the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services administers a Culvert Flood Risk Assistance Grant Program statewide with funding opportunities for New Hampshire municipalities and non-governmental organizations. In Pelham the inspection of catch basins and culverts is conducted by the Environmental Compliance Specialist as part of ongoing MS4 Permit compliance efforts.



Climate Change and Sustainability Toolbox

Energy Benchmarking and Audits

Building specific energy assessments inform energy conservation efforts, and can be completed on any municipal, commercial, or residential structure. The Town of Pelham should lead by example and encourage private property owners to do the same through Liberty Energy or a private vendor.

Benchmarking is often considered the first step toward data-driven decision making for energy efficiency. Benchmarking averages multiple years of energy usage data and the costs associated with operating a building. The resulting calculations produce the building's Energy Use Intensity (EUI), which is how much energy the building consumes per square foot, and its Cost Use Intensity (CUI), which is the operating cost per square foot. These calculations and others can then be compared to similar buildings locally and nationwide. Benchmarking allows decision-makers to easily see buildings that need attention. Benchmarking before and after

a project also allows you to report the real-world savings, and provides an accurate calculation of the return on investment. Benchmarking can also be used when a building is approaching the end of its life and a case needs to be made to seek funding for a replacement.

Municipal buildings identified as weak performers by benchmarking calculations are ideal candidates for energy audits. An energy audit includes an assessment, analysis, and action plan that describes the current conditions in the building and guides cost savings and comfort improvements. Diagnostic tools such as blower door tests and thermal imaging cameras are used to determine how "leaky" a building is and can pinpoint problem areas not seen by the naked eye. A follow-up action plan of energy efficiency measures is then developed based on the results from this analysis. Audits provide tangible next steps that inform the building owner.



Climate Change and Sustainability Toolbox

Solar Outreach, Education, and Installation

The organizing of a community-based solar initiative, often referred to as a Solarize Campaign could provide the community outreach and education needed to increase the number of solar energy systems in Pelham. These initiatives are usually organized by the town with the help of a pre-selected solar installer.

The goal of the campaign is to educate as many people within the community as possible, and help home and business owners make the switch to solar while overcoming the upfront cost of installation. The main reason these initiatives are so successful is that they often offer additional cost benefits for the people within the community.

Other options for promoting the installation of solar panels include hosting public informational sessions and tours of locally installed systems. Group net metering is also an option in New Hampshire communities. Group net metering requires the construction of a solar array that is hosted by a property owner, and the energy created is then credited to other individuals or households in the community that become members of the solar array. One of the benefits of this virtual net metering for the group members involved is that they know where their energy is being produced, but do not need to install a system of their own. This is especially attractive to renters and residents of developments where solar installations are not feasible.





IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing the Master Plan will be a collaborate and community-wide effort, led by town staff, local officials, board and committee members, non-profit partners, businesses, property owners, residents, and others. Key action items are organized in an implementation table which will serve as a roadmap for the town. This table includes all actions the town will work on over the next decade to help Pelham achieve its vision for the future. This includes guiding the town's capital improvements, land use policy and zoning changes, open space conservation, and other initiatives. The actions were informed by the Existing Conditions Report, the Outreach and Engagement Report, and the Master Plan Sub-Committee.

An "official implementation table" will be maintained by the Town's Planning Department and will be overseen by the Planning Board and, if established, a Master Plan Implementation Committee. This will ensure consistency over the coming years as board membership evolves and changes. This table will include additional detail for each action related to the level of priority, status of action, responsible party, relevant stakeholders, and potential partners. It will also be publicly available on the town's website and the status of actions will be updated on an annual basis.

Implementation Actions

GENERAL ACTIONS	
#	Action
A	Complete a policy and regulatory audit of Pelham's land use regulations against the new Master Plan to provide greater insight and direction on regulatory disconnects, barriers, and opportunities across all future land use areas and priorities.
B	Develop a 4-6 person Master Plan Implementation Committee that meets quarterly throughout the calendar year to prioritize, delegate, and coordinate the completion of implementation actions outlined in the Plan.
C	Consider organizing an end-of-year annual joint meeting of all boards and committees in the town that are active partners in the implementation of the Master Plan to evaluate progress and plan for the upcoming year.
D	Annually report on the progress of the 2023 Master Plan to local officials, boards and committees, and the public through town news outlets.
FOCUS AREA - STEWARD PELHAM'S RURAL LANDS AND WATERS.	
1. Open Space and Conservation	
1.1	<p>Seek to acquire an additional 1,000 acres of land to achieve a goal of dedicating at least 25% of the land area of Pelham to conservation (as articulated in the 2022 Natural Resource Inventory) by the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize the newly updated Conservation Plan (currently being completed) to prioritize land acquisition and conservation projects. Consider high value conservation opportunities including land around Gumpas Pond, Musquash Brook, and Beaver Brook as well as critical wildlife habitat areas (as identified by the NH Wildlife Action Plan), wetland and aquifer protection, lands that connect conserved parcels, and agricultural lands. • Use conservation easements, outright purchase of land, the purchase of development rights, or other mechanisms to conserve additional land and natural resources in Pelham. • Partner with other conservation-based organizations working in Pelham and the region to increase funds, access a wider audience, and pursue land protection efforts that will benefit the community and the region. • Work to conserve the remaining farmland with Prime/State designated agricultural soils. Identify organizations to partner with and then pursue protection of agricultural land through outright purchase, purchase of easement/ development rights, and donations while allowing for sustainable farming practices to continue in the future. • Collaborate with neighboring municipalities to conserve lands in the northeast area of Pelham, which have the potential to create an inter-connected and inter-municipal conservation system or greenway. This area includes important fields, forests, and wetlands. The greenway has the potential to provide for trails and wildlife movement from the Pelham Fish and Game Land, Pine Valley Golf Course, and other properties in the vicinity of Little Island Pond to the Peabody Town Forest and further south into Dracut via the powerlines.

#	Action
1.2	Create public outreach and education materials and initiatives related to land conservation and water resource protection to educate property owners and garner public support for specific projects and initiatives.
1.3	Continue to allocate an established amount of funding to the Conservation Fund each year. Apply for grants and technical assistance available through non-profit state and federal agencies for open space protection.
1.4	<p>Perform best management practices on Town Forest land including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor all the properties regularly for wind damage, ice damage, fire, or disease, and take appropriate corrective actions as needed to ensure the continued health of forest blocks. • Re-assess each property every 10 to 15 years or as needed and prepare updated 10-year forest management plans. • Continually monitor each property for the presence of invasive plants, and implement control measures while invasive populations are low. • Maintain and encourage a diverse, vibrant, functioning, indigenous forest by maintaining all native forest components and functions. Retain and protect a portion of the large diameter and unique trees. • Produce high quality saw timber in an environmentally responsible manner. • Protect soil, water, nutrient and energy cycles, fragile habitats and conditions, rare plants, animals, and exemplary natural communities. • Maintain and improve wildlife habitat for a variety of mammals and birds. • Maintain scenic beauty and open agricultural land. • Maintain and enhance recreational opportunities. • Replace missing or damaged signs as needed. • Monitor, clear and widen hiking trails as needed. Consider accessibility of trails and all potential users. • Protect cultural features. Maintain the current condition of these features wherever possible and enhance them when desirable. Make every attempt to minimize disturbance of historical features on the property when harvesting timber or constructing trails and roads.
1.5	Encourage and support local agriculture and farming in Pelham. Review existing local regulations through the lens of farm operations. Identify areas where permit review processes or specific standards are not practical for farm operations and amend the regulations as appropriate to make them farm friendly.
1.6	Create community gardening space in Pelham and promote agriculture and gardening programming and education.
2. Water and Natural Resource Protection	
2.1	Review and revise land use regulations to encourage/require Green Infrastructure solutions, during development and redevelopment activity to the greatest extent possible. This is especially important in the Critical Natural Resource Future Land Use Areas, as well as for the Residential, Open Space, Agriculture, and Conservation Future Land Use Area.

#	Action
2.2	Create Green Infrastructure demonstration projects on municipal sites (such as Town Hall, the Library, or the Schools) with other community partners. These may include rain gardens, bioswales, rainwater catchment systems, and other stormwater management strategies. Explore NHDES's LID project planning for stormwater management web page for tips on how to start a project, and consider small grant opportunities to cover the costs or recruiting a corporate sponsor.
2.3	Riparian buffers are vegetative buffers along the shorelines of rivers and streams that protect water quality and prevent soil erosion from adjacent land uses. Assess/adopt land use regulations requiring a robust vegetative riparian buffer along all surface waters including ponds, lakes, streams, rivers, and wetlands. Ensure that the new regulatory language states that this will support biodiversity and water quality and should include native plantings. NHDES provides vegetative buffer guidance that can serve as a model.
2.4	Collaborate with the Conservation Commission during the review of development proposals or the planning of public improvements where natural resources may be impacted.
2.5	Consider completing a water resource protection plan for all surface and ground water resources to inform the development of land use regulations and to guide future land conservation initiatives in the community. As part of this, work to better understand the impact development has on the town's aquifers.
2.6	Complete a feasibility study for expansion of public water infrastructure systems. Explore the feasibility of extending water infrastructure along Route 38 and Sherburne Road.
2.7	Promote stormwater management through land use regulations and through resident education initiatives.
2.8	Continue to implement Pelham's Stormwater Management Plan and manage Pelham's MS4 program to adhere to permit guidelines and requirements for municipal stormwater management.
2.9	Continue to encourage private residential well testing for property owners in Pelham.
2.10	Continue to utilize the Town website and other communication methods to increase public awareness of the presence of groundwater pollutants and the importance of preventing groundwater pollutants from affecting Pelham's drinking water resources.
2.11	Pelham's Wetlands Conservation District ordinance has not been updated since 2005. The existing ordinance lacks defined buffer areas and has no specific provisions related to prime wetlands or vernal pools. Consider undertaking a comprehensive update of the Wetlands Conservation District to better reflect changing best practices, development patterns, and emerging threats.
2.12	Pelham's Aquifer Conservation District ordinance has also not been updated since 2005. Consider undertaking a comprehensive update of the Aquifer Conservation District to better reflect changing best practices, development patterns, and emerging threats.
2.13	Identify and map vernal pools in town, which are an important water resource type for a variety of aquatic species.

#	Action
2.14	Work with NHDES and their Volunteer Lake Assessment Program (VLAP) to regularly monitor the quality of Pelham's water bodies. Review water quality data to monitor levels of phosphorus, and other nutrients and contaminants. Long Pong is currently the only pond in Pelham that participates in VLAP. It is highly recommended that monitoring continues for all ponds in Pelham.
3. Trails and Outdoor Recreation	
3.1	Maintain existing trails and add new trails where appropriate and as opportunities arise. Consider hiking trails, multi-use paths, and mountain bike opportunities as the trail network is expanded.
3.2	Add amenities such as signage and benches, at the town's forests, open space parcels, and recreation areas as appropriate.
3.3	Create more ADA accessible outdoor recreation opportunities. Continue to modify trails in town to be more age accommodating and user-friendly for different levels of ability.
3.4	Install boat launches along Beaver Brook and Golden Brook.
3.5	Consider recruiting volunteer assistance for trail maintenance and beautification of municipally maintained open space properties.
3.6	The Recreation Department, Conversation Commission, and Forestry Committee should collaborate to determine how the Town Forest and other properties could be better utilized to support recreation-related needs.
3.7	Collaborate with neighboring municipalities to identify ways to better connect trail systems beyond Pelham's political boundaries.
FOCUS AREA - FOSTER A MULTI-GENERATIONAL AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY.	
4. Housing Opportunities	
4.1	Conduct a housing needs assessment of the community to identify additional housing needs.
4.2	Promote the use of open space cluster subdivisions, especially where the establishment of open space will protect existing forested areas, agricultural soils, and water resources.
4.3	Encourage a diversity of housing types in appropriate areas of the community (for example, housing units for older adults and renters). Review and identify existing housing related land use regulations and make improvements to guide the creation of a variety of housing unit types that serve different housing needs. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More flexible standards for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). • Developing an inclusionary zoning provision. • More flexible and innovative site design techniques for Residential Open Space Cluster Development. • Standards for innovative housing solutions such as cohousing and tiny homes.
4.4	Create an outreach and education initiative focused on accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to educate homeowners on ADU's and the requirements for construction.

#	Action
5. Community Services and Facilities	
5.1	Continue to use the capital improvement planning process to ensure municipal facilities and infrastructure improvements are scheduled to reduce the financial impact on taxpayers. Over time, this may also include the use of impact fees or other strategies to fund improvements.
5.2	To effectively invest in facility maintenance and capital planning, the town should complete facility condition assessments of each town-owned building to have a record of all internal and external building components, their useful life, and replacement schedules. Having a facility plan and schedule will also help prioritize items in the annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).
5.3	Explore ways the town can help improve existing community service programs for older adults and lower income individuals.
5.4	Continue to support the library and historical society as important cultural centers in Pelham.
5.5	Assess the recreational needs of different user groups in the community, especially older adults, and youth, and how they are being met. If there are needs, prepare a strategic plan to guide the addition and/or improvement of recreational facilities, programs, and related administration.
5.6	Invest in and complete improvements at Pelham's existing recreation facilities including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovations at Muldoon Park (adding restroom facilities, improving the parking lot/driveway entrance, and improving the playground) • Renovation of Lyon's Park skate park and courts • Renovations at Raymond Park (adding field lighting and restroom facilities) • Town Beach improvements including better older adult access • Additional space for adult programming and expanded programming offers for older adults at the Hobbs Community Center to meet increased service needs • More youth programming opportunities
5.7	Consider the addition of new recreation facilities and programming in town including a dog park, splash pad, public skating rink, public pool, camping areas, and an indoor recreation center.
5.8	Ensure all of Pelham's municipal buildings and facilities become more ADA accessible over time.
5.9	Monitor each town department's staffing needs over the next ten years and fund new positions accordingly to meet increased demand for services.
5.10	Investigate and study natural burial alternatives, which are a new and increasingly popular burial trend, to better understand how Pelham's cemeteries may accommodate this in the future.
5.11	Continue to invest in a quality school system. Scrutiny of the school budget should continue, but so should the desire to invest in our schools as a foundation for our quality of life and our workforce development.
5.12	Continue to promote residential, commercial, and industrial recycling in Pelham. Promote recycling by placing bins in high traffic areas in public areas.
5.13	Continue to promote and support the food bank program in town.
5.14	Explore the feasibility of a municipal composting program.

#	Action
6. Multi-Modal Transportation, Walkability, and Bikability	
6.1	Continue to maintain the road and pavement conditions in Pelham through regular road maintenance planning.
6.2	Develop strategies for improving bicycle and pedestrian connectivity in Pelham by evaluating the location and condition of existing sidewalks, paths, and trails and to determine future improvements and potential connections.
6.3	Construct additional sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and shared use pathways in Pelham to enhance the pedestrian and bicycle network. Identify and pursue connections from the schools and town center to services on NH 38, Mammoth Road, the Hobbs Community Center, and Sherburne Road.
6.4	Develop and adopt a town-wide Complete Streets Policy to ensure all new roadways are designed to accommodate all modes of transportation and existing roadways incorporate bicycle, pedestrian, and public transportation improvements during roadway maintenance projects to the greatest extent possible.
6.5	Identify opportunities to add electric vehicle charging stations in municipal parking areas and encourage other landowners to do so in public and private parking lots.
6.6	In 2021, the Planning Department applied for a TAP grant to construct a pedestrian bridge and extension of the sidewalk from the cemetery on Old Bridge Street to NH38. Plans were submitted to the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) to be included in the ten-year plan.
6.7	Address areas that are unsafe for cyclists and pedestrians along main travel routes and those that connect residential areas to the town center between the schools and to recreation facilities and rural trails.
6.8	Work with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to make transportation improvements along state-maintained routes.
6.9	Apply for Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) funds, through the NH Department of Transportation, for the construction of additional sidewalks and multi-use paths along state routes.
6.10	Implement access management strategies along Pelham's commercial corridors to coordinate access points and preserve the safety and capacity of the roadway.
6.11	Support the Hobbs Community Center shuttle bus program and promote the expansion of shuttle services to improve its use for the growing older adult population in the community. Consider expanding regular van connections to regional transportation centers such as Gallagher in Lowell or the train station in Lawrence.
6.12	Explore contracting with Uber and Lyft to expand ridesharing options in town.
7. An Active Town Center and Local Economy	
7.1	Explore regulatory tools and economic development incentives that support the growth of commercial activity in the Town Center and in the Mixed-Use Corridors and Industrial future land use areas.

#	Action
7.2	Revitalize the Pelham Economic Development Committee to act as a liaison between businesses and town government, to track and understand the town's changing needs, and to focus on implementing plan strategies.
7.3	Encourage small businesses to open in Pelham by welcoming entrepreneurs and small business owners.
7.4	Ensure a quality streetscape environment with gateway treatments in the Town Center and at the entrances into town.
7.5	Review design standards in the commercial and industrial areas to ensure they protect the small-town character of Pelham.
7.6	Implement welcome signage with landscaping at the entrances to the Town Center.
7.7	Support the growth of home-based businesses and remote workers while protecting the quality of the residential neighborhoods. This could include supporting organizations that are providing networking opportunities, workspace, and services to entrepreneurs, small businesses, and telecommuters. It could also include looking for opportunities to create shared workspaces and co-working opportunities.
7.8	Change the zoning regulations or create an agricultural overlay district to reduce limitations on the suitable economic use of agriculture lands. This will allow for a diversification of revenue streams and more sustainable business models that could include small retail operations, events, food preparation and sale, brewery/winery/cidery, accommodations, etc.
8. Climate Change and Sustainability	
8.1	Continue to inventory existing culverts and identify specific culverts that are under-sized or compromised and should be replaced to enhance flood resiliency and aquatic habitat connectivity.
8.2	Conduct solar installation feasibility studies for Pelham's municipal buildings and sites, and plan for the addition of solar energy systems where appropriate.
8.3	Perform energy audits of all buildings, note the structures and systems that are not energy efficient, and plan for improvements through the Capital Improvement Plan. This may include LED lighting, better insulation, energy efficient windows, and renewable energy systems.
8.4	Consider participation in the New Hampshire Community Power Coalition and developing a local community power program to provide expanded choice for electric power supply and services for residential and commercial electric customers within the community.
8.5	Remove any regulatory barriers and encourage the implementation of renewable energy systems in Pelham.
8.6	Provide technical assistance to homeowners and businesses for energy audits and conservation measures. This can include providing property owners with information about energy audit programs and rebates for efficient upgrades.
8.7	Educate homeowners and businesses about small scale solar, wind, or other renewable technologies that may be available and feasible at their sites. Consider organizing a Solarize campaign to increase the number of installed renewable energy systems on private properties.
8.8	Continue to implement the Climate Adaptation Forestry Management Plan.