

Our Pelham, Our Plan Draft Implementation Actions

The actions listed in the implementation plan on the following pages will help Pelham achieve its vision for the future by guiding the town's capital improvements, land use policy and zoning changes, open space conservation, and other initiatives. These 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 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.

1. General Actions

- i. 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.
- ii. Our Pelham, Our Plan will be implemented collaboratively by town staff, local officials, board and committee members, non-profit partners, businesses, property owners, residents, and others. To coordinate the implementation of the Plan, the following recommendations were developed:
 - iii. Develop a 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.
 - iv. 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.
 - v. Annually report on the progress of the 2023 Master Plan to local officials, boards and committees, and the public through town news outlets.

2. Focus Area - Steward Pelham's Rural Lands and Waters.

a. Conservation of Open Space

- i. 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).
 1. 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.
 2. Use conservation easements, outright purchase of land, the purchase of development rights, or other mechanisms to conserve additional land and natural resources in Pelham.
 3. 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.
 4. 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.
 5. Collaborate with Windham, NH and Dracut, MA 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.
- ii. Create public outreach and education materials and initiatives related to land conservation and water resource protection to garner public support for specific projects and initiatives.
- iii. 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.
- iv. Perform best management practices on Town Forest land including:

1. 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.
2. Re-assess each property every 10 to 15 years or as needed and prepare updated 10-year management plans.
3. Continually monitor each property for the presence of invasive plants, and implement control measures while invasive populations are low.
4. 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.
5. Produce high quality saw timber in an environmentally responsible manner.
6. Protect soil, water, nutrient and energy cycles, fragile habitats and conditions, rare plants, animals, and exemplary natural communities.
7. Maintain and improve wildlife habitat for a variety of mammals and birds.
8. Maintain scenic beauty and open agricultural land.
9. Maintain and enhance recreational opportunities.
10. Replace missing or damaged signs as needed.
11. Monitor, clear and widen hiking trails as needed.
12. 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.

b. Water and Natural Resource Protection

- i. Incentivize the use of residential cluster subdivisions, especially where the establishment of open space will protect existing forested areas, agricultural soils, and water resources.
- ii. Review and revise land use regulations to encourage/require Low Impact Development (LID) solutions, such as green infrastructure systems and permeable pavement 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, and Conservation Future Land Use Area.
- iii. 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.

- iv. Collaborate with the Conservation Commission during the review of development proposals or the planning of public improvements where natural resources may be impacted.
- v. 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.
- vi. 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.
- vii. Complete a feasibility study for expansion of public water infrastructure systems. Explore the feasibility of extending water infrastructure along Route 38 and Sherburne Road.
- viii. Promote stormwater management through land use regulations and through resident education initiatives.
- ix. 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.
- x. Continue to encourage private residential well testing for property owners in Pelham.
- xi. 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.
- xii. 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.

- xiii. 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.
- xiv. Identify and map vernal pools in town, which are an important water resource type for a variety of aquatic species.
- xv. Create Low Impact Development (LID) 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.
- xvi. 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.

c. Trails and Outdoor Recreation

- i. 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.
- ii. Add amenities such as signage, benches, and trash receptacles at the town's forests, open space parcels, and recreation areas.
- iii. 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.
- iv. Install boat launches along Beaver Brook and Golden Brook.
- v. Consider recruiting volunteer assistance for trail maintenance and beautification of municipally maintained open space properties.
- vi. 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. Focus Area - Foster a Multi-Generational and Sustainable Community.

a. Housing Opportunities

- i. Conduct a housing needs assessment of the community to identify additional unmet housing needs.
- ii. 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:
 - 1. More flexible standards for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).
 - 2. Developing an inclusionary zoning provision.
 - 3. More flexible and innovative site design techniques for Residential Open Space Cluster Development.
 - 4. Standards for innovative housing solutions such as cohousing and tiny homes.
- iii. Create an outreach and education initiative focused on accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to educate homeowners on ADU's and the requirements for construction.

b. Community Services and Facilities

- i. 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.
- ii. 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 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).
- iii. Explore ways the town can help improve existing community service programs for older adults and lower income individuals.
- iv. Continue to support the library and historical society as important cultural centers in Pelham.
- v. 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

unmet needs, prepare a strategic plan to guide the addition and/or improvement of recreational facilities, programs, and related administration.

- vi. Invest in and complete improvements at Pelham's existing recreation facilities including:
 - 1. Renovations at Muldoon Park (adding restroom facilities, improving the parking lot/driveway entrance, and improving the playground)
 - 2. Renovation of Lyon's Park skate park and courts
 - 3. Renovations at Raymond Park (adding field lighting and restroom facilities)
 - 4. Town Beach improvements including better older adult access
 - 5. More adult programming at the Hobbs Community Center
 - 6. More youth programming opportunities
- vii. Consider the addition of new recreation facilities and programming in town including pickleball courts, a dog park, splash pad, public skating rink, public pool, camping areas, and an indoor recreation center.
- viii. Ensure all of Pelham's municipal buildings and facilities become more ADA accessible over time.
- ix. Monitor each town department's staffing needs over the next ten years and fund new positions accordingly to meet increased demand for services.
- x. 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.
- xi. 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.
- xii. Continue to promote residential, commercial, and industrial recycling in Pelham. Promote recycling by placing bins in high traffic areas in public areas.
- xiii. Explore the feasibility of a municipal composting program.

c. Multi-Modal Transportation, Walkability, and Bikability

- i. Continue to maintain the road and pavement conditions in Pelham through regular road maintenance planning.

- ii. 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.
- iii. 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.
- iv. 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.
- v. 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.
- vi. Construct a pedestrian bridge and extension of the sidewalk from the cemetery on old bridge street to NH38.
- vii. 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.
- viii. Work with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to make transportation improvements along state-maintained routes.
- ix. 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.
- x. Implement access management strategies along Pelham's commercial corridors to coordinate access points and preserve the safety and capacity of the roadway.
- xi. 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.

d. An Active Town Center and Local Economy

- i. 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.
- ii. 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.
- iii. Encourage small businesses to open in Pelham by welcoming entrepreneurs and small business owners.
- iv. Ensure a quality streetscape environment, including landscaping and signage, in the Town Center.
- v. Review design standards in the commercial and industrial areas to ensure they protect the small-town character of Pelham.
- vi. Implement welcome signage with landscaping at the entrances to the Town Center.
- vii. 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.
- viii. 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.

e. Climate Change and Sustainability

- i. 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.
- ii. Conduct solar installation feasibility studies for Pelham's municipal buildings and sites, and plan for the addition of solar energy systems where appropriate.

- iii. 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.
- iv. Remove any regulatory barriers and encourage the implementation of renewable energy systems in Pelham.
- v. 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.
- vi. 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.
- vii. Continue to implement the Climate Adaptation Forestry Management Plan.