

Assessment of Master Plans and Land Use Regulations Newfound Lake Watershed Master Plan



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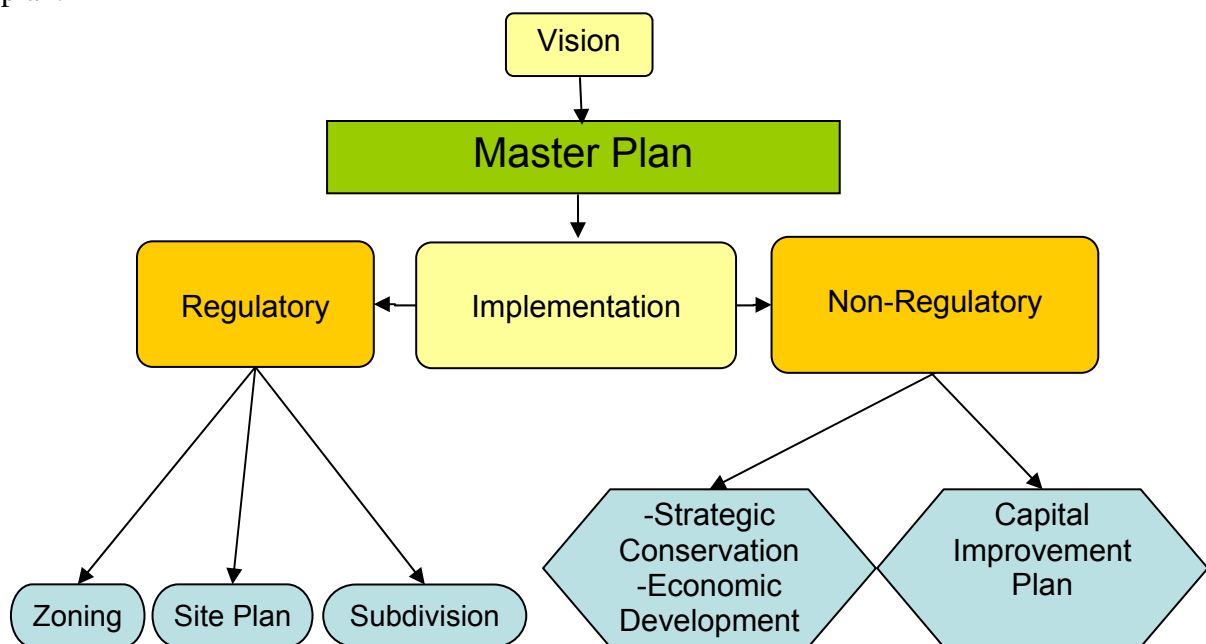
INTRODUCTION

This Watershed Master Plan includes an assessment of the existing master plan documents and the land use regulations in each of the nine Watershed towns. The reasons for conducting this assessment are to gain a better understanding of the level of planning and regulation that is currently taking place at the municipal level in the Watershed, to identify important tools that have been adopted locally, and to identify opportunities for new language and tools that may be adopted during future plan and regulation updates.

The purpose of this assessment is not to create an exact template for all plans and regulations within the Watershed, but rather to ensure that all nine communities are working toward a shared vision using whatever means they feel are most appropriate for their community. Any of the model language presented in the Watershed Master Plan will need careful review and adaptation to meet the needs and conditions found within individual communities.

A review of the existing master plan documents was the first step in this effort. This included a review of each plan's components with an emphasis on the vision statement and the future land use plan. It is important for all involved in this effort to know how each community has articulated its vision of the future, and how they believe future land use changes should be guided to reach their vision. We then reviewed each community's existing land use regulations to see if they are working to implement the vision and future land use plan for that town.

Legally, the master plan serves as the foundation for all land use regulations, and the regulations should help the community implement the vision contained in the master plan.



STATUS OF MASTER PLANNING IN THE WATERSHED

The majority of the master plans in the Watershed have been prepared since 2002. Although they differ somewhat in the extent of their inventory and the details of implementation, they all provide a clear sense of what the community would like to work toward from a land use perspective. This is critical information that can inform the Watershed Master Plan.

Throughout the nine Master Plans there is a clear understanding of what sets these communities apart, and how important it is to preserve their identities into the future. There is also a strong sense of stewardship and of the importance of protecting natural resources within the Watershed area. Many of the Master Plans also include some of the chapters recommended by the State of New Hampshire. Under NH RSA 674:2 only two chapters are required in a Master Plan. They are the Vision and Future Land Use chapters. The other recommended chapters include:



Hebron Village

- Transportation
- Community Facilities
- Economic Development
- Natural Resources
- Natural Hazards
- Recreation
- Utility and Public Service

- Cultural and Historic Resources
- Regional Concern
- Neighborhood Plan
- Community Design
- Housing
- Implementation

These chapters may be included in any combination based on the needs of the community. In future revisions of the community master plans it would be beneficial to this Watershed effort to see more detail on the condition and protection of natural resources, on future land use plans that consider the context of the Watershed, and on a Regional Concern chapter that reinforces the multi-town Watershed approach.

Table shows the age of each master plan, and the presence or absence of the Vision and Future Land Use sections required by New Hampshire statute.

Table _ Watershed Master Plan Dates and Details

<i>Community</i>	<i>Master Plan</i>	<i>Vision</i>	<i>Future Land Use Plan</i>
Alexandria	2007	√	√
Bridgewater	2006	√	√
Bristol	2002	√	√
Danbury	1985	X	√
Dorchester	1981	X	X
Groton	2007	√	√
Hebron	2005	√	√
Orange	2004	√	√
Plymouth	2006	√	√

√ = included in the Master Plan

X = not included in the Master Plan

A Vision for the Watershed

There is a great deal of similarity between the various Watershed communities’ vision statements. All of the Master Plans identify the elements of their individual community’s character, the importance of natural resource protection, and the need for balancing the various forces of growth and development into the future. The strong parallels between the various vision statements provide an assurance that the Newfound Watershed communities can join together to work toward a common vision.

The common vision that has been created for the Watershed communities states:

By the year 2020, we envision a watershed where quality of life and economic vitality are fostered by stewardship and sustainable use of the watershed’s natural resources, land uses and development are balanced with conservation, and maintaining water quantity and quality is central to the efforts of the nine watershed communities.

These have been achieved by...

This vision was created during several public dialogues at Watershed meetings. In order to reach this vision a series of implementation actions must be developed during the preparation of this Watershed Master Plan. Then the identified actions must become priorities throughout the Watershed. Every resident, property owner, and visitor will necessarily have a role in the implementation of this vision in order for it to be fulfilled.

Existing Community Visions in the Watershed

The core elements of each community's vision have been summarized below:

Alexandria's vision reinforces the citizens' desire to preserve the rural character of the community while conserving natural resources, balancing development needs, and encouraging the use of land use policies and planning tools in order to work toward the vision. The vision also highlights concerns related to population increases in the future, and their potential impacts on the community.



Agricultural fields in Alexandria

Bridgewater's vision is to balance the preservation of its small town feel and natural resources with business development. The primary approach identified for accomplishing this is the strengthening of land use regulations.

Bristol's vision recommends safeguarding the rural qualities of the community by preserving the historic, natural, agricultural and forestry assets while creating well-designed, well-sited structures, addressing housing needs, and enhancing the economic vitality of the downtown.

Danbury does not have a specific vision statement, but the Goal Statements from the 1985 Master Plan serve a similar function (if they are still considered relevant by the residents today). In general they call for maintaining the uncrowded rural and village character, retaining agriculture and open space, protecting natural and historic resources, developing reasonable regulations, and maintaining an active role in local and regional land use planning activities.

Dorchester's 1981 Master Plan also lacks a vision statement, but the *Goals, Policies, and Objectives* section provides a fairly clear image of the community's desire to maintain rural character by protecting, improving, enhancing, and maintaining scenic, historic and natural areas (if they are still considered relevant by the residents today). The document also recommends protecting and maintaining watershed, wetland, and wilderness areas and keeping development away from natural and scenic resources.

Groton's vision recommends establishing a framework that reflects the will of the people and facilitates orderly growth and development while protecting the rural woodland characteristics of the town, promoting environmental protection, and creating opportunities for environmentally sensitive and aesthetically unobtrusive development.

Hebron's vision calls for remaining a small, friendly, rural community, but recognizes the need for affordable housing, protecting natural and historic resources, and encouraging small scale commercial businesses rather than large scale commercial or industrial activity.

Orange's vision states that the community should remain a rural residential community, protect natural and historic resources, and maintain its scenic beauty.

Plymouth's vision calls for responsible growth and community prosperity while preserving the rural characteristics and other qualities that residents and visitors value.

Future Land Use Considerations

The Future Land Use Plans that have been prepared in each of the local master plans appear to understand the complex web of resources that create each community. Each document also articulates the role of regulations in implementing the policy recommendations found in the Master Plan. This is good news and very important to the Watershed Master Planning effort. From a Watershed perspective it is important to view all nine future land use plans together as a cohesive whole. Together these municipal policies will determine future land use patterns in the Watershed, and how the impacts related to land use change will be mitigated to meet the objectives of the Watershed Vision.

Future Land Use Plans in the Watershed

Alexandria – This is a future land use plan that is based on the existing land use conditions and input expressed through the community survey (2005), and was designed to describe a desirable pattern of future development in Alexandria. Specific objectives are identified for the Village Center, the primary transportation corridor along NH Route 104, conservation/preservation areas, and the identified water resource protection areas. The future land use plan for Alexandria provides direction for future policy actions in the community, and stresses the importance of the natural and historic resources in the community. This information is very important to the health of the Watershed because Alexandria composes roughly 36 percent (22,600 acres) of the watershed area.

Bridgewater – The future land use plan recommends protecting the natural resources in Bridgewater, and reducing the impact of development on these resources. The plan also suggests fostering a village development pattern at a site to be identified along Route 3A, accommodating residential development using innovative development options such as open space cluster development, and creating voluntary design guidelines for all non-residential development.

Bristol - Bristol's present land use pattern provides a sharp contrast between the urban type of development found in the village area and a strongly rural pattern throughout the remainder of the town. The exception to this is the land area along the margins of Newfound Lake, where development patterns are denser. The future land use development in Bristol is limited by a variety of physical constraints' including steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains. Otherwise development is expected to follow the existing zoning regulations. Bristol also included a Downtown Improvement Plan in the Master Plan that encourages the rehabilitation of the Downtown through a public/private partnership.

Danbury – The future land use plan calls for the continued use of the town center for a mixture of commercial and residential land uses, for future residential growth to be accommodated in areas of the community that are most suitable for development, and for the protection of identified conservation areas and environmental corridors. The plan even includes details on the types of land use regulations that would help discourage strip development and encourage a form of development that reflects Danbury's distinct rural character. The majority of the land in Danbury that falls within the watershed has been identified as being important for conservation.

Groton – According to the future land use plan residential development is expected to follow a pattern similar to that of the last two decades. In the future, though, it may fall under regulations that call for greater protection of surface water and ground water recharge areas, and the protection of areas considered important to preserving the rural/woodland character of Groton. Small unobtrusive home-based businesses are supported, and the desire for larger commercial/industrial development is dependent on the location. Forestry and agricultural activities are expected to continue and to be encouraged.

Hebron – Given the rural and generally hilly nature of Hebron, and the expressed wishes of the townspeople to maintain its rural character, low-density residential development is recommended in the future land use plan as the most appropriate land use pattern outside of the village area. The future land use plan also suggests that the town may want to revisit the minimum lots sizes currently being used, and, in order to protect the community's natural resources and scenic beauty, the plan recommends supporting zoning changes that would limit development in areas of steep slopes and in or near wetlands and floodplains.

Orange – The future land use plans states that a mix of residential uses, home businesses, agriculture and forestry activities will be encouraged throughout the town. Concern over the impact development may have on the natural environment and on the municipal budget is clearly stated.

Plymouth - The following settlement pattern is proposed in the future land use plan: mixed-use center in the downtown; moderate-density residential and civic-institutional uses adjacent to the downtown center; commercial and light industrial development in nodes along Route 3 north and Tenney Mountain Highway; surrounding countryside

characterized by low density housing and a working landscape of forest and farms; a recreation area for four-season resort development; and the least accessible and most fragile areas left generally undeveloped. A very low density of development has been recommended for any of the remaining developable areas located in the portion of the community that falls within the Watershed.

Future Land Use Plans and Watershed Growth Projections

The Master Plans in the Watershed are in place to guide land use changes as the population grows. Based on the forecasts for population growth in the Watershed, the communities can plan on seeing a total of approximately 500 more year-round residents by 2020. These new residents will require housing units and non-residential services so **it is critical that the Master Plans are reinforced by regulations that will guide future development** toward the identified future land use plans and vision statements.

Population Projections for the Watershed Area

Towns	2005	2020	# Increase	% Increase
Alexandria	1029	1148	119	12%
Bridgewater	597	667	70	12%
Bristol	1978	2189	211	11%
Danbury	2	3	1	50%
Dorchester	0	0	0	0%
Groton	250	280	30	12%
Hebron	540	590	50	9%
Orange	12	14	2	17%
Plymouth	26	28	2	8%
Total	4435	4919	484	11%

Source: New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning

Significant Master Plan Recommendations

The recommendations included in each of the nine master plans were reviewed against the Watershed Vision to see which are likely to help work toward the shared vision if they are implemented. The most significant recommendations were then grouped under the three main themes found in the Watershed Vision. A longer list of recommendations from each Master Plan can be found in Appendix **Y**.

The three main Watershed Vision Themes are:

- Stewardship and Sustainable Use of the Watershed’s Natural Resources

- Land Uses and Development are Balanced with Conservation
- Maintaining Water Quantity and Quality

Stewardship and Sustainable Use of the Watershed's Natural Resources

- Promote good forestry practices by requiring use of licensed foresters and registered loggers on timber harvests greater than five acres (*Bridgewater*)
- Consider adopting technology specific guidelines for the siting of windfarms (*Bridgewater*)
- Promote education and enforcement initiatives in Bridgewater related to Town and State regulations. (*Bridgewater*)
- Create a Town Beach on Newfound Lake. (*Bridgewater*)
- At the local level, The Conservation Commission has an obvious role to play in increasing public awareness of the town's natural assets and helping to educate the public about such approaches as conservation easements. The Planning Board should review the existing overlay districts to be sure they provide adequate protection for the most sensitive areas. (*Bristol*)
- Municipal authorities, business associations, private organizations and community leaders must work together to ensure the long-term health of the region's working landscape. Town ordinances should be friendly toward the agricultural and forest industries while encouraging the use of Best Management Practices. (*Bristol*)
- Establish a Rural Conservation District with large minimum lot sizes. (*Danbury*)
- The community should encourage the use of sound forest management practices. (*Danbury*)
- Adopt earth excavation regulations in accordance with RSA 155:E. (*Danbury*)
- The Conservation Commission should identify natural resources for restrictive action. (*Groton*)
- The Conservation Commission is also charged with developing a planning framework for the preservation of open spaces and woodlands while ensuring the viability of woodlands management activities. (*Groton*)
- Developing a program to encourage and improve forestry practices in the community. (*Dorchester*)
- Create a conservation commission to act as spokesperson for critical environmental areas. (*Dorchester*)
- Support sound forestry management practices. (*Hebron*)
- Adopt a lighting ordinance in conformity with the "Dark Sky" guidelines of the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning Technical Bulletin 16. (*Hebron*)
- Promote the preservation of open space land through conservation easements, gifts, and purchases. (*Orange*)
- Strategies to maintain and improve the continued economic viability of local agriculture and forest should continue to be supported. These include maintaining an adequate land base (e.g., through land conservation and land use regulations), maintaining and expanding economic incentives (e.g., current use), and allowing for value added production locally. (*Plymouth*)
- Protect and manage for sustainability the town's natural resources by:

- Ensuring that the removal of sand, gravel, and other mineral resources does not permanently degrade the landscape, or adversely impact ground or surface waters;
 - Minimizing the loss of productive farm, forest and open land;
 - Guiding growth to priority development areas; and
 - Minimizing the impact of development to preserve the landscape. *(Plymouth)*
- Work with large landowners to identify alternatives to development; and use acquisition methods to protect important natural resources, especially environmentally sensitive areas. *(Plymouth)*
 - Work with private conservation organizations to inventory wildlife habitat, including wildlife travel corridors, and to develop strategies for the preservation of that habitat. *(Plymouth)*
 - Increase the public's awareness of its role in protecting natural resources and minimizing impacts on the natural environment. Provide information about appropriate water usage, non-point pollution sources (i.e., lawns, storm drains), maintenance of catch basins, sedimentation pools, waste disposal, invasive plants vs. native species, land protection options and other conservation issues. *(Plymouth)*
 - Sustain forestlands as a renewable local resource. *(Plymouth)*

Land Uses and Development are Balanced with Conservation

- Establish ordinances and regulations designed to preserve and protect the rural character *(Alexandria)*
- Conduct an inventory of scenic resources and viewsheds within the community to guide the protection of key parcels within the identified scenic viewsheds. Provide guidelines for new development in these areas. *(Bridgewater)*
- Ensure that Bridgewater's regulations provide opportunities for a diverse mix of housing unit types that can accommodate the changing composition of Bridgewater's households. *(Bridgewater)*
- Work with developers to minimize the costs of living through quality housing design, energy efficient construction, and proximity to transportation options. *(Bridgewater)*
- Educate landowners about the benefits of leaving lands open to the public, and the liability protections provided by existing laws. *(Bridgewater)*
- One of the most effective ways to maintain the rural character of the town is through sensible zoning regulations. Commercial areas should be concentrated as much as possible, and preferably located close to the traditional village center. Zoning should allow for clustered residential development along with the preservation of open space. In addition, efforts to conserve our natural assets, to maintain the viability of agricultural lands and forests, and to enhance the natural systems that support life in Bristol, which are included later in this vision statement, all contribute to the effort to retain the rural character of the town. *(Bristol)*
- The community should guide growth in close proximity to existing community resources. *(Danbury)*
- Develop provisions for clustering development. *(Danbury)*

- Support zoning changes that would limit development in areas of steep slopes and in or near wetlands and floodplains. (*Hebron*)
- Determine the need for enhanced code enforcement services. (*Hebron*)
- Encourage land trusts, conservation groups, and private and municipal landowners to hold forests, shoreline, and open space for conservation and public recreational uses, as appropriate, and promote the use of conservation easements and restrictions for these purposes. (*Hebron*)
- Develop an Open Space Subdivision ordinance that would require developers to retain a significant portion of the development for open space/conservation easements. (*Hebron*)
- Review and update the Orange Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Regulations to ensure they foster the implementation of the Master Plan (*Orange*)
- Encourage additional creative site design to minimize development costs; allow for a mix of housing while preserving natural resources and open land; and, in appropriate instances, provide a density bonus to projects which include affordable housing units or permanent land preservation. (*Plymouth*)
- Encourage an integrated natural resource protection strategy that links the most environmentally sensitive areas of town to protect groundwater resources, surface waters, important wildlife habitat, softwood forests, farmland, recreation resource lands, and greenways through land acquisition/conservation, education, application of "best management practices," and/or "low-impact development" strategies. (*Plymouth*)
- Protect fragile resources and environmentally sensitive areas through land use regulations. At a minimum, such regulations shall:
 - Allow development on slopes of 15 to 25% only in accordance with strict standards to limit site disturbance and avoid erosion and sedimentation of surface waters;
 - Restrain the creation or the development of parcels that will result in development on steep slopes, wetlands, floodplain and/or natural heritage sites;
 - Require the designation of building envelopes (the area of a parcel where structures may be sited) and clustering of development;
 - Minimize the fragmentation of important agricultural land (including prime and statewide important soils), large softwood forest blocks and critical wildlife habitat;
 - Prevent the emission of excessive light, fumes, dust, odor, smoke and noise from all non-agricultural land uses; and
 - Explore land use regulations that clearly define areas unsuitable for development. (*Plymouth*)

Maintaining Water Quantity and Quality

- Develop construction and maintenance standards for the Highway Department and outside contractors to follow. (*Bridgewater*)
- While a good deal of federal and state legislation addresses such concerns as clean water and clean air, local awareness and concern play an important role in implementing this vision. The town should work closely with groups which are

devoted to the preservation of forests, rivers, etc. to assure that vital natural systems are preserved. (*Bristol*)

- Adopt and enforce more stringent setbacks from water bodies. (*Danbury*)
- Consider adopting a local septic system ordinance that includes design standards and inspection procedures. (*Danbury*)
- Preserving water quality by strictly enforcing state statutes on septic tank installations. (*Dorchester*)
- Using the *Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act* as a guide, develop ordinances to protect the Cockermouth River, the major brooks (e.g. Cilley, Fretts, Wise, Tannery, and Georges/Bog Brooks) and wetlands. (*Hebron*)
- Prevent degradation of water resources by:
 - Evaluating current zoning setbacks from rivers and streams for adequacy, and make changes as deemed necessary;
 - Preventing potential adverse impacts to groundwater resources, including depletion and degradation of water quality, from groundwater extraction;
 - Ensuring that development within wellhead protection areas is carefully designed to prevent adverse impacts to groundwater supplies;
 - Requiring proper erosion control measures and storm water management during all development, including road construction and maintenance; and
 - Controlling road salt storage areas and snow dumps to prevent contamination of waters. (*Plymouth*)

Recommendations Watershed-wide for Future Master Plan Updates

To be addressed during the facilitated discussion at the November Meeting

STATUS OF LAND USE REGULATIONS IN THE WATERSHED

The existing land use regulations in each community were reviewed in order to better understand what is currently in place, how extensive the regulations are within the Watershed, and the likelihood that they will guide future changes toward the individual community visions and the Watershed vision. In many ways this review serves as both an inventory and an initial audit of how well the regulations will implement the master plans. Eight of the Watershed towns have a zoning ordinance in place. Alexandria, the one community that does not currently have zoning, does still regulate the subdivision of land, floodplain development, and earth excavation.

It is interesting to see the level of uniformity throughout the Watershed, and note which aspects of that uniformity are likely to work toward or against the Watershed vision. All of the towns have subdivision regulations in place, and five of the communities also have site plan review regulations. With the exception of some overlay districts, the majority of the Watershed falls under some form of a rural residential zoning district. As a result, most of the Watershed has a minimum lot size of 1-2 acres, and a minimum road frontage requirement of



Hillside Development in Bridgewater

150 to 200 feet. **This is potentially a very suburban pattern of development, and not one that matches the vision statements.** One exception to this is the Rural Residential District in Bridgewater, which notes the scenic, recreational, and environmental values of the land and calls for a lower density of development.

Some of the communities have adopted additional setbacks and performance criteria for land adjacent to surface waters and wetlands, but little has been done to address steep slope or ridgeline development. Most of the communities have a provision for open space cluster developments, but few provide suitable design guidelines or incentives to the developer. Some of the communities have also adopted other provisions including wetland ordinances, historic district regulations, a seasonal conversion ordinance, outdoor lighting regulations, impact fees, adult use ordinances, and telecommunications ordinances.

Some of the communities have also made a point of including a provision for the assessment of “regional impact.” Having this provision in the land use regulations and regulatory checklists helps remind board members and applicants that any Planning Board may determine an application to be a development of regional impact according to NH RSA 36:54. This is a tool that may become more useful within the Watershed as each community begins to understand the potential impacts new development proposals may have on the shared resources within the Watershed.

Finally, this chapter of the Watershed Master Plan should help identify how effective the existing regulations are going to be in the future, what existing regulations may serve as examples for other portions of the Watershed, and what types of regulatory improvements would be beneficial to consider in the future.

Building Permits, Occupancy Permits and Enforcement

Currently, all of the Watershed communities require some form of building permit or land use permit for new structures. This is largely to help monitor the level of development activity in each community. Most of the enforcement duties related to these permits fall to the Boards of Selectmen, and in some instances an identified Health Officer working with the Selectmen. Two communities, Bristol and Plymouth, have professional code enforcement staff.

Bridgewater is the only community that requires an occupancy permit, but other communities in the Watershed have expressed interest in this practice. Occupancy permits are used to enforce the community's building and land use regulations. They often require an inspection to ensure that the structure is safe for occupancy, and occupancy is considered illegal without an approved occupancy permit.



Residential Units along the Shoreline of Newfound Lake

<i>Community</i>	<i>Zoning Ordinance</i>	<i>Zones</i>	<i>Minimum Lot Size</i>	<i>Road Frontage</i>	<i>Lot Coverage Limits</i>	<i>Environmental Setback</i>	<i>Open Space Clustering</i>	<i>Excavation Regulations</i>	<i>Erosion/sediment Control</i>
Alexandria	N/A	N/A	Minimum of two acres	Minimum road frontage of 150 feet	N/A	N/A	Cluster Housing Provision in Subdivision	Gravel Pit Regulations	In Subdivision regulations
Bridgewater	2004	General Residential District; Rural Residential District; Commercial District; Commercial/Industrial District	Minimum of two acres or five acres	Minimum road frontage of 150 feet to 300 feet	15% to 30% Maximum lot coverage	N/A	Allowed in Zoning with no additional density (no guidelines or performance criteria)	Basic regulations in the Zoning for areas within 100 feet of public ROW; RSA 155 E for all other commercial purposes.	N/A
Bristol	2007	Village Commercial District; Village Residential District; Downtown Commercial District; Corridor Commercial District; Rural District; Lake District; Industrial District; Pemigewasset Overlay District; Wetlands Conservation Overlay District; Historic Overlay District	Vary based on District from 10,000 square feet to two acre minimum	Vary based on District from 50 feet to 150 feet	Vary based on District from 100% in the Downtown Commercial District to a maximum of 10% impervious lot coverage in the Pemi Overlay	Primary structures and garages 100 feet from Pemigewasset reference line, and were existing preservation of the natural vegetative buffer within 150 feet of the river; All structures must be at least 50 feet from surface waters in Lake District; 50 feet from wetlands for all development unless a Special Use Permit is awarded	Allowed in Zoning, but lacking performance criteria	RSA 155 E	Erosion and siltation control requirements in Pemi Overlay District
Danbury	2006	Town wide Rural District with Village Overlay Districts	Vary based on District from one acre in the village to two acres elsewhere	Vary based on District from 100 feet to 200 feet	N/A	N/A	Cluster Residential Development in Zoning (50% as open space, and density bonus possibilities)	N/A	Stormwater Management and Erosion Control in Subdivision regulations

Community	Zoning Ordinance	Zones	Minimum Lot Size	Road Frontage	Lot Coverage Limits	Environmental Setback	Open Space Clustering	Excavation Regulations	Erosion/sediment Control
Dorchester	1991	Rural District	Minimum of two acres - not including wetland areas or slopes in excess of 20%	Minimum road frontage of 200; Lots over 15 acres require 400 feet of frontage	N/A	Buildings 75 feet from surface waters; no water or septic system within 100 feet of surface water bodies	Allowed in Zoning with no additional density (no guidelines)	N/A	In Subdivision regulations
Groton	2007	Rural Residential Development	Minimum lot size by soil classification or a minimum of two acres, whichever is greater	Minimum road frontage of 150 feet	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	In Subdivision Regulations
Hebron	2007	Common Historic District; Lake District; Rural District; Floodplain Overlay District; Wetlands Protection Overlay District	1 acre in Village; 2 acres in the Lake and Rural Districts; (not including wetland areas or slopes in excess of 25%)	Minimum road frontage of 150 feet	30% Maximum for residential lots	Shore Setback - Buildings 50 feet from public waters; Wetland setback and buffer 50-150 feet	Permitted in the Lake and Rural Districts with no additional density	N/A	In Subdivision regulations
Orange	1991	Rural Residential District	Minimum of two acres; (not including wetland areas or slopes in excess of 15%)	Minimum road frontage of 200 feet	40% Maximum	N/A	Allowed in Zoning with no additional density (no guidelines or performance criteria)	Basic regulations in the Zoning for areas within 100 feet of public ROW; RSA 155 E for all other commercial purposes.	In Subdivision regulations
Plymouth	2006	Single Family Residential; Multi-Family Residential; Agricultural; Civic/Institutional; Village Commercial; Highway Commercial; Industrial and Commercial Development; Floodplain Development (overlay); Environmentally Sensitive (overlay); Airport (overlay)	No minimum lot size in the Village; .5 to 1 Acre minimum elsewhere	Vary based on District from 50 feet to 150 feet	Vary based on District from 100% in the Downtown and 50% elsewhere	In the Environmentally Sensitive Zone structures shall be setback 75 feet from the edge of the normal river channel or the mean high water line of the lake.	Open Space Residential Development in Zoning	RSA 155 E	In Subdivision regulations

Regulatory Models Within the Watershed

Within the Watershed several regulatory approaches that are used in some communities could serve as models to other communities, although they may need to be adapted to assist those communities as they strive to meet their own objectives. This is not to say that each of the examples below has been perfected, but rather that they are steps in the right direction towards addressing issues that all of the communities will be facing.

Diversity of Density

The communities of Bridgewater, Bristol, Hebron and Plymouth have all created a variety of zoning districts that relate to the characteristics in each portion of their community and the vision for that area of town. This is a more effective approach to reaching the vision than a “one size fits all” lot size requirement town-wide.

Open Space Cluster Regulations

Although most of the Watershed communities have provisions for the clustering of development, Danbury stands out as the most progressive example. The Danbury regulations require that fifty percent of the parcel be protected as common land (open space), and then provides a bonus unit incentive for developers. This ensures that the conservation area is significant, and provides a mechanism to promote this type of development to developers.

Environmental Setbacks

In Bristol and Hebron there are examples of specific setback requirements that reduce the impact of development activity on sensitive resources. These setback requirements also include provisions for natural vegetative buffers which filter stormwater, control erosion and provide critical wildlife habitat adjacent to surface waters.

Wetlands Overlay

Bristol has adopted an overlay district to reduce the impact of development on wetlands and their immediately adjacent uplands environments. Hebron has a similar ordinance going before the Town in 2008. These restrictions control the types of activities within wetland areas, and establish setback and buffering requirements for activities locating in close proximity to these critical resources.

Seasonal Conversion

The Town of Bridgewater has adopted an ordinance that assists it in monitoring the conversion of seasonal structures to year-round units. This is particularly important because many of the seasonal structures are older units that were not intended for intense year-round use. A primary concern is their septic systems, and the need to ensure that the system can accommodate the new levels of use.

Earth Excavation Regulations

Based on the authority of RSA 155:E for planning boards to regulate earth excavation regulations, Alexandria adopted an Earth Excavation ordinance and began working with local property owners to get existing and abandoned operations into compliance. Their annual

review process has greatly reduced the number of abandoned and non-conforming operations within the community.

Recommendations on Regulations Within the Watershed

To be addressed during the facilitated discussion at the November Meeting

CONCLUSION

Moving forward as a Watershed it will be important to have a clear vision with detailed implementation actions that all of the communities can help work toward. Understanding the individual community visions within the Watershed, and the implementation tools that have been adopted locally was an important first step and the purpose of this *Assessment*. This information will be used to help inform the public, and to select areas that will need attention locally under future planning and implementation activities. This *Assessment* will also provide some baseline information on the level of planning and implementation in the Watershed, and a way to measure progress as more planning and implementation are accomplished in each of the Watershed communities. Selecting implementation actions that build on the work accomplished in each of the communities and leading the Watershed as a whole toward a common vision is central to the long-term health of the Newfound Lake region.