

Chapter 1 – Current Land Use

Introduction

This Chapter describes how land is currently being used in Webster, along with some of the development history and trends that have brought us to that current status. The Future Land Use Chapter tackles the tough question of “What will the Town look like if current land development trends continue? “Do we aspire to some different outcome?” If so, “what changes should we make to achieve that different outcome?” And Both Chapters are necessary in the Master Plan, one to tell people where the Town is and one to say where it could and should be going.

Accelerating population growth, evolving housing needs, and changing social and economic trends discussed throughout the Master Plan have had a direct impact on the landscape of the community. Land is a finite resource and thoughtful use of land is a critical issue for all communities. How a community uses its land base has a direct impact on aesthetics, community character, transportation infrastructure, housing affordability, and the tax base.

Webster's development history began long before there were any land use regulations in the State or Town. Development occurred in those areas with good drainage, access to a water supply, transportation, and waterpower. The institution of zoning ordinances and other land use tools reflects a relatively recent effort to assure that development proceeds in a planned and controlled manner rather than being allowed to “just happen.” The intelligent use of such tools becomes increasingly important as the economic expansion of southern New Hampshire focuses increasing development pressure on the Town.

This Chapter reviews the land development patterns in Webster and the abutting communities since 1993, and describes the provisions of the Town’s Zoning Ordinance that impact land development.

Current Land Use Types

The existing land use pattern in Webster is typical of many communities in New Hampshire. Commercial land uses are located along more extensively traveled regional roadways while the majority of residential development is located in the back lands of the community. Please see the **Current Land Use Map** for more detailed information.

Residential Land

Residential land uses are scattered throughout the community, with current development pressures influenced by Concord and Manchester. In total, residential land uses occupy nearly 26.17% of the community's land area, 5.68% are lots smaller than 5 acres and 20.49% are lots that are larger than 5 acres.

Mixed Use Land

Mixed land uses are those where commercial uses are co-located with residential uses. In total, residential/commercial land uses occupy nearly 0.8% of the community's land area.

Public / Institutional Land

In total, public and institutional land uses occupy approximately 13.6% of the community's land area. Examples of such uses include the school, Town Offices, the Public Safety Building, Federally-owned land, Town-owned recreation land, Library, and local churches and cemeteries.

Commercial Land

This land use occupies less than 0.5% of Webster's total land area. Commercial uses involve the sale or trade of goods and services.

Excavation Land

This use occupies slightly more than 0.3% of the community's total land area. The excavation of land encompasses any land use where raw materials are removed from the earth and processed.

Utility Land

Utility lands include electric, and telephone rights-of-way, which occupy 1.8% of the community's total land area.

Conservation Land

Conservation lands include land that has been permanently set aside, with development thereby prohibited. Such land includes Town forests, lands owned by private conservation organizations, and properties subject to conservation easements. Such land constitutes nearly 6.8% of the community's total land area.

Undeveloped Land

Undeveloped lands, which are lands that are neither currently developed nor protected from development, comprise 50.2% of the Town's entire land area. Some of these areas are located on land with steeper slopes, limited road access, or other development constraints that make them much more difficult to develop. Land classified as undeveloped includes forested areas, fields, and agricultural lands.

The following table is a summary of the current composition of land uses in Webster.

Summary of Acreage Developed by Land Use Category

Category	Area (Acres)*	Percent of Total Land
Residential Land	987	5.7%
Residential Land that could be further subdivided**	3,566	20.5%
Mixed-Use Land	139	0.8%
Public / Institutional Land	2,369	13.6%
Commercial Land	86	0.5%
Excavation Land	53	0.3%
Utility Land	318	1.8%
Conservation Land	1,143	6.6%
Undeveloped Land	8,740	50.2%
Total	17,401	100%

Source: CNHRPC Geographic Information System (GIS), 2004

*Estimates based on GIS mapping for 2004
 **A Residential parcel was coded this way if it was larger than 5 acres and had more than 250' of road frontage.

Development Patterns, 1992-2003

Research and analysis of development patterns are important to help Webster better plan for future development. Knowledge of development patterns helps people to be aware of and understand the changes taking place within a Town, as well as in abutting communities. By looking at how many subdivisions and site plans were approved, building permits issued, and land placed in and taken out of Current Use during the past ten years, the Town is able to accurately report trends.

Subdivision Activity

During the period of 1993 through 2003, a total of 48 subdivisions were approved in Webster. From 1993-2003, the largest subdivision consisted of 6 new lots in 1998 on a piece of property off of Tyler Rd. The table below compares the amount of subdivision in Webster to the amount of subdivision in abutting communities.

Number of New Lots Created, 1993-2003

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total
Webster	7	6	4	5	9	7	5	4	1	6	9	63
Boscawen	0	14	5	3	3	7	20	7	5	8	4	76
Concord	33	32	22	14	28	88	57	58	220	121	177	850
Hopkinton	12	15	9	2	3	16	13	24	3	21	17	131
Salisbury	5	0	3	0	15	7	9	6	7	6	6	64
Warner	0	9	1	4	1	2	2	3	3	7	13	45

Source: Annual Town Reports, CNHRPC Development Trends Report, and Town Staff, 2004

Current Lot Sizes

Webster’s Zoning Ordinance currently requires a minimum two-acre lot size for all newly created lots. However, there are many lots less than 2 acres in size that were created before Zoning was adopted. Currently, there are 744 lots less than the two-acre minimum, with the majority of them located in the Pillsbury Lake District.

This is not to say that there are not some large sized lots in Webster, quite the contrary. There are 28 lots that are over 100 acres in size, 187 lots of 20 acres or more, and 307 lots of 10 acres or more. The breakdown of lot sizes can be seen in the table below. The existence of so many larger land holdings is a significant “target opportunity” for guiding future development trends.

Webster Lot Sizes, 2003

Lot Size	Number of Lots
0.0-0.5 acres	409
0.5-1.0 acres	204
1.0-2.0 acres	140
2.0-5.0 acres	199
5.0-10.0 acres	144
10.0-20.0 acres	120
20.0-50.0 acres	96
50.0-100.0 acres	63
100.0-200.0 acres	22
200.0-500.0 acres	4
500.0-1,000.0 acres	1
Over 1,000.0 acres	1

Source: Assessors Database, 2003

Site Plan Activity

From 1993-2003, there were 5 Site Plans¹ approved by the Town of Webster. These approved Site Plans included a change of use from a commercial or industrial use to another, as well as approvals for new commercial or industrial operations. The table below shows the comparison to abutting communities.

Number of Site Plans Approved, 1993-2003

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total
Webster	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	5
Boscawen	7	12	15	16	15	11	19	21	19	11	7	153
Concord	19	32	28	15	34	42	43	40	62	36	29	380
Hopkinton	13	15	7	14	18	8	7	3	8	15	16	124
Salisbury	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3
Warner	2	1	2	2	3	1	5	1	5	7	9	38

Source: Annual Town Reports, CNHRPC Development Trends Report, and Town Staff, 2004

Residential Building Permits

During the period of 1993 through 2003, Webster issued 151 building permits for new residential construction. This number does not include the tear-down and rebuilding of existing residential structures. See the **1993-2003 Building Permit Location Map** for more information.

¹ Site Plans are for the development or change or expansion of use of tracts for non-residential uses or for multi-family dwelling units.

Number of New Residential Building Permits Issued, 1993-2003

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total
Webster	5	7	12	11	13	12	8	18	19	18	28	151
Boscawen	8	1	16	9	11	10	9	13	14	13	10	114
Concord	60	72	65	95	67	65	284	112	125	91	139	1,177
Hopkinton	19	23	15	38	44	52	39	23	18	25	28	324
Salisbury	4	3	4	3	8	1	6	10	14	14	13	80
Warner	6	4	7	12	12	12	10	13	23	25	26	150

Source: Annual Town Reports, CNHRPC Development Trends Report, and Town Staff, 2004
NHOEP 1999 Current Estimates and Trends in NH Housing Supply

Current Use

Current Use is one of the easiest and most popular methods of enabling landowners to retain undeveloped land, forests, and agricultural fields. Current Use is a preferential tax program (RSA 79-A) in which the land is taxed on its potential to generate income in its existing or current use. Webster residents have continually participated in this program, as can be seen by the figures below.

Current Use Acreage for the Town of Webster

Year	Acres in Current Use	% Total Land in Current Use
1996	11,535	63.8%
1997	12,452	68.8%
1998	11,431	63.2%
1999	11,906	65.8%
2000	11,592	64.1%
2001	11,591	64.1%
2002	11,485	63.5%
2003	11,998	66.3%

Source: Town Staff, 2004

Current Zoning Regulations

The power to regulate private property is one of the most important powers granted to local governments. Webster adopted a Zoning Ordinance in 1974 and has updated it periodically over the last 30 years. Used properly, zoning can be a powerful tool to improve the aesthetics of a community, protect the natural environment, and enhance the quality of life. Used improperly, zoning can serve special interests, diminish the natural environment, inhibit individual rights, and have unintended consequences.

Zoning District

The Town of Webster has one Agricultural/Residential Zoning District that applies to the entire Town.

In addition to residential and agricultural uses, the following uses are allowed by Special Exception - business, commercial, or industrial uses; the operation of a home business; mining or excavation of materials; creation of accessory apartments or seasonal dwellings; the conversion of a dwelling from a single-family to a two-family dwelling; and the installation of personal wireless service facilities (“cell towers”).

All new lots shall be at least two acres in size, with 250’ of road frontage on a Class V or better road, and 50’ (25’ with Special Exception for non-commercial building) front, rear, and side setbacks. There is also a 50’ setback required for all buildings (25’ for accessory structures) from rivers, brooks, lakes, and ponds. In the Pillsbury Lake District, all pre-existing lots shall have 20’ front and rear setbacks and 12’ side setbacks.

Overlay Zoning Districts

Overlay Districts are superimposed upon the Base Zoning District, described above, so that any regulations pertaining to the Overlay Districts shall be *in addition* to the regulations of the Base District. The land within the town may be used if and to the extent that such use is permitted in both the applicable Base and any relevant Overlay District(s).

The Town has adopted a Floodplain Development Overlay District, the area of which can be seen on the **Current Zoning Map** and consist of all lands designated as special flood hazard areas by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The purpose of the District is to protect future development from flood damage by discouraging and/or modifying the type of land development in the Floodplain area.

Other Zoning Ordinance Provisions

In addition to the Zoning District, Webster has adopted numerous other Land Use Regulations that influence and help shape the land use patterns in Town. Webster has adopted a Controlled Growth Ordinance for new residential dwellings. The original Ordinance, which was adopted in 1974, limited the number of building permits, for new dwelling units, to 5% of the total number of dwelling units in the Town at the start of each calendar year. The Ordinance was subsequently updated in 1978 to lower the number to 4%, where it has remained.

At a 2001 Town Meeting, a Personal Wireless Service Facilities (PWSF) Ordinance was adopted. The provisions of the Ordinance apply to the entire town and specify the requirements that all applicants looking to construct a cell tower in Webster must follow.

Conclusion

This Chapter describes how the land in Webster is currently being used and the historic development patterns that brought the town to this point. Potential new developments may impact the town visually, environmentally, historically, or fiscally, all of which merit the attention of the Planning and Zoning Boards. How land is to be used will impact all aspects of town life, town services, schools, conservation, commercial growth, and residential growth. The Town is currently in a position to make decisions on future land use that will impact the development, feel, and character of the Town. The following Chapters in the Master Plan contain suggestions that seek to guide future growth and development in a manner that builds on the foundations established by Webster’s history, and reflects the interests and desires of its current citizens.

Chapter 2 – Population and Economics

Introduction

The purpose of this Chapter is to describe the population and the economic life of the Town of Webster and to consider how those characteristics impact future land use planning. This chapter also compares the “you and your household” data in the responses to the Webster Master Plan Community Survey to Census 2000 data, and shows that the former generally parallels the latter. It is thus reasonable to assume that the survey responses represent the wishes and opinions of Webster’s citizens.

Community Survey Results

A Master Plan Community Survey was distributed to all residential households and non-residential landowners in May 2003. Approximately 1,100 surveys were mailed out with a 30% response rate. About 700 surveys were mailed to fulltime Webster residents and another 392 were mailed to an out of town address. The following survey questions relate to the Population and Economics Chapter. The percentages refer to each individual table as not everyone answered all the questions.

Are you a:

Fulltime Webster resident	241	72%
Non-resident property owner	77	23%
Seasonal resident	18	5%
Grand Total	336	100%

How long have you lived in Webster?

Less than 5 Years	50	20%
5 - 10 Years	43	17%
11-25 Years	71	29%
26-50 Years	61	25%
Greater than 50 years	21	9%
Grand Total	246	100.0%

The greatest number of surveys was returned by full-time Webster residents (72%). They accounted for 64% of the total surveys distributed. More than half (54%) of the survey respondents reported living here 11-50 years. Another fifth of the survey respondents lived in Webster for less than 5 years.

How many people are in your household?

<i>Number of People</i>	<i>Total Households</i>	<i>Percent of Households</i>
One person	38	16%
Two people	109	45%
Three people	43	18%
4-5 people	48	20%
Six people	2	0.5%
More than 6 people	1	0.5%
Totals	241	100%

The most frequent household size reported was two people (45%). This corresponds to Census 2000 data showing an average of 2.35 persons per household.

The number of adults in your household for each age group

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Total Adults</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>2000 Census Approx.</i>
18-25 years old	39	9%	31.2%
26-35 years old	68	15%	12.5%
36-39 years old	33	8%	8.5%
40-49 years old	90	20%	20.6%
50-64 years old	144	33%	17.9%
65-79 years old	43	10%	6.9%
80+ years old	24	5%	9.2%
Total	441	100%	100%

The surveys returned represented a total of 441 adults in 241 households. Over half the respondents (53%) were in the 40-64 year age bracket.

To determine whether the Webster survey results accurately reflect the demographics of Webster’s population, a comparison was made between the number of respondents by age category of the Webster Master Plan survey to the number of persons by age category in the 2000 Census. The age categories used in the Master Plan survey didn’t match exactly the categories of the Census, but they were close enough for comparison’s sake.

The most significant difference was in the 18-25 year old group; with far fewer households in Webster completing the survey represented the 18-25 year old group (9%) as compared with actual Census data (31.2%). A greater percentage of persons in the 50-64 year old group completed the survey in Webster (33%) as compared with the actual Census figures for the 50-64 year old group (17.9%). A conclusion could be drawn that the survey data reflects the attitudes and desires of the middle-aged population of Webster and that the younger population is under represented in the Master Plan survey results.

Do you:

Own your own home	234	98%
Rent your home	5	2%

Nearly all respondents own their own home.

In your household, how many persons are:

Working in Webster	41	9%
Commuting out of town	292	63%
Retired	98	21%
Other	33	7%

Of those residents answering the survey, 63% commute out of town for work and another 21% are retired. The 2000 Census data reported 49% of employed Webster residents commute out of town for work.

In what type of housing do you live?

Single family home	231	97%
Two family home	3	1%
Multifamily or apt.	0	0%
Mobile home	4	1.5%
Manufactured home	1	0.5%

Single family home is the most prevalent style in our survey sample (97%), with only 3% of the residents living in a two-family, manufactured or mobile home. In comparison, the 2000 Census data reported 91.4% of Webster residents live in a 1-unit detached (single family) home. This suggests that occupants of other than single family homes may be under-represented in the Survey responses.

Population Characteristics

Historical Population Trends

Changes in the population of any community are influenced by a variety of factors, ranging from changes in the local economic base to national and natural events, such as wars, recessions, and natural disasters. Webster’s population data is shown below.

From 1900 to 2000, Webster saw a growth in population of total 1,083 people.

Significant growth began in Webster’s population in 1950, and the trend continued for 40 years. Population growth slowed from 1990 to 2000. At the writing of this report in 2004, 1,673 people reside in Webster.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Percent Change</i>
<i>1900</i>	496	
<i>1910</i>	445	-10.0%
<i>1920</i>	335	-24.7%
<i>1930</i>	360	+7.4%
<i>1940</i>	351	+2.5%
<i>1950</i>	386	+10.0%
<i>1960</i>	457	+18.4%
<i>1970</i>	680	+48.8%
<i>1980</i>	1,095	+61.0%
<i>1990</i>	1,405	+28.3%
<i>2000</i>	1,579	+12.4%

Source: US Census, 1985 Webster Master Plan

Regional Population Trends

In the past 20 years, Salisbury experienced the highest growth rate (46%), followed by Webster (44%). Webster's growth rate exceeded the rate for the county and the state. The population trends are shown in the table below.

Webster and Abutting Communities - Population Trends, 1980-2000

Town	1980 Population	1990 Population	2000 Population	% Growth 1980-2000
Webster	1,095	1,405	1,579	44%
Boscawen	3,435	3,586	3,672	7%
Concord	30,400	36,006	40,687	34%
Hopkinton	3,861	4,806	5,399	40%
Salisbury	781	1,061	1,137	46%
Warner	1,963	2,250	2,760	41%
Merrimack Co.	98,302	120,005	136,225	39%
State of NH	920,610	1,109,252	1,235,786	34%

Source: U.S. Census

Population Projections

Historical and often unsuccessful attempts to predict population growth have demonstrated that this is a difficult task. Nevertheless, predicting future population growth is crucial for planning the expansion of community services and facilities.

Since 1960, New Hampshire's population has increased by about 629,000 people. More than 60% of this growth occurred in Hillsborough and Rockingham counties. The primary reasons, of course, are the forces of decentralization, originating in the Boston metropolitan area and following the I-93 and I-95 corridors.

The NH Office of Energy and Planning projects a shift in growth away from Hillsborough and Rockingham counties in the future. This projection reflects the facts that these counties are already densely populated, and the land therein is decreasingly available and increasingly expensive. The office projects that Merrimack and Carroll counties in particular will gain in state share of growth.

We are already experiencing growth pressure from Concord. The widening of Interstate 93 (Salem to Manchester) may drive growth along the corridor. Affordability will dictate outcomes; i.e., if a house lot in Hopkinton costs \$100,000, a builder isn't going to put a low price house on it. That may direct more people to Webster, as the lots are more affordable.

The NH Office of Energy and Planning has projected population growth through 2020 for Webster and surrounding towns. The following table shows those projections, along with actual values. Note that the 2000 projections generally underestimated the actual numbers, but by only small percentages. Also, note that for Webster, comparing the "2000 Actual" to "2005 Projected" numbers shows an annual increase of 46 persons. Surprisingly, the projections for 2010, 2015, and 2020 show this annual increase slowing to 30 per year, 20 per year, and 22 per year, respectively.

Population Projections, Webster and Abutting Communities, 2000-2020

Town	2000 Actual	2000 Projected	2005 Projected	2010 Projected	2015 Projected	2020 Projected	Percent increase 2000 Actual to 2020 Projection
Webster	1,579	1,498	1,810	1,960	2,060	2,170	37.4%
Boscawen	3,672	3,744	3,990	4,460	4,740	4,940	34.5%
Concord	40,687	39,095	42,780	45,230	47,550	49,870	22.5%
Hopkinton	5,399	5,105	5,720	6,080	6,440	6,800	26.0%
Salisbury	1,137	1,142	1,300	1,410	1,490	1,550	36.3%
Warner	2,760	2,522	2,960	3,210	3,450	3,700	34.0%
Merrimack County	136,225	130,476	145,510	155,280	164,580	173,780	27.5%
State of NH	1,235,786	1,228,794	1,306,638	1,358,750	1,441,668	1,527,873	23.6%

Source: NH Office of Energy & Planning

The above data predicts Webster’s population growth from 2000 to 2020 (37.4%) will exceed that of any of the surrounding communities. All of the abutting communities, except for Concord and Hopkinton, are predicted to grow at a faster rate than Merrimack County as a whole during the 20-year period.

The Master Plan Steering Committee members and other Town of Webster officials are concerned that the population projections in this table, based on extrapolations of historical data, are unrealistically low. The use of these State statistics as a planning tool could lead to complacency in the face of a significant potential challenge. As buildable land becomes scarce in the region south of Webster, development pressure on Webster’s land is likely to accelerate rather than continue at the level suggested by historical data.

The following table shows alternative population projections based on assumptions that clearly differ from those used by the OEP.

- The entries of 672 housing units and a population of 1579 in 2000 come directly from Census 2000. These numbers yield a persons-per-housing-unit value of 2.35. However, Census 2000 also shows that only 581 of those housing units were occupied. The rest are primarily in the “seasonal, recreational, occasional use” category. The number of persons per occupied housing unit is 2.7.
- The number of housing units in 2003 has been determined by adding an Office of Energy and Planning (OEP) estimate of the increase in occupied housing units to the 2000 value. (The OEP does not directly provide an estimate for the growth in total housing units.)

- The population value for 2003 is an estimate provided by the OEP.
- The values for 2001 and 2002 are simply linear interpolations between the 2000 and 2003 values.
- The housing unit values for 2004 and beyond are based on a 4% annual growth rate, corresponding to Webster's existing 4% growth cap. (The cap is applied to the total number of dwelling units in Town, not just the occupied units.) This cap was met in 2003, and there is ample reason to think that mounting development pressures will continue this precedent. The 4% growth rate could even be exceeded if, for any reason, the existing growth cap is no longer in effect. Obviously, a continuous 4% growth rate would at some point use up all available land under the present zoning ordinance. In the absence of a formal build-out analysis, it's difficult to project when this limit would be reached but, with Webster's current population density of only 59 persons per square mile, it almost certainly is beyond 2020.

Webster – Potential Population Growth

Year	Housing Units	Population *		
		2.35 persons/new unit**	2.7 persons/new unit**	4 persons/new unit**
2000	672	1579		
2001	686	1616		
2002	701	1653		
2003	716	1691	1691	1691
2004	745	1758	1768	1806
2005	774	1828	1849	1925
2006	805	1901	1932	2049
2007	838	1977	2019	2177
2008	871	2056	2110	2311
2009	906	2137	2204	2451
2010	942	2223	2302	2596
2011	980	2311	2404	2747
2012	1019	2403	2509	2903
2013	1060	2499	2619	3066
2014	1102	2599	2734	3236
2015	1146	2702	2853	3412
2016	1192	2810	2977	3596
2017	1240	2922	3105	3787
2018	1289	3039	3239	3985
2019	1341	3160	3379	4191
2020	1395	3286	3523	4406

* Assumes occupancy of housing units existing in 2003 remains constant at 2.35 persons/unit.

** 2004 and after.

The first of the three population projection columns the above table assumes new housing units will be continue to be occupied at the present average rate of 2.35 persons/unit.

The second population projection column assumes that the occupancy of existing (2003) housing units remains at 2.35 persons/unit but that units added in 2004 and beyond will be occupied at the rate of 2.7 persons/unit, i.e. the rate determined by Census 2000 for occupied housing units. This seems plausible because most of the new units are likely to be occupied. The areas that attract unoccupied units, mostly seasonal and waterfront are more nearly built out than the rest of the Town, and there is a trend to convert unoccupied units to occupied units.

It could be even worse. It is plausible to think that new housing units will tend to be occupied by younger families with two or more children. The third column in the table addresses this possibility by assuming that new housing units will be occupied by an average of 4 persons.

These three columns show population increases over the 2000 value by factors of 2.08, 2.23, and 2.79, respectively. These numbers are in stark contrast to the 1.374 factor (a 37.4% increase) projected by the OEP. Growth of this magnitude is an alarming prospect and clearly would have massive impact on all aspects of the Town. We need to plan carefully either to control the rate of growth to manageable levels or to be prepared to deal with the sort of growth envisioned by the above table.

An independent analysis conducted by the Town of Webster personnel yields generally similar alarming results. This analysis examines the number of building permits actually issued from 1976 through 2004 (to date). The 5-year moving average was computed for each year beginning in 1980 through 2004. When plotted as a graph, the 5-year moving average is straight from 1994 through 2004, and fits the straight line formula of $y=(1.5*x)-15$. When the line is projected out to 2020, there is a total dwelling count of 1318 housing units, starting with 754 in 2004. At 2.7 people per household (the current average), there would be 3,559 people in 2020. This analysis yields a 125% increase in 2000 actual population figures to 2020 projected figures, which again is far greater than the 37% increase projected by the OEP.

Our concerns about the OEP's population projections for Webster extend also to their projections for surrounding towns. Since these OEP projections are intended to be the basis for both local and regional planning, Webster should work closely with the OEP in an effort to converge on population projections that both parties regard as reasonable and credible.

Population Densities

One common measure of community character and sense of place is population density (persons per square mile). These density figures are based on the total land area, not discounting for unbuildable land, roads, and permanently protected areas. The total land area does not include water.

Population per Square Mile for Webster and Abutting Communities, 1980 – 2000

Town	Land Area (Sq. Miles) *	Persons per Square Mile 1980	Persons per Square Mile 1990	Persons per Square Mile 2000
Webster	28.8	38	49	55
Boscawen	25.4	44	55	57
Concord	67.2	452	536	605
Hopkinton	45.1	86	107	120
Salisbury	39.8	20	27	28
Warner	55.5	35	41	50
Merrimack Co.	934.0	106	129	146
State of NH	8,968.0	103	124	138

*Land are includes all buildable and unbuildable land; does not include water

Source: 1980 Census, 1990 Census, 2000 Census

As noted above, Webster had 55 persons per square mile in 2000, which is in the middle range, as compared to abutting communities. In 1980, the population per square mile in Webster was 38; the population has increased 45% in the past 20 years.

Population and Housing Characteristics for Webster and Abutting Comm., 2000

Town	Population	Housing Units	Area Sq. Mi.	Density per Sq. Mi.	
				Population	Housing
Webster	1,579	672	28.8	55	23.3
Boscawen	3,672	1,295	25.4	57	50.9
Concord	40,687	16,881	67.2	605	251.2
Hopkinton	5,399	2,210	45.1	120	49.0
Salisbury	1,137	514	39.8	28	12.9
Warner	2,760	1,228	55.5	50	22.1

Source: CNHRPC

Types of Housing in Webster, 2000

Type of Housing	Number	Percent of Type
1-unit detached	614	91.4%
1-unit attached	8	1.2%
3 or 4 units	4	0.6%
Mobile home	43	6.4%
Boat, RV or van	3	0.4%

Source: 2000 Census

Age Characteristics

Knowing not only the number of people living in Webster but also the characteristics of its residents is key to adequately planning for Webster's future needs.

- Households with Children and Older Adults

By knowing the number of households with children, under the age of 18, and adults over the age of 65, the community can better plan for the needs and wants of the residents.

Households with Children, 2000

Town	Households with People Under 18 Years Old, 2000	
Webster	222	38.2%
Boscawen	480	38.1%
Concord	5,248	32.2%
Hopkinton	764	36.7%
Salisbury	151	34.7%
Warner	366	34.9%
Merrimack Co.	18,677	36.0%
New Hampshire	167,367	35.3%

Source: 2000 Census

Households with Older Adults, 2000

Town	Households with People 65 Years Old or Older, 2000	
Webster	109	18.7%
Boscawen	287	22.8%
Concord	3,606	22.1%
Hopkinton	523	25.1%
Salisbury	79	18.2%
Warner	214	20.4%
Merrimack Co.	11,309	21.8%
New Hampshire	168,371	35.5%

Source: 2000 Census

These table show that, compared to abutting communities, Webster has the largest percentage of households with people under the age of 18 and one of the lowest percentages of households with people 65 years old or older. Note that the percentage of households is the percentage of the total population.

Population by Age Group

Understanding population trends by age group can help communities allocate resources for public infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the population.

Webster Population by Age Group, 2000

Age Group	2000 Population	Group as % of 2000 Population
Under 5	95	6.0
5 to 9 Years	112	7.1
10 to 14 Years	124	7.9
15 to 19 Years	102	6.5
20 to 24 Years	58	3.7
25 to 29 Years	86	5.4
30 to 34 Years	113	7.2
35 to 39 Years	134	8.5
40 to 44Years	168	10.6
45 to 49 Years	157	10.0
50 to 54 Years	120	7.6
55 to 59 Years	86	5.4
60 to 64 Years	78	4.9
65 to 69 Years	47	3.0
70 to 74 Years	38	2.4
75 to 79 Years	24	1.5
80 to 84 Years	22	1.4
85 to 89 Years	11	0.7
90 Years & over	4	0.2
Total	1,579	100%

Source: 2000 US Census

The age group with the highest single percentage of residents is 40-44 (10.6%) and 45-49 years of age (10.0). Webster’s population is roughly divided into quarters, with 27.4% being under 20 years of age; 24.8 being 20-39 years of age; 20.6% being 40-49 years of age; and 20.9% being 50-69 years old. Approximately 6.2% of the residents are 70 years and older. In this breakdown, the largest majority (27.4%) are school age children, less than 20 years old.

In the Webster survey results, the most prominent age group in the survey responses was the 40-64 year group, representing 53% of the responses.

Employment, Education, and Commuting Characteristics of Residents

Labor Force, Employment, and Unemployment

The labor force of a community is defined as the number of people who are over the age of 16, regardless of their employment status. In 2000, the population of Webster was 1,579 people, with a labor force of 1,000 people, which is approximately 63% of the population. Of those 1,000 people in the labor force, 983 were employed and 17 were unemployed, making a 1.7% average annual rate of unemployment. The Census 2000 reported 67% of all parents in the labor force have children less than 6 years of age.

Occupations

The chart below outlines the types of occupations the residents of Webster were engaged in during 2000. The numbers below do not necessarily represent the types of occupations available in the town, but those occupations of Webster residents. In 2000, the highest percentage of the Webster work force was employed in the managerial and professional job category, followed by the technical sales and administrative support category. The lowest percentages of people were employed in farming, fishing, and forestry occupations.

Occupations of Employed Webster Residents, 2000

	Number Employed 1980	Number Employed 1990	Number Employed 2000	Percent Employed 2000
Managerial and professional	126	184	266	30.0%
Technical sales and admin support	124	270	252	28.5%
Precision production, craft and repair	81	92	141	16.0%
Service occupations	51	116	132	14.9%
Operators, fabricators and laborers	111	75	75	8.5%
Farming, fishing and forestry occupations	21	19	19	0.2%
Total Employed Persons over 16 years of age	514	756	885	100.0%

Sources: 2000 Census

Education Levels of Residents

Of the total population living in Webster 25 years old and older in 2000, 92.7% of Webster residents had a high school degree or higher and 23.3% had a bachelors degree or higher.

Educational Levels of Persons 25 Years and Older in Webster, 2000

Less than HS Diploma	81
HS Diploma	433
Some College	229
Associates Degree	94
Bachelors Degree	189
Graduate / Professional Degree	66
Total	1,092
% of Pop. with HS Degree or Higher	92.7%
% of Pop. with Bachelor's Degree or Higher	23.3%

Source: Census 2000

Commuting Patterns of Residents

Most of Webster's employed residents work outside of Webster. Although the numbers are likely to have changed since the 2000 Census, the overall theme is anticipated to remain the same: the vast majority of residents leave Webster for employment.

In 1990 and 2000, the U.S. Census showed about half (53% and 49%, respectively) of working Webster residents commute out of town to work. Results of the Master Plan survey showed 63% of the respondents commute. The most common commutes were to Concord, Hopkinton and Manchester, in that order. The mean travel time to work was 28.8 minutes.

In 1990, the Census data showed 53 non-residents commuted to Webster to work, most commonly from Hopkinton and Pittsfield, with a 25-29 minute average commuting time. In 2000, the number of nonresidents working in town nearly doubled, with the most frequent commuters coming from Boscawen or Bow.

Income Characteristics of Residents

The income characteristics of households, families, and individuals tell a tale of the economic conditions within a community. Income and poverty levels of a community serve as indicators of the types of social services that a municipality may require.

Household income is the total income of people living in one household. Family income is the total income of all family members who consider themselves members of one household.

Median income is the middle figure in a series from lowest to highest.

The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to define poverty levels. If a family's total income is less than the Census Bureau's threshold, then that family, and every individual in it is considered below poverty level. The poverty thresholds are updated annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index. The following tables show the income characteristics of Webster and abutting communities and the poverty threshold for 2000 as calculated by the Census.

Income Characteristics of Webster and Abutting Communities, 2000

Town	Per Capita Income	Median Household Income	Median Family Income	% Families Below Poverty	% Persons Below Poverty
Webster	20,852	54,052	57,396	3.6	5.0
Boscawen	18,732	42,524	45,850	5.4	7.5
Concord	21,976	42,447	52,418	6.2	8.0
Hopkinton	30,753	59,583	69,737	0.7	1.8
Salisbury	23,112	55,000	62,321	0.6	1.9
Warner	21,587	44,142	50,926	5.0	6.8

Source: 2000 Census

Webster has the second lowest per capita income, as compared with the abutting communities. In terms of median household income and median family income, Webster ranks in about the middle as compared with abutting communities. The census data show that 3.6% of Webster's families are below the poverty level and 5.0% of Webster's residents are below the poverty level.

In 2000, the poverty level for Merrimack County families was 4.1% and the poverty level for all County persons was 5.9%. The poverty threshold is defined below.

Poverty Threshold, Year 2000

2000	
Individual Person	\$ 8,794
2-Person Family	\$11,239
3-Person Family	\$13,738
4-Person Family	\$17,603
5-Person Family	\$20,819
6-Person Family	\$23,528
7-Person Family	\$26,701
8-Person Family	\$29,701
9+ Person Family	\$35,060

Source: US Census Bureau, 2001

Webster Employers

Understanding historic trends in the local economic base can help the community better develop sound economic development strategies for the future. One key trend is the change in size and type of the local employment base.

Webster’s largest employer, White Mountain Imaging, employs about 14 people. Other Webster businesses include a landscaping company, a logging operation and a garage.

Tax Characteristics

An examination of the tax rate helps to gauge the economic attractiveness of a community to businesses.

Breakdown of Webster Tax Rates

Year	Municipal Tax	Local Education Tax	State Education Tax	County Tax	Total Tax
2000	5.04	8.88	6.69	2.35	22.96
2001	5.22	11.65	7.15	2.59	26.65
2002	4.71	11.44	6.38	2.85	25.38
2003	3.20	6.67	3.23	1.74	14.84

In 2003, the entire town was revalued for property taxes. Prior to the reassessment, all property values were significantly less than true market value, so the rate had to be higher to meet the town budget. In 2004, the property values were roughly doubled and the rate was lowered. For this reason, it is difficult to make a historical comparison of tax rates in Webster.

Tax Rates of Webster and Abutting Communities, 2003

Town	Total Tax Rate
Webster	14.84
Boscawen	22.98
Concord	31.53
Hopkinton	24.56
Salisbury	17.17
Warner	21.19

Source: NH Department of Revenue Administration, 2004

Webster continued to have the lowest tax rate (\$14.84 per thousand) as compared with the abutting communities in 2003. The lower tax rate, rural atmosphere and community spirit of Webster make it a very desirable place to live and we can anticipate continued growth pressure in the upcoming years.

Chapter 3 – Historic and Cultural Resources

Introduction

Webster is the product of a long and varied history, starting with the arrival of the first settlers in 1733. That rich history has fostered a culture... a way of life... that constitutes much of what makes Webster such a special place.

We are reminded of our history and its influence by the presence of older buildings and other historically significant resources. There are many reasons for preserving those resources and their surroundings. Among the most compelling are the psychological ones... those that are associated with the continuity and quality of life. Older buildings provide us with tangible links to the past. They give us a sense of the continuity of time and place. Just as important, they become a part of our own lives.

Gradual and pervasive erosion of historical character can result from the accumulation of incremental changes to buildings and places. It is our challenge to minimize the extent to which this happens in Webster.

If we fail to know, understand, and respect from whence we have come, we are at significant risk of losing our way in our attempts to plan for the future.

This chapter seeks to highlight local historic and cultural resources, to indicate why they are important, to suggest how they should be preserved, and to identify tools and resources appropriate for that task.

The intent of this chapter is to provide to the Town and its residents information and recommendations relevant to:

The teaching of present and future residents about the history that has shaped our town, and the cultivation of an appreciation for that history.

The preservation and protection of historic buildings and other important physical evidence of the Town's history.

The preservation and supplementation of existing historical documentation.

The recognition, promotion, and support of the service organizations and the spirit of volunteerism that shape Webster culture.

Community Survey Results

The Community Survey conducted in June of 2003 conveyed a clear message that Webster residents and property owners value the historic aspects of the community, appreciate the style of life that Webster currently provides, and wish that style of life to be maintained to the extent possible as the Town grows. Specific relevant survey responses include the following:

83% of respondents rated the protection of historic sites and buildings as either “very important” or “important”, even if it involves additional public spending.

88% of respondents ranked the historic character of the Town as either “very important” or “important”.

96% of respondents ranked Community Spirit as either “very important” or “important”.

93% of respondents ranked the Town's education system as either "very important" or "important".

98% of respondents ranked the Town's rural atmosphere as either "very important" or "important".

83% of respondents urged that the Federal Government be encouraged to maintain the Blackwater Reservoir area, where a lot of Town history resides, in its present undeveloped condition.

History of Webster

A complete record of Webster history might begin 4.6 billion years ago when the "Big Bang" created a vast cloud of gas and dust from which our solar system eventually coalesced. It might instead begin 650 million years ago when the first of the rocks that now shape the New Hampshire landscape were being formed. Or it might begin just 290 million years ago when the region eventually to become New England and England were adjacent south-of-the-equator parts of Pangea, a continuous land mass then incorporating all of the earth's land area. Pangea was then roamed by giant crocodile-like amphibians, and eventually split and drifted apart as the continents we know today. Perhaps our history should begin 200 million years ago with the appearance of the dinosaurs... or 60 million years ago with the appearance of the first mammals. Or 2 million years ago at the start of the Pleistocene epoch that saw New England covered by glaciers four different times, with much of coastal New Hampshire under ocean water between glacial periods. Or a mere 10,000-12,000 years ago when the first Native Americans arrived and began their own rich local history. But no... that's too broad a scope for this document. We'll leave all but the last 271 years of that 4.6-billion-year span to others and begin with the arrival of the first European settlers.

In 1733, King George II of England granted the seven-mile-square "Plantation at Contoocook" (unrelated to the later town of Contoocook) to John Coffin and 80 others, all from Newbury, Massachusetts. The area of this grant was eventually to become the towns of Boscawen and Webster.

The grant was made contingent on the establishment of 81 homesteads, the building of a meeting house, and the installation of a minister, all within 4 years. At the time, the grant and in fact all of the area west of the Merrimack River was claimed by Massachusetts and was to remain so until a dispute between New Hampshire and Massachusetts was resolved in 1740.

The first settlers arrived in the spring of 1734, and set about building log cabins, clearing fields, and putting in crops. Most were joined by their families during the summer and, by the fall, a total of 33 homesteads were in place. It had to have been a daunting undertaking. The settlement was "the outpost of civilization", with unbroken wilderness northwards to Canada. In fact, it would be another 28 years before Warner was settled and 30 years before there would be any settlements north of Salisbury.

Although it had been 37 years since Hannah Dustin, held captive by Indians in the area, had managed her brave and bloody escape, it was still 'Indian country'. Particularly from 1743 until the close of the French and Indian War in 1759, the settlement was under constant threat and periodic attack. Garrisons were built in which the settlers sought protection when threatened. Many surrounding settlements were abandoned in the face of the Indian attacks, but the Contoocook Plantation settlers refused to be intimidated and stayed put.

The first log cabin in what is now Webster is believed to be “Cook’s Cabin”, built in 1745 by Thomas Cook just west of the north end of Mutton Drive. Mr. Cook got his name on the map... Cook’s Hill (See Map3)... but did not have long to enjoy his new home. He was killed by Indians the following year. Little evidence of Cook’s Cabin remains.

In 1760, a town charter was granted and the plantation became the Town of Boscawen, named for Lord Boscawen, a hero of the English navy. At that time, framed houses had begun to replace log cabins. There were still few settlements westward of Water Street. The first school in the town was opened in 1761. By 1767, the population of the town had grown to 285... compared to 752 for Concord. By 1783, the population had increased to 756 persons in 98 dwellings. 1475 acres were devoted to tillage, pasturage, mowing, and orchards... still a tiny fraction of the 25,820 total land acres in the town.

In the years prior to the Revolutionary War, local militia mustered on Fowler’s Plain (See Map).

The revolution against English rule brought a period of turbulence and chaos, with Boscawen residents called upon to support the cause with both manpower and material. This period of uncertainty lasted until the adoption of the federal constitution in 1790.

By 1791, there was enough settlement in the western part of the town (the area eventually to become Webster) to prompt the construction of a new meeting house to serve that part of town. Five years later, again prompted by the growing population of the area, the new meeting house became home to “The Second Congregational Church of Boscawen”, a role it served until construction of the present church building in 1823.

In 1803, Boscawen and other towns competed unsuccessfully against Concord to become the state capital.

In 1826, a flood took out all of the bridges across the Blackwater River with the exception of one at Sweatt’s Mills. This flood was a precursor of bigger disasters yet to come.

On July 4th, 1860, the Town of Webster was incorporated and thereby separated from Boscawen. The town was named in honor of Daniel Webster, the famed lawyer/statesmen/legislator/orator who had been born in Salisbury and began his legal practice in Boscawen. The reasons for the separation of Webster and Boscawen seem not to have been well documented, but may have involved issues of local control and taxation. (Sound familiar?) The first Webster Town Meeting was held on August 11th of that year, with the maximum number of votes cast being 204.

At the time of its incorporation and subsequently, Webster was a rural and predominantly agricultural town. There was nevertheless a considerable amount of supporting commercial enterprise, much of it located on and often deriving power from the Blackwater River. The 1933-1983 Webster History lists no less than 22 shops and mills in the town. There were several sawmills, a shingle mill, grist and grain mills, blacksmith shops, a nail shop, a cobbler’s shop, a dry goods store, and others. Altogether a much more self-sufficient community than is now the case!

The agricultural character of the community was influenced in 1890s by the interest of Civil War naval hero Commodore George Hamilton Perkins who, during a leave of absence from his naval duties, purchased a small farm on the shore of Lake Winnepocket. This modest beginning eventually grew into a network of sixteen farms comprising about 1800 acres. Especially after

his retirement in 1891, Commodore Perkins devoted substantial energy to improving his farms. He took particular pride in his horses, of which there were about 60 at the time of his death in 1899, and several of which were champion trotters. He maintained a large workforce, contributed significantly to the Webster tax base, and was immensely popular with everyone in the region. That reputation was enhanced in 1897 when the Commodore and his wife hosted a lakeside celebration of the wedding of his daughter Isabel to Larz Anderson, an ambassador to Belgium and Tokyo under the William Howard Taft administration. Everyone within travel distance, regardless of station, was invited. 1500 guests were treated to a reception, a banquet, band music, and a fireworks display over the lake. Boston papers described the occasion as one “never to be forgotten by the New Hampshire countryside”.

A notable event each summer from 1928 to 1937 was the encampment of the 172nd Field Artillery of the National Guard in Sawyers Field (See Map) on Little Hill.

Webster was dramatically reshaped by a major flood in 1936, the great hurricane of 1938, and the consequent construction of the Blackwater Dam flood control project.

The 1936 flood, caused by torrential rains in combination with rapidly melting snow pack, took out five covered bridges crossing the Blackwater River. Only one was left, and mail service, electrical power, and telephone service were severely disrupted. Rowboats were used to cross the river until temporary replacement bridges could be built.

In 1938, an even greater flood was accompanied by hurricane-force winds that wreaked havoc with buildings and with the forest. Trees were down everywhere and roads were impassable. More than a million board feet of pine was down on the Larz Anderson estate alone. Huge quantities of pine logs were cut and floated on Lake Winnepocket until they could be sawed. A mammoth pile of sawdust next to the lake outlet is still a conspicuous reminder of the lumber milling that took place there.

When the Army Corps of Engineers responded to these disasters by building the Blackwater Dam in 1940, many of Webster’s older buildings were demolished and the Town was forever altered. The Federal Government acquired and mandated the removal of structures from approximately 3600 acres of upstream land, most of which would be submerged if water were to rise to the crest of the dam. Such cresting would create a lake almost 13 miles long, with more than 5 miles in Webster and the balance in Salisbury. Water behind the dam has been within two feet of cresting once, in 1987, but generally is far below that level. This situation creates a large undeveloped area straddling the Blackwater River, regarded by the Corps of Engineers as an “historic and culturally rich” area because of its early role in the Town. It also provides recreational opportunities including canoeing and kayaking, hiking, horseback riding, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, hunting, and fishing.

Webster’s recent history has been characterized by decreasing agricultural activity, considerable reforestation accompanied by growth of active timber-related enterprises, rapid population growth, the disappearance of most commercial activities in Town, and a corresponding substantial shift to out-of-town employment of its residents.

The Town was alerted to the potential effects of uncontrolled development by creation in the mid-1960s of a massive subdivision in what is now the Pillsbury Lake District. Many hundreds of lots were created, almost all too small to safely accommodate the wells and septic systems upon which most Webster residents depend. The issue was partially addressed with a

community water system but, even though a great many lots are still to be developed, that system is currently at capacity. Adequate septic systems are often not feasible. To a large degree in response to the Pillsbury Lake subdivision, the Town instituted a Zoning Ordinance in 1978 and Subdivision Regulations in 1993.

The Town now faces looming development pressures as the East Coast “megalopolis” spreads northward from Boston and outward from Concord and Manchester. This Master Plan is part of a conscious effort to respond to those pressures in a manner that will retain the unique character of the town while allowing reasonable growth.

Historical Resources in Webster

History Documentation

Webster’s history has been well documented in a series of books:

“A Chronological Register of Boscawen” by Rev. Ebenezer Price covering the period from Boscawen’s first settlement in 1733 to 1820, printed by Jacob B. Moore in 1823.

“One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Settlement of Boscawen and Webster”, primarily a compilation of speeches given at the time of that anniversary.

“The History of Boscawen and Webster New Hampshire 1733-1878” by Charles Carleton Coffin, published by The Republican Press Association in 1878.

"The History of Boscawen and Webster, New Hampshire from 1878 to 1933" compiled by Willis G. Buxton and re-published in facsimile form by The Boscawen Historical Society in 1992.

"Webster New Hampshire, 1933-1983, History", compiled and published by the Webster History Committee in 1984.

Walter and Linnea Silver, “From the King’s Plantation to Home Town Heritage”, Peter E. Randall Publisher, 1997.

“A Visit to the Past... A Walking Tour of Old Webster Behind the Blackwater Dam”, a pamphlet created and published in 1998 by The Society for the Preservation of the Old Meeting House.

All of these documents are available for reference at the Webster Free Library. They paint a vivid picture of life in Webster as it evolved over the years, and are recommended reading.

Much of the historical information herein is drawn from one or more of these sources.

National Register of Historic Places

Webster currently has two structures on the National Register of Historic Places... the Webster Congregational Church and the Old Webster Meeting House. Both were placed on the list in March of 1985. The location of each is shown on the Sites of Historic and Cultural Importance map.

The First Congregational Church of Webster (See Map) was originally established in 1804 as the Second Congregational Church of West Boscawen and assumed its present name in 1860 when

Webster was separated from Boscawen. Its present building was erected in 1823 by master carpenter George Pillsbury.

The Old Webster Meeting House (See Map), originally built as the Westerly Meeting House and later known as the Town House, was built in 1791 and was first used as a meeting place for religious worship. The contract for the frame of the building was let to one Samuel Jackman for the sum of \$94.00, but the work was so well done that the Town voted an additional \$16.68. The building stood on its original site, now part of the Blackwater dam flood basin, for 140 years. In 1941, it was among those buildings acquired by the Federal Government prior to construction of the dam, but then was re-purchased at auction by interested citizens (for \$105!) and moved by a windlass powered by a single horse up the hill to its present location on Battle Street. It is owned and maintained by The Society for the Preservation of the Old Meeting House and serves as a site for community functions and as a repository for a wide array of historical Webster artifacts.

New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places

This is a relatively new program, with listings starting in 2001. Properties are listed at the owner's request. There are as yet no Webster Properties listed on the Register. Clearly there are some good candidates for such listing.

Cemeteries

There are three active cemeteries in Town, all managed and cared for by an elected Cemetery Commission. Their locations are shown on the Sites of Historic and Cultural Importance map.

The Beaver Dam Cemetery (See Map) was divided equally between Webster and Boscawen when the towns were separated in 1860, even though it lies entirely in Webster. The earliest marker in this cemetery is dated 1818, and many lots are still available.

The land for the Corser Hill Cemetery (See Map) was purchased in 1910 by the Central New Hampshire power Company of Maine in anticipation of a power generation project on the Blackwater River that would necessitate moving the graves from the yard established in 1813 at the original site of the Old Meeting House. That project never materialized, but the planned move took place in 1941 when the Corps of Engineers undertook construction of the Blackwater flood control project. A total of 774 bodies were moved to the new location. In recent years, an additional portion of the property was cleared to enable future expansion.

The Riverdale Cemetery (See Map) was deeded to the Town of Boscawen in 1847 and then to the Town of Webster when the two towns separated in 1860. The earliest marker in that cemetery carries the date of 1802, but there are several unnamed and undated markers. This cemetery is at or near capacity.

There is an additional but inactive cemetery on Clough and Sanborn Hill (See Map). It was formalized by Town vote in 1871 but, since the earliest marker is dated 1802, the cemetery clearly pre-existed that vote. There are 12 headstones and several field stones marking additional graves in what is essentially a private family cemetery.

A site directly across Pleasant Street from the Corser Hill Cemetery is believed to be an Indian burial ground (See Map) ... and perhaps even the place where some early settlers were interred.

Veterans' Memorial

A Veterans' Memorial at the junction of Allen Road and Battle Street (See Map) honors Webster residents who have served the nation's military in all major conflicts starting with World War I, with special emphasis on those who lost their lives while serving their country. The Memorial, completed in 1991, was the result of an 8-year-long planning, fund raising, and construction effort by a volunteer group of Webster veterans. It was created on donated land and replaces an earlier World War I memorial that had fallen into disrepair. A non-profit volunteer veterans group maintains and updates the Memorial. It serves as a reminder to all Webster residents of the sacrifices made on our behalf by the dedicated members of our nation's military, and especially those from Webster families.

Historic Structures

- The Town Hall Complex (See Map)

Tangible evidence of Webster's history is embodied in the current Town Hall facility on Battle Street, the site of many municipal, civic, and social functions. Here until 1990 stood the Anderson Memorial Methodist Church and, next door, the Grange Hall.

The former church, with its striking stained glass windows, had until then been owned by the Women's Union. Their ownership of the church had been enabled by a gift from Isabel Anderson, daughter of Commodore George Hamilton Perkins, a civil war naval hero whose statue is at the capitol building in Concord. Isabel followed her father's example as a prominent early Webster resident and benefactor.

The steeple on the church fell prey to the ravages of time and the elements and had to be removed. It is currently in storage awaiting restoration. Voters have opted not to spend tax money on the project.

The Grange Hall was built and dedicated in 1884 as the home of the Daniel Webster Grange No. 100, which had been organized in town earlier that same year.

In 1990, the church and the Grange Hall were linked by a connecting building and Town offices were created on the lower level. The former church now houses the Webster Free Library. The combined facility is a "community center" for all kinds of functions including use of the Grange Hall as a polling place and the site for Town Meetings.

- One-room schoolhouses (See Map)

The early records of Webster schools prior to the 1860 incorporation of Webster as a separate town are sketchy at best, but it is evident that, prior to that date, a number of schools were in operation, probably generally located in private residences. Shortly after the separate incorporation, Town records show there were nine school districts in town, each with its own schoolhouse:

A school (Old District #1) at Sweat's Mills, after serving most recently as a Police Station, is awaiting disposition by the Town.

Schools on Pleasant Street (District #2), Corser Hill (#3), White Plain (#7, at the northerly end of Lake Winnepocket), and Putney Hill (#9) were moved to new locations (#9 in Hopkinton) and converted to private residences.

Schools on Battle Street (#4) and Clough and Sanborn Hill (#5) fell into disrepair and no longer exist.

The school on Little Hill (#6) served as a private residence until lost to fire in 2004.

The school at Bashan Hollow remains at its original location and now serves as private residence.

All of the one-room schools were superceded in 1952 by the opening of the Webster Central School (See Map), the current elementary school across from the Town Hall complex.

- Churches

The First Congregational Church of Webster, on Long Street, is described under the National Register of Historic Places heading. Next to the church is the parish house (See Map), built in 1780, occupied by early settler John Corser, and eventually acquired by the Church.

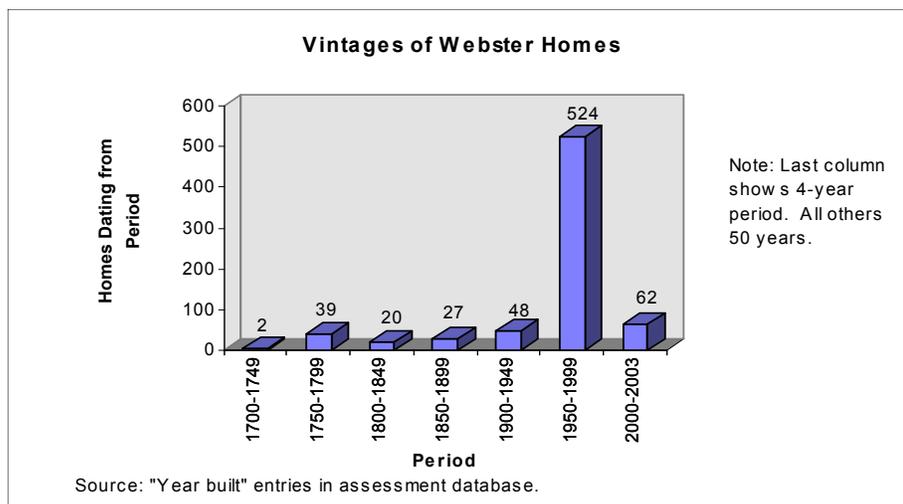
As noted above, the current library was once a Methodist church and is still notable for its stained glass windows.

- Barns

There are several old barns in Webster that may be of historical note and worthy of preservation. Examples include those owned by the Van Loans on Gerrish Road and the Taylors on Battle Street. There seemingly has been no systematic effort to inventory old barns in Town and to evaluate their potential historical significance.

- Historic Homes

The following chart shows that, although there has been a continuing surge in home construction in Webster since 1950, there are still significant numbers of older homes in town. 88 of them predate 1900, 41 predate 1800, and 2 predate 1750.



Many of these older homes are listed and described in the Webster, New Hampshire 1933-1983 History book. One of particular note, on Potash Road, is the circa 1800 former home of Rev. Edward Buxton, who served as pastor of the church for 50 years. The building was willed to the

Church by his daughter Elizabeth, was used as a parsonage for many years, and is now a private home.

These older homes constitute a significant resource and contribute substantially to the character of the town. Their protection and preservation should be encouraged.

Many of Webster's early structures have fallen victim to fire or the ravages of time. Evidence of some of them still exists in the form of old cellar holes. Buxton's History of Boscawen and Webster cataloged such cellar holes in 1933, and much of the information therein is still valid.

Old Stone Walls

A striking feature of the landscape in Webster and all of New England is the network of stone walls built, primarily in the years following the Revolutionary War, by industrious farmers. The magnitude of this effort was staggering. It has been estimated that, by the 1870s, more than 240,000 miles of such walls had been built in New England... enough to reach from the earth to the moon. A short walk or drive anywhere in Town shows that Webster contributed at least its share to this total.

The primary motivation for building those walls was the need to remove from fields enough of the stony rubble left behind by the retreating glacier to permit access by plow and scythe. The slight additional effort required to stack the rock in linear piles brought fringe benefits in the form of livestock containment and property line delineation. Those functions could have been achieved far more simply were it not for the need to rid the fields of stone!

Old stone walls continue to flank many of Webster's roads and define longstanding property boundaries. Others wander through the woods in paths the purposes of which are no longer apparent.

These old walls are the most extensive and conspicuous relics of Webster's agricultural origins. They have become a signature feature of our terrain, and a significant contributor to the rural landscape on which Webster residents have placed high value. They deserve protection and preservation.

There are at least two threats to our old stone walls:

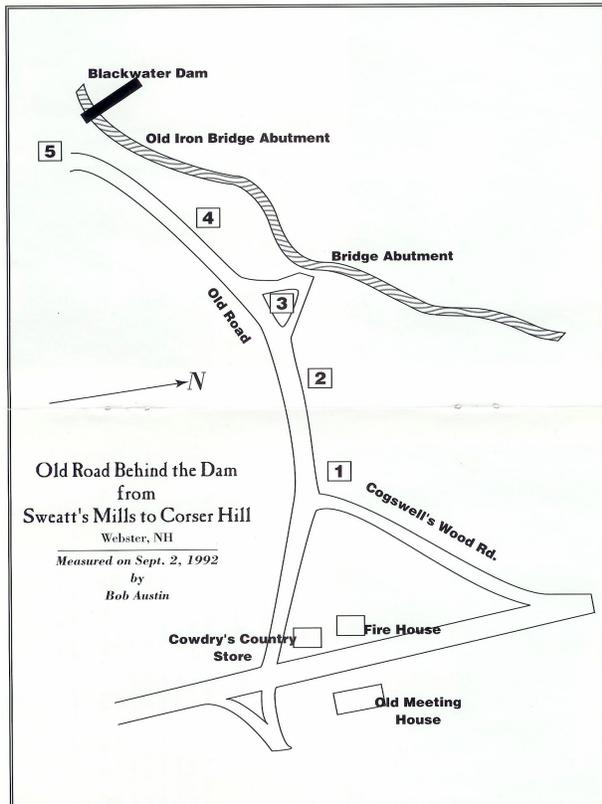
Old walls often do not fit well with new boundary lines or new land uses, and are bulldozed into oblivion as a matter of insensitive convenience.

Although not yet a major factor in Webster, the growing market for stone has created a thriving industry in which old walls are "mined", either legally or illegally, and the stone trucked away to sometimes distant destinations.

Webster will be well served by efforts to minimize the extent to which these threats are allowed to impact our historic stone walls and thus our valued rural atmosphere.

Historic Markers

In recognition that the area behind the Blackwater Dam was once alive with homes, farms, and industry, a series of five numbered granite markers records the sites of some of the structures that were lost. A pamphlet published by The Society for the Preservation of the Old Meeting House facilitates a walking tour of these sites and documents their history. The following figure, extracted from that pamphlet, shows the five sites. These markers and the associated documentation are important records of an earlier time.



Marker #1 – Original site of Old Meeting House

Marker #2 – Stebbin’s Store

Marker #3 – Burbank’s Bridge

Marker #4 – Burbank’s Sawmill

Marker #5 – Hearse House

Historic Roads

Many of Webster’s roadways have significant histories. An example: Dublin Road, a portion of Little Hill Road, and the partially discontinued Province Road were parts of a highway intended to connect Boscawen with Fort No. 4 in Charlestown, called in its entirety “The Province Road” and intended to become the first east-west highway across the State. An act directing the construction of this highway was passed by the State in 1769 after years of wrangling. Webster complied with the State’s mandate, but it’s not clear how much of the rest of this highway was actually built.

Historic District

Webster does not now have a designated historic district. Such a district could be created to increase awareness of and to facilitate preservation of some of Webster’s more important historical features. Designation of such a district would require creation of a historic district commission, in accordance with RSA 673:1-II.

Historic Preservation and Information Resources

There are many sources of historical information available about the Town of Webster, both in the Town itself and in outside repositories. The following is a partial list of available organizations and their resources, as they relate to the historical resources of Webster.

- The Society for the Protection of the Old Meeting House

The Society maintains a growing collection of records and objects related to the history of Webster. This collection provides valuable insight into the forces that have shaped the nature and character of our Town.

- Webster Town Hall Records

The Webster Town Hall contains many historical documents and records. These records are quite complete starting in 1977, when the Town Hall function was formally constituted and sometimes partial for the period from the 1860 charter date until 1977. These records include: tax maps, other old maps, deeds and property sales information, Town Reports (complete from 1900, some from 1860-1899), Town Clerk records, meeting minutes from various boards, vital records and statistics, invoice records beginning in the 1800s (these list property owners, number of livestock, and the taxes owed), and much more. All of this information is available to the public for research and review.

It should be noted that, while most of these records are normally stored in a vault room, many exist nowhere else and could be lost in the event of a major fire or other disaster.

- Webster Free Library

As previously noted, the Webster library contains a number of historical documents that pertain to the Town of Webster and the surrounding area.

- New Hampshire Historical Society

The New Hampshire Historical Society, in Concord, is an independent, nonprofit organization and is accredited by the American Association of Museums. The services and resources the New Hampshire Historical Society provides include the Museum of New Hampshire History, the Tuck Library, a museum store, a newsletter and quarterly calendar, and technical assistance to local libraries, historical organizations, and citizens.

- New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources

The New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources in Concord was established in 1974 as the "State Historic Preservation Office." The resources and materials available at the NHDHR include National Register of Historic Places criteria; New Hampshire historical marker programs; the offices of the State Architectural Historian, State Curator, State Archeologist; preservation tax incentive programs; historical survey programs; and grant programs.

- New Hampshire State Library

The New Hampshire State Library houses approximately 2,400 titles of published family histories for New Hampshire and New England. This collection is enhanced by the unique name index to early town records on microfilm. The town records, ranging in years for each town, but falling roughly between the years 1640-1830/1840, can provide birth, death, and marriage dates, as well as a listing of such items as tax inventories. Other major resources available include

town and county histories, annual town reports, Federal Census records for New Hampshire (1790-1920), local newspapers on microfilm, the genealogical column of the "Boston Transcript," legislative biographies (1890 +), city and county directories, and military records.

Cultural Resources in Webster

School

Webster schoolchildren attend elementary school (Kindergarten through Grade 5) in Town, across the street from Town Hall, and then travel to regional schools for continuing education. The Webster school and the regional schools are part of the Merrimack Valley School District managed by a Board of Education that is independent of the Town government.

Library

The Webster Free Public Library ("The Library"), managed by an elected Board of Trustees, first opened in 1894 with 102 volumes received from the New Hampshire State Library. Before moving to its present location, it was housed in turn in the Old Meeting House, the Sweatt's Mills Store, and the building across Battle Street occupied until 2003 by the Police Department. At times, parts of the collection were housed in private homes because of space limitations. The Library serves all Webster residents with a collection that has grown to more than 9,000 volumes supplemented by an array of videos, audios, and internet resources. The Library maintains a close relationship with the elementary school across the street, serving as a significant resource for the students. As noted in the Community Facilities chapter, the Library is already hard pressed to supply these services in the presently available space.

The Old Meeting House – as a Museum

The growing and varied collection of historical items housed at the Old Meeting House paints a vivid picture of what Webster life was like in earlier times. It helps us to understand the people and the culture that led to the Town we know today.

The scope of this facility is now being expanded, with the recent acquisition of the old fire station, across the street from the Meeting House. This added space will enable additional exhibition areas and improved meeting facilities.

Service and Charitable Organizations

Much of Webster's character is attributable to an active network of service and charitable organizations.

The First Congregational Church of Webster was originally established in 1804 as the Second Congregational Church of Boscawen and assumed its present name in 1860 when Webster was separated from Boscawen. Its present building was erected in 1823 by master carpenter George Pillsbury and, as noted above, is listed in the National Register of Historical Places. The church congregation is a part of the United Church of Christ and plays an important role in the life of its members and the community. A significant portion of church funding comes from operation of a permanent food booth at the Hopkinton Fairgrounds.

Daniel Webster Grange, Number 100, was organized in 1884 and built the Grange Hall in that same year. The Grange to this day is an active participant in the affairs of the Town and maintains a high, state-wide reputation for its charitable and service activities.

The Women's Union has operated since 1929 in a variety of charitable and public service roles.

These three organizations jointly offer a highly popular series of public suppers at the Town Hall, sharing equally in the income so generated.

Also meeting regularly in Webster is a group observing the Baha'i faith.

Webster citizens of other faiths attend churches and synagogues in surrounding towns.

Webster has a chapter of the New Hampshire Circle of Home & Family (NHCHF), a women's group originally a part of the UNH Cooperative Extension service. The group extends its interest internationally through its membership in the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW). Open to all Webster women, the NHCHF focuses on education and personal growth of its members.

4-H groups, both Webster-based and in the region, provide important educational and developmental opportunities for Webster youths, particularly in the agricultural areas that are such an important part of Webster's past and present.

An Old Home Day Committee organizes an annual celebration of the Town's heritage, continuing a tradition begun in 1899 when former residents were invited to return to Town to re-establish ties and friendships.

Communication and Local News Dissemination

Webster is served to an extent by coverage in the Concord Monitor and other news media in the region, but has come to depend on The Webster Grapevine for detailed coverage of local news and activities. The Grapevine is a privately owned monthly newsletter but nonetheless serves an important role in disseminating information regarding Town activities. If it were for any reason to cease publication, there would be a significant gap in residents' ability to stay abreast of Town matters.

The Town has recently established a Town Website. This represents another means for information dissemination, at least for those residents with web access. It should become an increasingly useful tool as the site is expanded.

Spirit of Volunteerism

An underlying theme of Webster's culture is a pervasive spirit of volunteerism. Municipal, charitable, social, and recreational functions all rely heavily on volunteer participation. This is the source of considerable citizen pride, as evidenced by the "Home of the Professional Volunteers" sign on the church booth at the fairgrounds and by the "Volunteers – Proud to Serve" sign over the fire truck bays of the new public safety building.

A relevant quote in the 1951 Town Report, commenting on the community support that had made possible the new elementary school: "There is a spirit in Webster that is found in few towns. I am not sure how to describe it. It is a feeling of closeness to our neighbors, a willingness to lend a hand, and the spirit of working together to get things done. One thing I am sure of, this is a wonderful thing, this spirit you have in Webster. I hope you will never lose it."

Webster would be a very different place without this spirit. Growth will inevitably make this spirit more difficult to maintain, but it should be fostered and promoted in every possible way.

Resources Available for Meeting Historical and Cultural Resource Needs

Webster has a rich historical legacy that is evident in its buildings, landscapes, and patterns of development. This legacy contributes to the quality of life in the community and provides a sense of identity that many residents enjoy and find important. The resources listed below are potential tools for protecting and preserving this legacy for enjoyment by and education of future generations.

Barn Owner Tax Relief: RSA 79-D authorizes municipalities to grant property tax relief to barn owners who can demonstrate the public benefit of preserving their building and who also agree to maintain their structure throughout a minimum 10-year preservation easement. The law encourages barn owners to maintain and repair their buildings by granting them specific tax relief and assuring them that tax assessments will not be increased as a result of new repair work.

Certified Local Governments Program: The "Certified Local Governments" (CLG) program, enacted by the National Historic Preservation Act Amendments of 1980, is a partnership between municipal governments and the State historic preservation program, to encourage and expand local involvement in preservation-related activities. To be certified, a town must:

- 1) Enforce appropriate state or local legislation for designation and protection of historic properties (this means that the community must have a legally-adopted Historic District, and adequate regulations for administering the District Ordinance);
- 2) Establish an adequate and qualified Historic Preservation Review Commission (Historic District Commission or Heritage Commission, with Historic District responsibilities) under state law and local ordinance;
- 3) Maintain a system for the survey and inventory of historic properties;
- 4) Provide for adequate public participation in the local historic preservation program, including the process of recommending properties for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places; and,
- 5) Satisfactorily perform the responsibilities delegated to it by the State of Historic Preservation Officer under P.L. 96-515.

Local governments that are certified have specific responsibilities for review of National Register of Historic Places nominations for all properties within their community, not just within a historic district; they participate in the development of regional and statewide historic preservation goals; and they are eligible to apply for federal matching grants from a special "pass-through" fund set aside for the exclusive use of CLGs.

Citizens for New Hampshire's Land and Community Heritage: A coalition of organizations that are working to protect the special places that define our state. Technical assistance, outreach, and education are available to communities.

Cooperative Ventures with Private Organizations: When the interests of the Town to conserve historic or cultural resources match with the interests of a private organization, the potential for a cooperative partnership exists. This tactic will require some creative thinking and introductory discussions by Town officials with area organizations that have, or could develop, an interest in conserving such resources.

Grants from Foundations: The Town should research available grants and develop proposals to seek funding to conserve particular pieces of property or types of historic resources within Town. Funding could be sought from foundations at the local, state, regional, and national level.

Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP): This State fund is designed to assist communities that want to conserve outstanding natural, historic, and cultural resources.

There is a requirement that the Towns match the State money from this fund with a 50% match from other sources, some of which can be an "in kind" match, as well as funds from other sources.

Land Trust: The Town should support non-profit land trusts that accept and pursue property and easements for land of local historic and cultural concern.

New Hampshire Main Street Center: Dedicated specifically to maintaining, strengthening, and revitalizing the physical, economic, and cultural characteristics of the state's traditional and historic downtown urban and village centers by supporting and working with Main Street programs. The Center provides technical assistance, education, and outreach to interested communities. Funding is also available to eligible communities.

New Hampshire Preservation Alliance: The Alliance was founded in 1985 and works to preserve New Hampshire's historic buildings, landscapes, and communities through leadership, advocacy, and education.

Preservation Easements: Preservation easements are initiated by landowners who wish to protect their land from future development, while still retaining owner's rights. Farms, buildings, and scenic and historic areas all may be protected by easements. Perpetual easements protect the land or structure through subsequent owners, while term easements have a set time period agreed to by the town and current owner. Perpetual easements often reduce the estate tax on large amounts of property, though the decision to award tax relief is officially decided by State Law, local officials, and town assessors.

Revolving Funds: Revolving funds help protect and preserve publicly significant historic properties by using options to purchase, direct acquisition, or deed of gift to acquire threatened or endangered properties. Profits from the sales are rolled back into the fund to help save other endangered properties and perpetuate the fund. The National Preservation Loan provides loans to establish or expand local and statewide preservation revolving funds.

State Historic Markers: The Historical Marker Program is one way that New Hampshire remembers its past. The New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources is responsible for approving the subject, location, wording, and accuracy of the state markers. The authorizing official of the historical marker program is the Commissioner of Transportation, who has the power to erect up to ten markers per year. The only way a marker can be placed in a Town is in response to a proposal and petition of twenty signatures from concerned citizens. These markers can be erected on State and local roads. However, the initial costs of the markers and on-going maintenance are local responsibilities.

Tax Rehabilitation Credits and Incentives: Income tax deductions may be granted for two types of historic properties, a historically important area, or a certified historic structure. A twenty percent tax credit is given by the government for rehabilitation of certified historic structures. The Bank of America Historic Tax Credit Fund grants equity investments for the rehabilitation

of historic commercial and residential properties eligible for the federal and state historic tax credit, as well as the 10% non-historic federal tax credit.

Transportation Enhancement Funds (TE): Funding for the TE program is slightly more than \$3 million dollars annually. These funds are provided in an 80/20 match, with the State paying for the majority of the project cost. Typical examples of projects eligible for TE funds include:

Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites

Scenic or historic highway programs

Historic preservation

Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, facilities

Preservation of abandoned railway corridors

Archaeological planning and research

Establishment of transportation museums

Issues, Goals, and Suggestions

The underlying issue relevant to historic and cultural resources is the threat that the Town will lose track of its historical heritage, be overrun by rampant growth, lose its unique character, and become just a faceless part of urban sprawl.

Development pressures, population growth, and the passage of time all serve to diminish individual and collective memories and to foster gradual disappearance or degradation of both tangible and intangible historic resources. Such losses will inevitably alter the character and culture of the Town in ways contrary to the wishes of its residents, as expressed by the Community Survey results.

It should be a goal of the community to preserve insofar as practical the historical foundation on which Webster's character has been built, and use that foundation as a basis for guiding the evolution of the Town in the face of the inevitable growth pressures.

There is a Webster History Committee that, in 1984, published the most recent history of Webster. However, that committee is currently relatively inactive except for an annual contribution to the Town Report, summarizing the year's events and happenings. The **general suggestion** presented herein is that the History Committee be reinvigorated, charged with achieving the above goal, and tasked with working in cooperation with the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals to develop a plan for implementation of the following **detailed suggestions**:

The History Committee should investigate the possibility of replacing the Committee with a Heritage Commission, in accordance with RSA 673:4.a, 674:44-a, 674:44-b, 674:44-c, and 674:44-d. The Committee should recommend an appropriate warrant article if they deem such a commission to be desirable.

The Library trustees and staff should undertake an inventory of material in the Library relevant to Webster history and develop a plan to protect, enhance, and publicize that material.

The Library trustees or the Society for the Preservation of the Old Meeting House should initiate an effort to locate residents, particularly those with direct memories of Webster history, who can contribute documents and/or taped recollections to the Library's collection. A number of

recorded interviews with older residents already exist in private hands. They should be added to the Library's and/or the Meeting House's collection and, if possible, transcribed.

The History Committee should explore the possibility of placing additional features on the National and/or the State Register of Historic Places. Possibilities include the Town Hall complex, the trail of historic markers in the Blackwater flood plain, and some of the older homes in Town.

The History Committee should study the advisability of establishing a historic district, and a Historic District Commission to manage it, in accordance with relevant RSAs.

The History Committee should inventory antique homes and barns in Town, evaluate them for historical significance, and seek means to document their history and encourage their preservation.

The Planning Board, in response to this Master Plan, should update the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Regulations as appropriate to protect and honor historic structures, old stone walls, and their environs.

Similarly, the Zoning Board of Adjustment should emphasize the importance of preserving and protecting historic structures and their environs when faced with issues affecting such structures.

Town Hall staff should inventory records of historical interest at Town Hall. Those found to be unique should be copied to microfilm or compact disks and those copies stored in a separate facility.

The History Committee should systematically review the preceding section on Resources Available for Meeting Historical and Cultural Resource Needs to determine which of the listed resources might be relevant to Webster needs and how best to employ them.

The Selectmen should remain alert for any indication that the Corps of Engineers is contemplating any change in the status of the Blackwater Recreation Area, and be prepared to communicate to the Corps the overwhelming opposition of Webster residents to any such change.

All Town functions should seek every opportunity to encourage, promote, recognize, and reward the spirit of volunteerism that is so important to the character and culture of the Town.

Summary

The purpose of historic preservation is to enrich contemporary life and culture by retaining historical assets and safeguarding them for the future. Often when people think of historic resources they think of one handsome old house, a cemetery, or site of a famous event. The historic resources of Webster are much broader than individual buildings or sites. "Historic" encompasses space as well as buildings. The term includes farms and barns, churches, town centers, streetscapes, bridges, streets, stonewalls - in short, the architectural, cultural, and aesthetic heritage of the community.

Historic resources are among a community's most significant and fragile assets. They give character and memory to a place. They are easily violated, blighted, or destroyed by any development that is insensitive to their importance. Webster should actively ensure that its historic and cultural resources are protected, enhanced, maintained, and preserved.

This Chapter seeks to promote that concept and to provide corresponding guidance to the selectmen, the land use boards, Town employees, citizens, and volunteers.

Historic and cultural preservation is part of an overall plan to promote a sense of community and general welfare in Webster.

Chapter 4 – Community Facilities and Services

Introduction

The Town of Webster provides basic services to its citizens and the survey results show the majority of residents approve of the current services. However, the results of the survey also show residents' interest in expanding, protecting and improving town facilities and services, even if it involves a tax increase and/or additional public spending. Interest was shown in increasing certain town recreation programs; expanding the waste recycling effort; providing a public beach on Lake Winnepocket; expanding efforts to maintain and improve historic sites and buildings; and adding paramedic services.

Interviews with individuals responsible for the Fire Department and Rescue Squad, the Police Department, the school, the Town Hall facilities and services, and the Webster Free Public Library indicate a concern that the current facilities and services are not adequate to meet future anticipated growth. Although the majority of Webster residents want the town to “stay the same,” there is an awareness and concern that Webster will continue to grow and that it's necessary to develop long range plans and funding strategies to meet increased needs.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information and guidance for future decision making for Webster Selectmen, town boards and others whose responsibilities and interests include administering and maintaining community facilities and services. Information and suggestions included in this chapter were developed from interviews with individuals currently responsible or involved in the respective areas.

Community Survey Results

In the summer of 2003, the Master Plan Steering Committee sent out a survey to every Webster household and every non-resident Webster landowner (1,100 total), with a 30% response rate. The following survey questions and responses are relevant to the Community Facilities and Services chapter.

How important do you think each of the following is to the Town?

	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Education system	180	108	20
Community spirit	154	135	15
Town services	96	175	33
Facilities/recreation	70	180	52

Over half of the respondents feel the education system is very important to the Town and another third think it is important. Community spirit was ranked as very important (52%) or important (44%) by nearly all the respondents (96% total). Fifty-seven percent of the respondents feel

town services are important and another 32% feel town services are very important. Sixty percent feel facilities/recreation are important to the Town and 23% feel they are very important.

Athletic fields and town recreation programs were also highly ranked in a question below. Written comments show an interest in more recreational facilities such as tennis and basketball courts and one person noted the athletic and recreational facilities at the school are inadequate. Another individual promoted ATV trail use and other recreational opportunities at the Blackwater Reservoir.

Webster provides basic town services needed by all. Do you approve of this policy or do you think that Webster should provide services and facilities similar to those found in more developed communities?

Approve of current services	237	78%
Would like more services	50	16%
Would like fewer services	17	6%

A very large majority of the respondents (78%) approve of town services and 16% would like more services. These results are expanded upon in a later question.

Webster currently spends \$135,000 per year for its share of the transfer station and this amount will substantially increase when the present tipping contract expires. The cost to taxpayers would be dramatically reduced if people sorted their trash. Would you favor considering a plan whereby those who did not separate their trash would be charged a fee?

Yes	225	70%
No	69	21%
No opinion	29	9%

Seventy percent of the respondents favor a program that requires individuals to recycle or face a penalty. Mandatory recycling was recommended in the written comments as well. The next table shows that 73% of the respondents feel recycling is either very important or important.

How important is it to you, if it involves a tax increase and/or additional public spending, to expand, provide, protect or improve the following?

	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Opposed
Recycling	117	107	35	47
Historic sites and buildings	91	162	39	14
Paramedic Services	79	169	37	15
Non-motorized rec Trails	51	111	104	39
Highway and public works	37	141	94	18
Bike paths	35	127	97	42
Town rec programs	33	142	89	30
Athletic fields	33	168	72	25
Adult rec programs	25	91	131	34
Motorized rec trails	24	30	103	151
Expand town library	22	110	124	34
Outdoor ice rink	11	71	143	71
Irrigate athletic fields	10	61	146	68
Skateboard park	10	47	146	95
Expand town hall	7	62	162	49

Historic sites and buildings were ranked either very important or important to protect by 83% of those surveyed. Paramedic services were ranked by 82% of the respondents as either very important or important. Seventy-three percent ranked recycling as very important or important.

Highway and public works were ranked as important by 62% of the respondents while another third ranked them as not important (32%).

In response to questions about recreational facilities, bike paths were ranked as important or very important by a total of 54% of the respondents, while another 32% ranked them as not important. Town recreation programs were ranked as either important or very important by a total of 59% of the respondents while 30% ranked them as not important. Forty-seven percent of the respondents feel adult rec. programs are not important while another third (32%) feel they are important.

Sixty-seven percent of the respondents ranked athletic fields as either important or very important while another quarter (24%) ranked them as not important. About half the respondents (51%) feel irrigating the athletic fields is not important and a quarter (24%) are opposed; 21% feel it's important.

About a third of the respondents each feel non-motorized recreation trails are either important or not important. Half the respondents oppose motorized rec. trails and another third feel they aren't important. Nearly half the respondents feel a skateboard park is not important and another third are in opposition to the idea. Nearly half the respondents (48%) feel an outdoor ice rink is not important but another 24% each feel it's either important or are opposed to the idea.

In terms of town facilities, 43% of the respondents feel expanding the town library is not important and 38% feel it's important. Fifty-eight percent feel expanding town hall is not important and 22% feel it's important; another 18% are opposed to expanding town hall.

Should it be town policy to encourage improved access to communication technology (cable TV, high speed internet, etc.?)

Yes	203	61%
No	87	26%
No opinion	41	13%

Additional written comments include the following needs and observations:

1. Five comments in favor of a public beach on Lake Winnepocket
2. More recreational facilities such as tennis courts and basketball courts
3. Inadequate athletic and recreational facilities at the school
4. Mandatory recycling
5. Irrigate the Courser Hill Cemetery
6. Encourage a town-wide community service day to pick up roadside trash
7. Repair of asbestos and water problems in some public buildings
8. Include horseback riding on non-motorized recreation trails
9. Provide limited appropriate ATV trail use and other recreational opportunities at the Blackwater Reservoir
10. Encourage a gas station (2 comments)

Town Roads

Descriptions of Webster's roads by classification are provided in the Transportation Chapter and are shown on the Private Road, Scenic Road and Class VI Road Location Map. The diversity of roads in Webster contributes to the Town's unique and historic atmosphere. Maintaining the gravel roads and those with scenic attributes will further enhance the character of the community.

Survey results show that 68% of survey respondents think the condition of paved and unpaved roads in Webster is acceptable. The Town presently spends about \$70,000 annually for major road reconstruction work plus another \$176,500 for plowing and general maintenance. The budget generally increases each year and this trend is anticipated to continue. There are capital reserve funds allocated for major projects such as bridge improvements.

A Highway Committee works in conjunction with the Board of Selectmen and the Road Agent to manage Webster's roads. Most of the road maintenance equipment is supplied by the Road Agent and is not owned by the Town. At this time, most of the equipment is old and in need of upgrade. The Town may need either to buy its own equipment or be faced with increased Road Agent contract costs.

In early 2005, the Planning Board approved a 12-lot subdivision at the corner of Call Road and Battle Street. Concerned residents requested the Town pave the portion of Call Road affected by the proposed development. After considerable discussion, the Board decided that paving would needlessly alter the rural character that most residents wish to preserve.

This subdivision hearing exemplifies the type of issues we can anticipate as Webster continues to grow. Road policies and maintenance issues become more complex when competition for resources increases.

The anticipated growth and complexity of development may make it increasingly difficult for a Road Agent to perform the duties as assigned. The neighboring towns of Boscawen and Warner each have a staffed Highway Department. Future needs for facilities and equipment may compel the Town to expand to a Highway Department and purchase town owned equipment. Major equipment purchases would presumably be accomplished via capital reserve funds established for this purpose.

Issues, goals, and suggestions

It is suggested that the Selectmen establish a policy for the appointment of Highway Committee members, including their length of service.

It is suggested that the Selectmen form a task force to study the pros and cons of a contracted Road Agent versus a Town Highway Department. This task force should also consider the feasibility of a combined Highway Department with the Town of Salisbury and/or other neighboring towns to share resources and equipment.

It is suggested that the Selectmen, as part of the above task force, study the need to purchase land for a new Highway Department and/or for relocating the salt and sand storage site. The new site should take into consideration the possibility of a combined department with the Town of Salisbury and/or others.

It is suggested that the Selectmen, Planning Board and Highway Committee undertake a study to document the condition of all dirt roads in Webster and establish the conditions/circumstances under which paving would be appropriate.

It is suggested that the Selectmen, Planning Board and Highway Committee develop a plan that assures continued long-term maintenance of all Town roads, including a funding proposal.

It is suggested that the Road Agent initiate a project to develop a map showing the location of all culverts and bridges, and the current condition, to include in a long-range plan and budget for roadway improvements.

See the Transportation Chapter for additional issues and recommendations.

Fire Department and Rescue Squad

The Fire Department and Rescue Squad share with the Police Department a public safety building that was built in 2003. The Fire Department includes a 6 bay garage, office space, bathrooms with showers and storage areas. The shared part of the facility includes a kitchen, a conference room and additional storage space. There are 5 trucks owned by the Town and one forestry truck owned by the State. The rescue truck is equipped with a defibrillator and miscellaneous medical supplies.

The Fire Department and Rescue Squad response to calls over the past ten years is shown below:

Year	Incidence Totals Number of Response Calls
1994	100
1995	105
1996	98
1997	132
1998	115
1999	191
2000	114
2001	129
2002	121
2003	128

Source: Webster Fire Department

The Fire Department and the Rescue Squad are understaffed in comparison to similar sized communities. There is one fire chief, one assistant chief, one captain, three lieutenants and 15 to 16 other members on the roster. These are all volunteer positions.

The safety building was designed to accommodate the Town's needs for the next ten years. At recent Town Meetings, the Town voted to replace the pump truck and the rescue truck.

Additional items to purchase include air packs, defibrillator upgrades and other miscellaneous medical supplies.

Air packs will be purchased, in 3-4 years, through money allocated annually in a capitol reserve fund. The Department will be replacing all radios and portables within the next 3-4 years through federal government grants.

There is the ongoing need to increase the capital reserve funds. There is also the ongoing need to keep staff trained and to update equipment and medical supplies.

Issues, goals, and suggestions

The primary issue with the present volunteer service is that there are fewer and fewer people willing and able to give the time needed to become properly trained as volunteers. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that fewer people work in town and are available for quick response in an emergency.

The Town may need to move towards a full time Fire Department and Rescue Squad. This will include two salaried employees about 8-10 years from now. These trained employees will help provide 24-hour coverage for both fire and rescue services. Modifications to interior space will be needed in order to provide sleeping quarters for full time members.

It is suggested that the Selectmen put together a task force to study the merits and issues related to staffing a full-time Fire Department and Rescue Squad. The results should include a study of issues related to volunteers and recommendations for promoting increased volunteerism for the Fire Department. This task force should include representatives from the Fire Department as well as town residents.

Police Department

The total number of calls received in eight of the past 10 years is 13,191 (complete data is unavailable for 1997 and 1998 – see chart below). The data show an increase of about 35% over the past five years, from 1999 to 2003.

Year	Incident Totals: Number of Response Calls
1994	1,389
1995	1,155
1996	1,333
1997	N/A
1998	N/A
1999	1,446
2000	1,940
2001	1,827
2002	1,865
2003	2,236

Source: Webster Police Department

The number of calls for service shows an upward trend due to several factors, including number of town residents; weather conditions; number of hours covered by police; number of special functions held in town; and the status of the economy.

The Webster Police facility is up to date as compared to nearby communities. The facilities, shared with the Fire Department and Rescue Squad, meet State and Federal standards. The condition, size, and functionality of existing equipment and facilities fulfill the needs of the agency at its current level of staffing. Police officers are experienced, well trained, and receive training similar to other officers throughout the State of New Hampshire.

Future equipment needs include replacement of digital portable radios, regular replacement of computer equipment and software, and scheduled replacement of police cruisers. Replacement of police cruisers should be anticipated in these years: 2005, 2007, 2009, and 2011.

Issues, goals, and suggestions

The department may need to increase staffing to provide 24 hour coverage within the next 10 years. Data shows the late night and early morning activity increases every year. Increased population creates greater problems and demand for services. State Police coverage is not always dependable, with response time up to one full hour.

It is suggested that the Selectmen put together a task force to determine at what point the Town should consider providing 24 hour coverage. This task force should be designated by the Selectmen and could include representatives from the Police Department as well as town residents.

Schools

Webster is a member of the Merrimack Valley School District, which includes Webster, Boscawen, Loudon, Penacook and Salisbury. Eleven School Board members, two from each town in the District and one member-at-large, decide the policies and direct the Superintendent of Schools to act on those policies. The Webster Elementary School offers programs for children in grades Kindergarten to 5. The Merrimack Valley Middle School, in Penacook, offers programs for students in grades 6 to 8. The Merrimack Valley High School, in Penacook, offers programs for students in grades 9 to 12.

Projected enrollments provided by the Merrimack County School Board are expected to stay consistent for all grades, according to data provided by the school board in 2005.

At an annual School District meeting in March 2002, a bond issue for approximately 9 million dollars was passed by voters. The money was used to construct a new elementary school in Penacook, and for additions to the Loudon, Salisbury, and Webster Elementary Schools. The Webster Elementary School shares a building principal, reading specialist, special education specialist, school nurse, and other support staff with the Salisbury Elementary School. The Webster Elementary School employs 6 full-time classroom teachers.

Present building plans include renovations and additions to the High School, the Middle School, and Loudon Elementary School. At the annual School District meeting in 2004, residents voted to raise and appropriate \$100,000 for an architectural study. At the annual meeting in 2005, the School Board plans to present a bond issue to address the above needs.

Issues, goals, and suggestions

Webster students' needs are being met at present by the Merrimack Valley School District. Continuing to be a member of the District is advantageous to the Town, for many reasons. This connection to regional services allows for the sharing of administrative costs; the purchasing of materials and supplies in bulk; sharing of part time staff with other schools; improved staff development for teachers; and less costly special education placements.

While the present elementary school facility is adequate for the time being, it is recommended that the Selectmen, Planning Board, and School Board Representatives continue to closely monitor population trends and projections and prepare for any future site expansion requirements, in conjunction with the Merrimack Valley School Board.

It is suggested the possibility of sharing school facilities with Salisbury be explored.

Town Hall Facilities

The Webster Town Hall is housed in a historic building comprised of a former church and the Grange Hall, built in 1884. The two buildings were linked together in 1990 with the town administrative offices on the lower level. The facility contains 10,500 square feet of space, providing offices for the Selectmen, the Administrative Assistant, the Secretary, the Planning and Zoning boards, the Conservation Commission, and the Town Clerk. There is also a kitchen, a dining room, a library and the Grange Hall auditorium with seating capacity for 360 people.

Issues, goals, and suggestions

The Town Hall Facilities may not be adequate to meet the needs of town growth. There may need to be additional office space, a larger Grange Hall, and an expanded library.

It is suggested that the Selectmen put together a task force to study the adequacy of the Town Hall facility for the next 10 years and options for expansion, in light of the anticipated growing population and demand for services. This task force should be designated by the Selectmen and may include town hall staff, Daniel Webster Grange members, library personnel and other town residents.

Town Hall Services

The Town of Webster employs eleven staff members to provide town services. These positions include administrative assistant, secretary, town clerk, deputy town clerk, tax collector, deputy tax collector, treasurer, deputy treasurer, part-time Planning Board and Zoning Board secretary and zoning officer.

The staff provides support to the Board of Selectmen, the Planning Board and the Zoning Board, which guide and manage Town policies and operations. The boards oversee the work of all town committees, including the following: Highway, Cemetery, Youth Sports and Recreation, and History Committees. They are also responsible for providing input to the Fire Department and Rescue Squad, the Police Department, the Webster Free Public Library, Transfer Station/Recycling Center, Town Hall facilities and all services provided by the Town of Webster.

The Town office staff and volunteer boards utilize the available manpower and resources to their fullest to handle the administration of town business. In recent years, the growing pressure for development, the extra work generated by state mandates from the Department of Revenue

Administration, and the increasing complexity of regulatory and enforcement issues make it difficult for the staff and volunteer officers to accomplish the necessary long-range planning goals, in addition to the day-to-day operations of the Town.

Issues, goals, and suggestions

It is suggested that the Selectmen work with the Town Hall staff to identify automation needs and to develop a long range plan for upgrading the Town's computer technology. These needs may include upgrading computer services to provide for the further automation of tax data, record retention, addressing the information needs of realtors and builders.

It is suggested that the Selectmen put together a task force to review overall needs for providing town services and administration, including staffing and funding requirements.

The task force may consider the option of studying the pros and cons of alternative forms of town governments and the process for transitioning into a Town Manager form of government, in the future. This task force should be designated by the Selectmen and may include town employees and other town residents.

Webster Free Public Library

There are presently 471 registered patrons of the Webster Free Public Library, located in the Town Hall building. Usage in 2002 included 4,210 visits to the library. Materials borrowed from other libraries were 172. The present number of books is 9285 plus 342 audio books and 186 videos. Elementary school children visit the library regularly for a story program and to borrow books. There is a six week Summer Reading Program for preschool through elementary school aged children. There is also a monthly book discussion group for adults.

The library is open 22 hours each week. There is one paid employee who works most all of the hours. A rotating group of volunteers staff the library on Wednesday evenings. Other volunteers include the occasional high school student seeking community service hours, "Adopt-a-Shelf" participants who keep some of the bookshelves in order, parents and other residents who provide the entertainment and refreshments at the Summer Reading Program Story times, and one resident who takes care of the more time-consuming book repairs.

The library is housed in one room, with an approximate size of 1,435 square feet. In 1989, the New Hampshire State Library consultant provided a space needs analysis and recommended a minimum size of 2,194 square feet.

There are five computers. There is an online public access computer (OPAC), dedicated for the library's catalog, a circulation desk computer, an office computer for the librarian, and two other OPACs for word processing and access to the library's catalog and to the Internet.

Library funding comes from Town funds authorized at Town Meeting, income from a bequest, and from donations. There have also been matching fund grants from Books, Kids, and the Arts to hire a performer for the Summer Reading Program, a Federal Library Services and a Technology ACT matching funds grant to automate the Library, a Children's Literacy Foundation grant providing approximately \$1,200 worth of children's books at the cost of \$300, and a grant from the Brownstone Book Foundation for \$1,400 for new children's books.

Issues, goals, and suggestions

The Library facility is at its limits. There is no workspace for people using computers and no desk or table space for a Library user when the conference table is in use for meetings and story times. Storage capacity is fully utilized and most of the bookcases have books stored on top. The New Hampshire State Library consultant suggested that a mezzanine level might be added. The Trustees have decided that this is not a workable solution. There is no other additional space to expand. Continued close proximity to the elementary school is vital.

The Library Trustees have no future needs plan at this point, but are aware that Library expansion is an issue. Space needs will continue to grow and may include a meeting room, space for a second staff member and space for increased materials.

It is suggested that the Library Trustees undertake a study to address the future needs of the Library and to present that plan to the Selectmen. One alternative may be to use the old police station as the children's library, easing present Library space problems and reducing crosswalk safety concerns.

Water Supply

Most Webster residents obtain their water from individual on-site private wells and relevant issues related to groundwater protection and water management are addressed in the Conservation chapter of the Master Plan.

The Pillsbury Lake Water District operates a public water system currently supplying 115 dwellings. The Water District contains seven miles of pipe. The system was built in 1965 and is in deteriorating condition. Daily water usage is 44,000 gallons from five wells. The Peninsula wells need storage and filtration. Facilities include five working wells, one maintenance building, one truck, a trench box and assorted tools.

Pump Systems, Inc., located in Franklin, NH, is the certified water superintendent. There are additional part-time employees who either take meter readings or work on the system. Some work is contracted out to local contractors.

Engineers are presently in the process of looking into leak detection and determining needs and options to address those needs. Upgrade costs to replace pipes will be high. Water district commissioners are researching alternative funding sources for planned upgrades, including grants, loans and other sources.

Other projects underway include installation of water meters to ensure conservation and the addition of a water purification system to meet upgraded federal guidelines by 2006.

Issues, goals, and suggestions

The Pillsbury Lake Village District is the largest community in the Town. It is recommended that the Town continue to communicate closely with the District and stay apprised of current issues and long range plans.

Wastewater Treatment Plan

All Webster wastewater is disposed by individual on-site subsurface systems. This is expected to be the disposal method for the long-term future.

Issues, goals, and recommendations

It is suggested that the Selectmen and Planning Board continue issuing building permits with private septic systems only.

Transfer Station/Recycling Center

Webster residents use the transfer station at the Webster/Hopkinton landfill to facilitate shipping of waste to the incinerator in Penacook. A permanent recycling building accepts aluminum, newspaper, cardboard, some plastics, glass and tin. In 2003, Webster was credited with delivering 833 tons of trash to the incinerator. Webster was also credited with delivering 143 tons to the recycling center.

There are many approaches to increase recycling, all of which generally depend on the willingness of a community's residents to tolerate some inconvenience. The recycling committee is continually promoting increased recycling with individuals, groups and businesses.

The Community Survey results show support for recycling and measures to increase it. Seventy percent (70%) of the residents favor considering a plan whereby those who do not separate their trash are charged a fee.

"Pay As You Throw" programs are effective ways of increasing recycling but they are also the most intrusive. They accept recyclables for no charge but require a charge for trash disposal, typically by the bag. This incentive system has been successful in places where residents are willing to support it.

Issues, goals, and suggestions

Most of the current activities of the regional Recycling Committee focus on promoting volunteer cooperation with the recycling program to reduce overall operation costs.

The Town could consider more aggressive recycling education to increase participation, thus reducing the cost of sending waste to the incinerator. Everything that enters the facilities now must be transferred elsewhere for proper disposal.

Continued research into markets for recycled materials could be conducted. Mandatory recycling, or "pay as you throw" programs, should be considered.

It is suggested that the Selectmen encourage the Recycling Committee to continue to study and implement programs to educate residents on how and why to recycle.

Cemetery Trustees

The cemetery trustees manage three active cemeteries: Beaver Dam, Courser Hill and Riverdale. There is one inactive cemetery on Clough and Sanborn Hill Road. Residents of the Town are offered a free lot and there is no cost until time of burial. Costs vary due to type of burial and inflation. Cemetery trustees encourage people to pay for a lot in advance through a trust fund, with the interest used to offset annual maintenance costs.

The cemeteries are managed by three trustees who are elected on a rotating basis every three years. Maintenance work, such as mowing, is handled by a contractor. Funds are allocated at Town Meeting, including capital improvement funds for projects.

Issues, goals, and suggestions

It is suggested that the Cemetery Trustees continue to manage the cemeteries in future years in a manner similar to the present.

Webster Youth Sports and Recreation

The goal of the Webster Youth Sports and Recreation Program is to provide meaningful athletic and recreational programs and activities for the adults and children of Webster. The program is administered through the Sports Committee. The members work to maintain and improve current programs and facilities and to expand programs to meet the future needs of the townspeople.

Facilities include the William Pearson Memorial Little League baseball field and the soccer field, both adjacent to the Webster Elementary School. The current facilities require general field maintenance such as mowing, seeding, fertilizing, etc.; and specific field maintenance, such as lining and preparing fields for games. Other ongoing projects include maintaining field structures, such as fences, backstops, goals and nets, bleachers, lighting; and maintaining uniforms and equipment for the sports and activities.

The following programs are currently offered: soccer, basketball, baseball, softball, tennis, swimming, and adult co-ed soccer and co-ed softball. Program administration requires participation with the Merrimack Valley Leagues, such as soccer, baseball, softball and basketball; recruiting and registering children for programs; recruiting volunteers to coach, officiate, and maintain fields; maintaining equipment and facilities; and providing training for coaches and officials. Funding to maintain the current programs is obtained through the Town budget, registration fees, fundraising and donations.

Issues, goals, and suggestions

The Sports Committee strives to provide quality recreational and athletic programs that meet the needs and interests of residents. It is recommended that this committee continue to oversee the town sports and recreation activities.

Over the past several years, the fields have required extensive maintenance. The lack of irrigation for the fields increases the costs and efforts required to maintain the fields. Providing irrigation for the fields would lower the cost and improve the overall quality of the fields.

Currently the equipment required to maintain the fields is stored in the shed near the town sheds, in the basement of the old police station, and in the shed near Town Hall. Locating sheds near the fields would make it easier to maintain the fields. Also, if the town decides to sell or move the old police station, that storage space would no longer be available to the committee.

Interest has been shown in a teen recreation program as well as organized group hikes, canoe trips, ski trips, etc. There are plans to increase the soccer field to a regulation sized soccer field and to build a softball field over time.

There is further interest in creating a town beach on Lake Winnepocket; building basketball courts and a full sized gymnasium for the elementary school; replacing the food booth; building

a rollerblade/skateboard park; building tennis courts; creating a teen recreation center; and adding lights to the other side of the soccer field. There is also discussion about adding a recreational flag football league for children in grades 4 to 6.

It is suggested that the Selectmen pursue any opportunities that become available to purchase land to create a public beach on Lake Winnepocket. The topic that received the most mention on the Community Survey, of all the written comments, was the desire for a public beach on Lake Winnepocket.

It is suggested that the Webster Youth Sports and Recreation Committee, under the direction of the Selectmen, create a ten year plan to prioritize and address sports and recreation needs. The plan should address fund raising activities to include donations of property, time and equipment, and other possible funding sources.

Major Electric Utilities

Electric service in Webster is provided by Unitil and by Public Service of New Hampshire. Deregulation will allow for additional choices.

A major high power AC transmission line and a separate DC transmission line traverse the Town from north to south near the Boscawen line.

Issues, goals, and suggestions

It will be important for the Town to keep a watch on deregulation and to take measures to ensure additional choices are available to consumers for major electric utilities.

Communication Services

The town is provided telephone service by TDS Telecom. The town has two cell towers and service is provided by U.S. Cellular (Dustin Road tower) and by AT&T (Pearson Hill Tower).

Issues, goals, and suggestions

Survey results show that 61% of survey respondents agree that the town should encourage improved access to communication technology. This would include cable television, high speed internet, etc.

Also, the majority of town residents support the concept of promoting home-based businesses in Webster. Towards this goal, the town should promote expanding high speed internet and other services, as they become available.

It is suggested that the cell tower ordinance, passed in 2002, be reviewed periodically to determine if it is compatible with land use policies.

Chapter 5 – Natural Resources: Conservation, Preservation and Open Space

Introduction

Our community must meet the needs of the people who live here. Our community must grow and develop only within its ecological limits. We must inhabit the land in ways that sustain it for future generations.

The Goals of this Chapter are to:

- Provide information for the Planning, Zoning, and Selectmen Boards about Webster’s natural resources, so as to guide their decision-making
- Build citizen awareness about natural resources
- Maintain a healthy environment for present and future generations
- Protect drinking water sources: wells, aquifers, recharge areas and wetlands
- Preserve open space
- Achieve community growth that respects natural resources
- Preserve wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors
- Increase, manage and protect land for recreation

“Most land in Webster is undeveloped and wooded. Much of the undeveloped land is devoted to agricultural or forestry uses. The development that does exist is almost entirely residential.”

That statement (from the 1992 Webster Master Plan) still holds true in 2003. However, the population has grown from 1,403 residents and 586 homes in 1992 to 1,673 residents and 710 homes in 2002; and with the proposed widening of I-93, development is certain to intensify. What follows is:

A review of Webster’s natural resources

Issues and concerns

Goals and recommendations

Community Survey Results: Conservation Issues

Total Surveys Sent: 1100

Total Respondents: 336+/-

Survey respondent total numbers are in parentheses ()

% is of people answering that question

Residents/landowners chose as either very important or important:

Rural atmosphere (306)

Natural resources (295)

Scenic areas (276)

Resident/landowners' opinions on growth:

Webster is growing too fast: Yes: (140) 42%

Webster's growth in acceptable Yes: (139) 41%

Methods favored for balancing growth with environmental conservation are:

Encourage land donations and/or development rights and/or Conservation easements	(227)	68%
Town purchase of land for conservation	(77)	23%
Current use designation	(142)	42%
Land trusts	(131)	39%
Rezoning	(79)	24%
Town purchase of development rights	(77)	23%
Impact fees	(74)	22%

Blackwater Reservoir:

In favor of encouraging the federal government to maintain the Blackwater Reservoir area in its present undeveloped condition: 83%.

Recycling:

In favor of charging a fee to people who don't separate trash for recycling: 83%

Even if it involved a tax increase, people surveyed voted that it is very important or important to expand, provide, protect or improve the following top 6 priorities:

Surface and groundwater	(256)
Wetlands	(252)
Wildlife habitat diversity	(252)
Shoreland protection	(247)
Town forests	(244)
Fields and agriculture	(231)

Also important to survey respondents:	Scenic roads	(208)
	Public access to lakes	(197)
	Public access to rivers	(180)
	Non-motorized trails	(162)
	Non-motorized bike paths	(162)
	Open space purchase	(187)

Soils

Soils are important because their composition determines what we can grow for food, and how clean and abundant is our water. Soils are possibly the most neglected and poorly understood component of the environment. Without soil, there would be no life as we know it on earth. Soils control the velocity and quantity of runoff from snow and rain. Soils differ in their ability to allow infiltration and bind pollutants. Highly permeable sandy soils, common in Webster,

allow water to percolate rapidly through the ground. This means pollutants may enter aquifers easily. Soils with abundant organic materials such as forest topsoil help retain and cleanse water that flows through it. Soils with high clay content have poor infiltration that would cause runoff to flow over the soil buffer directly into wetlands or surface water. The connection of soil types to the general health and well being of people has been mapped in America, with overlays showing poor soils coinciding with poor health. Soils also determine the health of our forests and fields, and the time it takes to grow good marketable lumber.

There are many geological resources of particular importance in Webster. The two most prevalent are:

Sand & Gravel Ridges which are evidence of glaciers. There is economic value in these because they provide sand and gravel for construction; wildlife value through nesting habitat for turtles, and bird species such as bank swallows and kingfishers.

Glacial Erratics which are huge boulders left by glaciers. They are part of Webster's land history and are scenic attributes on the landscape.

Some Webster soils have severe limitations for septic tank absorption fields. This is due to steep slopes, shallow depth to bedrock or shallow depth to water table.

Continuing development threatens to impact natural resources. There is increased pressure to build on land previously regarded as unsuitable for building. Present subdivision regulations require that at least one acre of contiguous land be dry and not wetland, and that all wetland soils be delineated on the subdivision plan.

Suggestion:

The capability of our soils to absorb and to filter run-off from septic systems and from rain and snow should be considered when housing and road development occurs.

Steep Slopes

Slope is the ratio of change in vertical elevation in relation to the change in horizontal distance, multiplied by 100 percent. Slope is a very critical consideration in land use planning because it affects the capability and suitability of land to support development. Environmental impacts include runoff, erosion, sedimentation, and pollution.

It is important to control development on steep slopes in order to assure emergency vehicle access.

Steep slopes provide den habitat for certain wildlife species. Enriched habitats with unusual plants are often found growing below steep slopes and can be destroyed by construction or by erosion during and after construction.

The following is an informal inventory, estimated from study of U.S.G.S., 7.5 minute series, topographical map, of especially steep hillsides in Webster:

West slope of Sweatts Hill down to Lake Winnepocket

West side of the Blackwater River, a mile+ down from Riverdale Natural Area

Ox Pond Hill

Rattlesnake Hill, between Tyler Rd. and Gerrish Rd.

East sides of Chase Hill and Putney Hill

West sides of Round Hill and Rattlesnake Hill, just north of Blackwater Dam

Suggestions:

The town should have a map produced that highlights all areas with slopes greater than 15%, and greater than 25%.

Land with slopes greater than 25% requires close study during the approval process for subdivision to minimize adverse environmental impacts as listed above.

Surface Water Resources

Webster has two large rivers, two major stream systems, and eight lakes/ponds, as well as numerous small brooks. These water bodies can be seen on the **Surface Water Map**.

Warner River – undammed and natural, flows through the southwestern corner of town.

Blackwater River – flows from the Salisbury border south through the center of town into Hopkinton and to the Contoocook River. The Blackwater River is a Class A (NH’s cleanest water designation) river with two major whitewater areas that attract canoe and kayak races every year. One whitewater area is at Sweatt’s Mill where the New England Division Canoe and Kayak Championships are held; the other is at Snyder’s Mill. The latter rapids have been used in U.S. Olympic kayak slalom trials as they are one of the most challenging natural rapids in the country. The rest of the Blackwater River is mostly flat water, popular with canoeists, fishermen, and swimmers.

Along the town’s eastern border with Boscawen, Beaverdam Brook becomes Pond Brook which becomes Deer Meadow Brook. These brooks flow through some of Webster’s most valuable wildlife habitat. Three ponds within the Beaverdam Brook watershed, with unusual bog plants growing in floating peat mats, are:

Couch Pond off Long Street, along Beaverdam Brook

Huntoon Bog Pond east of Dingit Corner

Isaac Walton Pond south of Dingit Corner

Knight’s Meadow Brook flows through Knight’s Meadow Marsh and pond, and joins Schoodac Brook, which begins at the outlet of Lake Winnepocket and flows westward to the Warner River. Schoodac Brook provides crucial habitat for endangered turtle species (as shown in over twenty years of research by David Carroll of Warner).

Lake Winnepocket (227 acres) – noted for the clarity and quality of its water; ice fishing, boating, fishing, and swimming.

Walker Pond (190 acres) – adjacent to marshes where loons and ducks nest; high water quality.

Trumbull Pond (83 acres) – undeveloped, with views of Mt. Kearsarge; turtle habitat.

Pillsbury Lake (64 acres) – highly developed, attractive, popular fishing/boating lake.

Ox Pond (8 acres) – undeveloped, Webster’s only hilltop pond; beaver and other wildlife; popular with ice fisherman.

Public Access:

Public access to the Blackwater River was guaranteed by the acquisition in 1991 of the 52 acre Riverdale Natural Area, which preserves about a mile of river frontage and provides access from Tyler Road for hand-carried canoes and kayaks. Other public access to the Blackwater exists at William Pearson Memorial Park and at road crossings within the Blackwater Reservoir managed by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Public access to the Warner River is possible near a powerline crossing on Dustin Road. At present time, access to Webster's ponds is mainly through private, unposted land. However, the Boscawen Water Precinct Lands provide access to Walker Pond; and Lake Winnepocket access on White Plains Rd. exists as well.

Concerns:

Development of currently undeveloped land along surface water bodies is a concern. A study of Webster tax maps shows that much land on the Blackwater River is at present time undeveloped and unprotected by conservation easements. Much of this land is over aquifers. With many buildable lots on Webster's lakes, ponds, rivers and streams, development on Webster shorelands could rise sharply any time. Water quality is affected by runoff from the impervious surfaces of roofs and pavement, and by many common human activities that take place around our homes.

Shoreland Buffers:

Naturally vegetated buffers reduce the adverse effects of human activities on surface water by protecting water quality, and reducing direct human disturbance from dumped debris, noise, pets, lawn fertilizers and many other possible effects. Buffers protect and provide wildlife habitat, and maintain aesthetic diversity and recreational value. Buffers prevent or reduce algae blooms in water, filter pathogens and reduce acid rain. (See Pages 18-20: Appendix 3: Rationale for Buffers for a more complete description of the many benefits of shoreland buffers.)

Suggestions:

Future consideration of a Zoning Ordinance that requires a buffer, a naturally vegetated upland adjacent to a wetland or surface water, with setbacks between buildings and the mean high water mark. These buffers could be established for specified Surface Water Resources.

A plan for compliance with NH's Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act (RSA 483-b) should be a required part of a building permit application for land within the Act's protection zone.

The Town could work with landowners to purchase land/easements/access along public water bodies.

Precautions to prevent invasive plant species such as milfoil from entering ponds, using, where boat traffic is heavy enough to warrant action, available state programs. Post milfoil warning signs.

Study conservation subdivision zoning requiring 50% of total site area for common open space not to include wetlands or water bodies.

Give the Blackwater River Corridor special consideration. Utmost care should be taken by Planning and Zoning Boards to protect this exceptional natural resource; the river is a unique feature of Webster's rural character and flows over an aquifer providing clean drinking water to many residents.

The recommendations provided to the Town through the Community Assistance Visits of the National Flood Insurance Program should be reviewed and implemented.

Wetlands

A wetland has three (3) components: hydrology, wetland vegetation, and wetland soils. The common definition of a wetland is: "...an area that is inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal conditions does support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands include but are not limited to swamps, marshes, bogs, fens and similar areas." Vernal pools are omitted from this definition but are of value as crucial wildlife habitat.

Layperson's Quick and Easy Guide to Wetlands

- Swamp: a shaded wetland with trees or shrubs.
- Marsh: an open, sunny wetland with cattails, grasses, and wildflowers.
- Bog/Fen: contains a floating mat of peat, on which grows certain uncommon plants and shrubs. A fen has an inlet and outlet stream; a bog does not.
- Vernal Pool: usually a shallow woodland pool that may become dry in summer.
- Serves as essential spring breeding habitat for many amphibians, and insects which provide amphibians food.

The Webster Roadside Wetlands Inventory (conducted in the dry summer and fall of 1999) gives data and photographic evidence on 113 wetlands: 63 wooded swamps, 17 marshes, 16 swamps (of which 11 were clearly vernal pool habitats), 7 wetlands with both swamp and marsh vegetation, 8 wet soil areas (not identified as wetland types as they lacked vegetation), and 4 small ponds. The Inventory shows 35 stream crossings by roads, and 5 bridges. More than 88 culverts connect and permit water to flow between wetlands crossed by roads. Many more wetlands, identified as such by hydrology, wetland vegetation and soils, exist in Webster, and are being inventoried by the Conservation Commission in a five (5) year study due to be completed in 2007.

There are many significant wetlands in Webster, which are listed below and in The Webster Roadside Wetlands Inventory and can be seen on the **Water Resources and Potential Contamination Sites Map**.

- Knight's Meadow Marsh
- Wetlands within the Leonard Wildlife Management Area
- Marshes between Couch and Walker Ponds
- Ponds that contain floating bog mats
- Swamps and marshes over 10 acres in size
- Vernal Pools known to be valuable wildlife habitat used by amphibians

Suggestions:

- Future consideration of adopting a Zoning Ordinance that would require buffers on wetlands from 3,000 to 20,000 square feet in size and larger buffers on wetlands over

20,000 square feet in size, as well as other requirements. Consider exceptions to the 3,000 square foot lower limit should be made to protect small vernal pools determined by the Conservation Commission and/or a qualified wetland scientist to be of high quality and meeting vernal pool criteria. (See Appendix 3: Rationale for Buffers)

Drinking Water and Aquifer Protection

- Protection of surface and subsurface water should be a top priority throughout town.
- Webster has two (2) stratified drift aquifers located beneath the Blackwater River. One runs from the north end of town to Dingit Corner; the others begins in the Cold Brook Watershed and runs south between Tyler Road and the west side of the River to the Hopkinton Town line. See the **Drinking Water and Aquifer Protection Map** for these locations. Definition of Stratified Drift Aquifer: sorted, unconsolidated layers of sand and gravel that are saturated with a usable quantity of water.

Most residents have private wells except for the public wells that exist at Sweatt's Mill, Cold Brook Campground, The Austin Home, Westwind Village and Pillsbury Lake District.

Potential Pollution Sources:

The two main sources of drinking water and aquifer pollution are failing septic systems and commercial/industrial sites that are licensed to store or use chemicals.

There are eight (8) or more industrial/commercial sites in Webster. These include two (1) licensed junk yards. The Drinking Water and Aquifer Protection Map shows the location of potential contamination sources.

Residences on Pillsbury Lake that once were seasonal vacation homes are now year-round homes, increasing their impact on septic systems, soils, and drinking water. The same holds true for some homes on Lake Winnepocket.

Throughout Webster, wastewater is disposed of in individual subsurface systems. The proper maintenance of septic systems is crucial to the health of our water bodies and drinking water supplies/groundwater.

Pillsbury Lake:

The Pillsbury Lake District has its own regulations for development and its own water commission. A community water system serves district residents, but is inadequate for current or future growth. Many valuable wetlands, which recharge groundwater in the district, are being impacted and destroyed.

Suggestions:

- Focus on education about and enforcement of the NH Shoreland Protection Act.
- Use the Drinking Water and Aquifer Map to guide development decisions.
- Consider an Aquifer Protection Overlay District that excludes the future placement of potentially harmful industries/materials in areas that have the potential to be used for future public municipal wells.

- Consider adopting reduced density zoning over Webster’s major aquifers, in order to preserve and protect aquifer water for Webster residents/landowners.
- Consider adopting regulations to control commercial groundwater withdrawals.
- Consider ways to preserve and buy land that the state has identified as a potential site for a public well, such as the area downstream from Snyder’s Mill.
- Study and implement ways to support the Pillsbury Lake District as it attempts to achieve balance in growth and gain protection for its natural resources.

Sand and Gravel Deposits

Sand and Gravel deposits, evidence of Webster’s glacial history, are of economic and wildlife value. Wildlife species that nest in or close to Webster’s gravel pit include turtles, belted kingfisher and bank swallow.

There are several inactive and three (3) active sand and gravel pits in Webster. These highly permeable, sandy soils are commonly found over aquifers, close to and often within a few feet of the water table. See the Current Land Use Map for the locations of active gravel pits.

Unused gravel pits can be reclaimed by allowing natural vegetation to grow, by planting red pines, and/or certain warm season grasses that have been proven to grow well on abandoned gravel pits needing to be reclaimed. The use of sewage sludge or “biosolids” to reclaim gravel pits is a high-risk practice, as sewage sludge contains hundreds of mostly unregulated toxic substances that can seep into aquifers and be costly or impossible to remove.

Suggestions:

- Sewage sludge should not be used to “reclaim” a gravel pit in Webster.
- Information could be provided by the Conservation Commission to those working in gravel pits to help avoid destruction of known nests of wildlife dependent upon these sandy habitats for breeding and nesting success.

Farmland

Definition (American Heritage Dictionary. NH State definition of “Agriculture” and “Farming” is on-line at the NH.Gov website and is two pages long): A farm is a tract of land cultivated for the purpose of agricultural production, or devoted to the raising and breeding of domestic animals, or fish. Farming includes a wide variety of activities these days, many of which are carried out in Webster, such as growing plants in greenhouses, beekeeping, producing maple syrup, and Christmas tree and tree farms. Farmland is important to Webster because it sustains the Town’s highly-valued rural atmosphere, and provides local employment and a wide range of food crops.

The town survey shows people support agricultural activity in town.

Farms in Webster can be found in many areas, including but certainly not limited to:

- Battle Street north of Corser Hill...a dairy farm, a horse farm
- Pleasant Street...apple orchards, beef cattle farm, organic meat farm
- Long Street ...horticulture/greenhouse

- Tyler Road...corn fields, a horse farm, sheep pastures, a cow pasture
- Mutton Road ...berries
- Deermeadow Road ...berries, corn
- Little Hill...hay fields, cattle, milk goats
- Blackwater River flood control lands...hay crops

Suggestions:

- Webster could continue to encourage the preservation of farmland through the State's Current Use tax program, Current Use Discretionary Easements on lots under ten acres, and through conservation/agricultural easements.
- Ensure that the Zoning Ordinance does not inhibit the continuing operations of existing farms, or the development of new farms.

Wildlife Habitat Management

Wildlife is important to the people in Webster and essential to Webster's historical and present rural character. Hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing are popular in Webster. Wildlife requires space, food, and specific habitats. Critical to healthy wildlife populations are habitat diversity, wetland protection, wildlife corridors, forested and contiguous open (undeveloped) space.

Along Beaverdam Brook are some of Webster's most ecologically rich wetlands. Many wildlife species have been seen and/or heard in these marshes including beaver, bobcat, otter, fisher, weasel, moose, owls, hawks, and ospreys. Schoodac Brook and Knight's Meadow Marsh are ecological resources named by the CNHRPC Open Space Plan (2002) as being particularly important to the town, along with Walker Pond, Dingit Corner's two nearby bog ponds, and Wildlife Management areas.

Wildlife Corridors are defined as contiguous areas of undeveloped land used by wildlife traveling between habitats. Such corridors are critical for the biological success of animals, particularly large mammals.

The following wildlife corridors have been observed in Webster:

- The Class A Blackwater River – A unique town feature, this major riparian corridor is presently (but not permanently) protected in the north of town as government flood control land, and areas that are permanently protected by two (2) town parks and several conservation easements below the Blackwater Dam. From the Blackwater Dam downstream to Clothespin Bridge, the river's western shore is developed. The corridor is forested on the river's eastern shore from the Paul P. Mock Memorial Forest to Clothespin Bridge, where the river corridor is interrupted by development along Frost Lane on the west side and the paved road on the east side. The corridor resumes below Dingit Corner and continues, almost entirely undeveloped on both sides except at Snyder's Mill, down to the Hopkinton Town line. Farmland, forest, large wetlands and "oxbow" swamps are found here. The Riverdale Natural Area and four (4) significant conservation easements on private land now permanently protect

part of this watershed and shoreline. These four-five (4-5) miles of river corridor are highly valuable for drinking water, aquifer protection, recreation, and wildlife.

- An important power line corridor runs along the western side of town, parallel to the Webster-Boscawen town lines. Many animal species use this corridor and it is rich in bird life as it passes by ponds and crosses wetlands.
- Deer yards and bear trails have been noted on Little Hill. A wildlife corridor runs from Leonard Wildlife Management Area east through Knight's Meadow Marsh and over Little Hill to the Blackwater flood control lands.

Suggestions:

- Wildlife corridors could be mapped by Conservation Commission with advice from residents knowledgeable about the Town's wildlife, and these maps be displayed in the office of, and used by, Planning and Zoning Boards.
- Wildlife corridors could be considered in town planning and protected through donation and/or the purchase of conservation easements as essential to the highly-valued rural atmosphere of Webster.
- The Blackwater River Corridor could receive special consideration in all conservation planning given that the river is a unique feature of Webster's rural character and heavily used by many wildlife species.
- Consider adopting shoreland buffers as described under Surface Water Resources.
- Consider adopting a Wetland Overlay District into the Zoning Ordinance.
- Recognize value of maintaining a healthy diversity of habitats throughout town, and considering wildlife needs as well as human needs.

Species of Special Concern

The U.S. Government and the State of New Hampshire lists and protects by law rare, threatened, and endangered species. Therefore, Webster's Master Plan must take into consideration the actual, and/or potential, existence of these species.

Biodiversity is short for biological diversity, of ecosystems such as lakes, swamps, and forests; of species; and of genetic variety within species (Wilson, Edward O., *The Future of Life*, 2002. P. 10-11). Biodiversity is a widely accepted important element in our natural systems. Within the delicate balance of natural systems there exist many species of plants and animals, some of which may be seldom noticed by humans. This fact does not lessen the importance of these wildlife species.

According to The New Hampshire Natural Heritage Inventory the following endangered or threatened species have existed, or do exist, in Webster:

- Plants: Arethusa (*Arethusa bulbosa*) a rare bog orchid
- Insects: two rare Noctuid moths, Frosted Elfin, Graceful Clearwing, Karner Blue Butterfly, Phyllira Tiger Moth, Pine Devil, Spiny Oakworm, Cora Moth
- Birds: Pied-billed Grebe, American Bittern, and Common Loons which nest at Walker Pond and Lake Winnepocket

- Amphibians/Reptiles: Spotted Turtle, Blanding's Turtle
- Mollusks: Brook Floater (*Alasmidonta varicose*)

Suggestions:

(See Also: Suggestions in Wildlife Habitat section above.)

- The Conservation Commission could work to locate and report to the NH Natural Heritage Inventory (in the Division of Forests and Lands at DRED) any rare, threatened or endangered species.
- The Conservation Commission could work to educate landowners and Planning and Zoning Board members about Species of Special Concern.
- The Conservation Commission could attempt to locate and study the habitats of rare, threatened or endangered species and Species of Special Concern, with landowners' knowledge and consent.
- Consider adopting regulations that prevent the potential destruction of fragile habitats known by the NH Natural Heritage Inventory to be critical to the survival of rare, threatened or endangered species and Species of Special Concern. This recommendation is intended to prevent the eradication of rare and fragile habitats in which Species of Special Concern are commonly found.
- The Conservation Commission could, where appropriate, notify landowners of the presence of rare, threatened or endangered species and Species of Special Concern located on property proposed for development; if such species are present, the applicant must demonstrate that the proposal will not negatively impact the Species of Special Concern.

Scenic Views

Scenic views are difficult to prioritize and protect. Yet, some New Hampshire towns have done that with surveys that identify views of value to townspeople, followed by land purchase or the procurement of conservation easements to protect such views. It may be a field, a beautiful marsh such as those on Corn Hill Road, a view of the river from a bridge, or the view of the town's center. It could be views of Mt. Kearsarge from Corser Hill and the Old Meeting House or from Little Hill from which on clear days the Presidential Range is visible. Other spectacular vistas can be seen from Lake Winnepocket and Knight's Meadow Marsh. Webster is a very rugged town. Our seventeen hills add interest, variety and beauty to roadside views. (A list of Webster hills is in Appendix 1)

Suggestion:

- Consider requiring that all major subdivisions that necessitate the building of a new road have an undeveloped, naturally vegetated buffer along the existing road, of a width adequate to screen the development from the road. The purpose is to preserve Webster's rural atmosphere.

Conservation and Open Space Land

The value of conserving undeveloped land for watershed protection, recreation, forestry, wildlife, hunting, fishing, hiking, nature study, and many other uses, not the least of which is the

mental and physical health of human beings, is impossible to calculate. Humans need green space. Not all humans actively use green space, but its mere presence has been shown to benefit human health. Even great cities preserve green space. If New York City can preserve 27% of its total space as open space, surely New Hampshire towns can try to do as well.

Open space is necessary for the protection of both quality and quantity of drinking water. Forests, fields and wetlands provide necessary habitat for the abundant and varied wildlife that lives in Webster. Conserving open space makes sense for everyone and is a valuable goal to be shared by all residents and/or landowners.

Open space/undeveloped lands require no services from the Town. They don't need schools or roads or police protection. Therefore they help keep taxes from rising as fast as they surely would were all our developable lands built upon.

In Webster, the first land protection took place in 1941 with the building of the Blackwater Flood Control Dam, and the taking of 1,117 acres by the Federal Government's Army Corps of Engineers to form the Blackwater River Reservoir. It is important to realize that these acres are not managed for conservation, but for flood control. The Army Corps of Engineers is not a conservation organization. Recently the Corps mentioned opening the land for increased recreational use which could result in great numbers of ATV riders legally accessing these lands.

The New Hampshire Fish & Game Department owns and manages four parcels totaling 997 acres, mostly wetlands, a bog pond and forested uplands.

In 1972, the 3.4 acre William R. Pearson Memorial Park at Sweatt's Mill was dedicated to the memory of a young soldier killed in Vietnam that year.

In November, 1988, a program on land conservation was held in the Grange Hall, and on January of 1989, a "Task Force" of fifteen Webster residents formed with the goal of preserving land under a program called The Land Conservation Investment Program of the Trust for New Hampshire Land, a public/private partnership. This program allowed the appraised value of donated conservation easements to be used instead of cash to match the purchase price of two large parcels of land on the Blackwater. The LCIP Task Force ended its work in 1991 having protected permanently through Town ownership 111 acres of conservation land (the Paul P. Mock Memorial Forest at Sweatt's Mill and the Riverdale Natural Area on Tyler Road), and permanently through conservation easements 349 acres of private land, mostly on the Blackwater River.

Nine other conservation parcels that total 595 acres further enhance the rural qualities Webster residents and land owners value so highly. These are privately owned. Some are owned and managed by the Society for the Protection of NH Forests. The Webster Conservation Commission manages town conservation lands and monitors conservation easements, marking boundaries, and assuring compliance. All of these lands are open to hikers, and most of them to hunting and fishing as well. They comprise a major benefit to all townspeople.

See the **Current Land Use Map** in Chapter 1 for the location of these permanently protected areas.

The Land Use Change Tax presently provides up to \$3000 a year to the Webster Land Trust Fund. The fund is presently used to help land owners with legal and other expenses of protecting land and water bodies with conservation easements.

Suggestions:

- The Conservation Commission could work to increase the number of privately-held conservation easements, and add to town-owned conservation lands for present and future residents of Webster by means of donations, and/or funds from Land Use Change Tax.
- The Town should discourage the Army Corps of Engineers from changing the existing use of the 1,117-acre Blackwater Reservoir Lands in a way that would harm the surrounding community. The Town Survey shows that people value the reservoir lands and want to protect them.
- A greater percentage of the Land Use Change Tax could be dedicated to the Webster Land Trust Fund for the purpose of protecting conservation and open space land through land purchase or easement purchase.

Forests

Forests are important because they provide watershed protection, clean air, soil erosion prevention, recreation, hunting, wildlife habitat, and general enjoyment for Webster residents in many ways. Forests contribute to Webster's economy, providing employment for many residents as well as firewood and building products.

Most of Webster is forested. The Paul P. Mock Memorial Forest at Sweatt's Mill is the town's only town forest. Having been harvested for timber in the last thirty years, the forest is (at present) being left to grow; future timber harvests have not yet been planned. A red pine plantation at the Riverdale Natural Area on Tyler Road could be cut for timber and planted with (or left to grow naturally) more economically valuable and useful wildlife trees and shrubs.

The Army Corps of Engineers harvests timber on the Blackwater flood control land. Other private timber harvests take place every year throughout town.

Suggestion:

- Forest management plans could be developed for the town-owned lands by the Conservation Commission and adopted by the Board of Selectmen.

Conclusion

The Webster Community Survey of 2003 proves that most residents want to preserve natural resources and are willing to accept regulations and zoning that preserve Webster's rural character.

Webster's aquifers, open space, healthy forests, wetlands and lakes, ponds, rivers and streams are its most valuable elements. They provide residents with clean drinking water and space for recreation and enjoyment.

Webster's valuable farmland, forests, and sand/gravel deposits contribute to the town's economic base.

Webster's diverse mixture of wildlife habitats supports a wide range of species. The land and its wildlife provide opportunities for hunting, fishing, hiking, swimming, bicycling, snowmobiling, and many other ways for humans to enjoy life and maintain their health.

Planning for sustainable, sensible growth requires close consideration of:

- Drinking water supplies
- Surface and groundwater
- Open space and wildlife corridors
- Wildlife and diverse wildlife habitat
- Wildlife species of special concern
- Scenic views and scenic roads
- Soils and steepness of slopes
- Farmlands and forests

Intelligent, wise use of our remaining undeveloped land will largely determine the future character of Webster.

Chapter 6 – Housing

Introduction

The Housing Chapter identifies the current supply and characteristics of housing in Webster and addresses the town’s possible future housing development with the goal of retaining its rural character as much as possible. Central New Hampshire’s strong economic growth over the last decade created many benefits for most communities and residents, but it also generated a demand for housing that the marketplace has been unable to meet in other communities.

The population projections provided by the Office of Energy and Planning predict growth is coming our way. The majority of Webster citizens want the town to “stay the same,” but they also recognize the need to develop regulations and ordinances to manage the inevitable growth.

Webster’s ordinances and building regulations may need to be amended to allow for alternative types of housing, such as multi-family structures or conservation design subdivisions.

The Housing Chapter’s goal is to identify strategies that can maintain and enhance the current quality of Webster’s housing and review alternatives to accommodate a variety of housing types consistent with different personal needs, income, and stages of life. Detailed information about Webster’s responsibility to provide affordable housing; conservation development strategies; and resources/strategies to meet housing needs are provided in the Appendices at the end of the chapter.

Community Survey

In May 2003, a Master Plan Community Survey was mailed out to approximately 1100 property owners. Over 330 surveys were returned for a 30% response rate. The following survey questions relate to this Housing Chapter of the Master Plan.

In what type of housing do you live?

	#	%
Single family home	231	97
Two family home	3	1
Multifamily or apartment	0	0
Manufactured home	1	0.5
Mobile home	4	1.5

How important do you think each of the following is to the Town?

	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Rural atmosphere	249	57	5
Natural resources	199	96	8
Education system	180	108	20
Scenic areas	158	118	30
Community spirit	154	135	15
Historic character	144	125	35
Location	101	152	30
Town services	96	175	233
Facilities/recreation	70	180	52
Employment opportunities	32	104	160
Low income housing	25	85	182

Would you like to see the following types of housing encouraged or not encouraged in Webster?

	Highly Encouraged	Encouraged	Not Encouraged
Single family	185	100	15
Conservation (cluster)	110	73	107
Elderly	59	141	88
Individual mobile homes	20	82	193
Two family homes	12	102	176
Conversion into apartments	7	53	222
Condos/town houses	7	58	230
Apartments 5+ units	5	14	275
Mobile home parks	4	19	276
Multi family 3-4 units	2	25	262

Which statement describes Webster's residential rate of growth?

	#	%
Growing too fast	140	43%
Growing too slowly	5	1%
Growth is acceptable	139	43%
No opinion	43	13%
Total	327	100%

Should the town take measures to control growth?

	#	%
Yes	266	82%
No	23	7%
No opinion	35	11%
Total	324	100%

Webster zoning regulations currently require that a newly created building lot, anywhere in town, be at least two acres in size. Should we:

Maintain the existing uniform two-acre	168	48%
Increase the two-acre minimum	63	18%
Decrease the two-acre minimum	18	5%
Establish different zones with minimum lot sizes tailored to each	103	29%
Total	352	100%

Should the developer of a large parcel be given the option of clustering homes on lots smaller than the normally required minimum size in exchange for protecting the remainder of the parcel as open space?

	#	%
Yes	122	37%
No	174	53%
No opinion	30	10%
Total	326	100%

Which of the following methods would you support to balance growth with the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas?

Issue	#	% of total surveys
Encourage private donation of land and/or development rights	227	67%
Town purchase of land for conservation	187	56%
Current use designation	142	42%
Land trusts	131	39%
Re-zoning	79	24%
Town purchase of development rights	77	23%
Impact fees	74	22%

Summary of Survey Results

The majority of survey respondents live in single-family homes (97%). They rate the Town's rural atmosphere, natural resources and scenic areas of top importance.

Of the housing types, the majority of respondents encourage single-family housing. A substantial number of responses encourage conservation (cluster) and elderly housing. Mobile homes, duplexes, apartments, condos, townhouses and other multi-family development are not encouraged.

Nearly half (43%) of the survey respondents feel Webster is growing too fast and the other half (43%) feel Webster's growth is acceptable. However, the vast majority (82%) feel the town should take measures to control growth.

About half the respondents (48%) are in favor of the existing uniform two-acre lot size while a third (29%) recommend establishing different zones with minimum lot sizes tailored to each, and a fifth (18%) would like to see the minimum lot size increased.

Almost 2/3rds of the survey respondents (63%) support "cluster development," while another third (37%) do not support the option of clustering homes on lots smaller than the normally required minimum size in exchange for protecting the remainder of the parcel as open space.

In terms of preserving environmentally sensitive areas, 67% of the respondents encourage private donation of land and or development rights, and another 56% support town purchase of land for conservation. Current use designation and land trusts were also suggested as measures to protect land by 42% and 39% of the respondents, respectively.

Housing Data²

1970-2000 Housing Units

By understanding past housing trends, Webster can better predict future housing growth and needs. Over the past 30 years, Webster has averaged 11 units per year in the 1970's, 18 units per year in the 1980's, and 10 units per year in the 1990's. Since 1970, the total number of housing units has more than doubled, representing a larger growth rate than any of the surrounding communities.

When compared to abutting communities, Webster has the highest percent growth from 1970-1980 (40.2%) and from 1980-1990 (47.5%), and was surpassed in growth rate by Salisbury and Warner from 1990-2000, as can be seen in the following table.

Number of Housing Units, 1970 – 2000

Town	1970 Housing Units	1980 Housing Units	% Change 1970-1980	1990 Housing Units	% Change 1980-1990	2000 Housing Units	% Change 1990-2000	% Change 1970-2000
Webster	276	387	40.2%	571	47.5%	672	17.6%	143.5%
Boscawen	881	1,105	25.4%	1,221	10.5%	1,295	0.6%	46.9%
Concord	9,475	12,081	27.5%	15,697	29.9%	16,881	7.5%	78.2%
Hopkinton	1,022	1,395	36.5%	1,924	37.9%	2,210	14.9%	116.2%
Salisbury	225	290	28.9%	422	45.5%	514	21.8%	128.4%
Warner	618	771	24.8%	1,039	34.8%	1,228	18.2%	98.7%

Housing data for this Chapter was collected from the US Census 1970-2000, Central NH Regional Planning Commission reports, and Webster town reports and staff.

Housing Stock Types

A well-balanced housing stock is important for all communities. A diversified housing stock provides for housing opportunities for all members of the community at various income levels and stages of life. The figures below were compiled using 2000 Census figures.

As of 2000, Webster's housing stock was comprised of 93% single family housing units (second highest in the region), 6.4% manufactured housing units (middle range for the region), and less than one percent multifamily housing units (lowest for the region). Housing types for Webster and abutting communities are shown on the following table.

Housing Types for Webster and Abutting Communities, 2000

Town	Total Units of Housing	# Single-Family Units	Single Family Units as % of Total	# Manuf. Housing Units	Manuf. Housing Units as % of Total	# Multi-Family Units	Multi-Family Units as % of Total
Webster	669	622	93.0%	43	6.4%	4	.60%
Boscawen	1,295	793	61.2%	226	17.4%	276	21.3%
Concord	16,881	7,536	44.6%	1,067	6.3%	8,278	49.0%
Hopkinton	2,210	1,873	84.7%	123	5.5%	214	9.7%
Salisbury	514	486	94.5%	17	3.3%	11	2.1%
Warner	1,228	929	75.7%	134	10.9%	165	13.4%

Source: 2000 Census

Multi-Family is defined as a structure containing 2 or more housing units. Single Family is defined as a 1-unit structure detached from any other structure.

Manufactured Housing is defined in the Manufactured Housing Section.

For the 10 year period, from 1993 to 2003, a total of 146 building permits for new homes were issued, representing an average of nearly 15 permits per year. The majority of them were for single-family residences. Through 2004, 28 permits have been issued, with 12 of them issued for the Pillsbury Lake community. The **Building Permit Map** shows where permits have been issued from 1993 through 2003.

Webster Building Permits Issued, 1993-2003*

Year	Single-Family Housing Building Permits	Multi-Family Housing Building Permits	Manuf. Housing Building Permits	Total Building Permits Issued
1994	8	0	8	8
1995	10	0	3	13
1996	10	0	1	11
1997	12	0	3	15
1998	11	0	1	12
1999	5	0	2	7
2000	16	0	2	18
2001	16	0	3	19
2002	16	0	0	16
2003	27	0	0	27

Source: Webster Town Office

*Note: The number of building permits does not include permits issued for replacement homes or reissued permits.

Owner-Occupied and Renter-Occupied Information

Knowing what percentage of the occupied housing units in a community are owner-occupied and which ones are renter-occupied helps to create a picture of the types of housing options available.

As can be seen in the following chart, in 2000 Webster has 92% of its occupied housing units owner-occupied, which is up from 90% in 1990. Of the surrounding communities, Webster and Salisbury have the smallest percentage of renter-occupied housing both years.

Occupied Housing Units, 1990-2000

Towns	1990					2000				
	Total Occupied Units	Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied		Total Occupied Units	Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied	
		#	%	#	%		#	%	#	%
Webster	491	440	90	51	10	581	531	92	50	8
Boscawen	1,173	886	75	287	25	1,260	946	75	314	25
Concord	14,222	7,443	52	6,779	48	16,281	8,373	51	7,908	49
Hopkinton	3,253	2,551	78	702	22	4,147	3,304	80	843	20
Salisbury	379	357	94	22	6	435	401	92	34	8
Warner	845	675	80	170	20	1048	797	76	251	24

Source: 1990 and 2000 Census, CNHRPC

Household Size

The average household size in a community is an indicator of how the population is arranged. Webster had an owner-occupied and renter-occupied average household size of 2.7 in 2000, which is average for owner-occupied and high for renter-occupied, for the region. Assuming a two-parent household, this means the average household in Webster currently has less than one child.

Average Household Size, 2000

	Average Size Owner-Occupied	Average Size Renter-Occupied
Webster	2.7	2.7
Boscawen	2.7	2.3
Concord	2.6	2.0
Hopkinton	2.7	1.9
Salisbury	2.6	2.5
Warner	2.7	2.0

Source: 2000 Census, CNHRPC

Age of Homeowners

As of 2000, the largest percentages of homeowners in Webster (43.9%) were 45-64 years of age; 15.8% were over 65 years old and 14.1% of the homeowners were less than 34 years old.

Age of Homeowners, 2000

Town	% of Homeowners 34 Years Old or Younger	% of Homeowners 35-44 Years Old	% of Homeowners 45-64 Years Old	% of Homeowners Over 65 Years Old
Webster	14.1	26.2	43.9	15.8
Boscawen	10.8	27.4	40.3	21.5
Concord	11.9	24.6	40.5	23.1
Hopkinton	7.7	22.5	47.3	22.5
Salisbury	11.7	22.9	48.4	17.0
Warner	9.9	25.8	45.2	19.1

Source: 2000 Census

Housing Size

The size of the housing units in a municipality is one measure of the wealth and diversity of residents within a community. The Census defines rooms in a housing unit as: "living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, bedrooms, finished recreation rooms, enclosed porches suitable for year-round use, and lodger's rooms." In 2000, the largest percentage of homes in Webster (37.4%) had 7+ rooms, with less than 4% comprising 3-room housing.

Median Home Size in Webster and Abutting Communities, 2000

Towns	# 1-Room Housing Units	# 2-Room Housing Units	# 3-Room Housing Units	# 4-Room Housing Units	# 5-Room Housing Units	# 6-Room Housing Units	# 7+-Room Housing Units
Webster	0	0	19	46	138	132	200
Boscawen	0	8	20	137	242	233	308
Concord	8	15	899	966	1,798	2,002	3,495
Hopkinton	0	0	19	65	276	471	967
Salisbury	0	2	5	48	95	112	148
Warner	4	11	32	103	157	193	297

Source: 2000 Census

Trends in the Cost of Housing

Since 1980, the cost of housing in the central New Hampshire region has increased significantly. This increase can be attributed to numerous factors, including market demand, interest rates, property tax rates, quality of community facilities, and location.

From 1980 to 1990 the median value for homes in Webster nearly tripled. From 1990 to 2000, the median value decreased by 15.6%. Over the entire period of 1980 to 2000, the median home value in Webster rose nearly 150% from \$43,299 to \$108,200, as reported by the Census. All the towns in the comparison experienced a very high percentage change in the median home value from 1980-1990. All communities experienced decreases in median value from 1990 to 2000, with Webster experiencing the greatest decrease in home value (-15.9%).

Comparison of Median Home Value* 1980-2000

Town	1980 Median Home Value	1990 Median Home Value	% Change in Median Home Value 1980-1990	2000 Median Home Value	% Change in Median Home Value 1990-2000	% Change in Median Home Value 1980-2000
Webster	43,299	128,200	196.1%	108,200	- 15.6%	149.9%
Boscawen	39,660	103,600	161.2%	101,100	- 2.4%	154.9%
Concord	43,200	112,400	160.2%	112,300	0.1%	159.9%
Hopkinton	59,600	144,900	143.1%	146,400	1.0	145.6%
Salisbury	41,900	109,000	160.1%	101,500	-6.9%	142.2%
Warner	41,100	116,800	184.2%	112,700	-3.5%	174.2%

Source: 1980-2000 Census

* Median represents the middle value in a distribution. The median divides the total frequency into two equal parts. Value is the respondent's self reported estimate of how much the property would sell for if it were for sale. The 2000/1990 comparisons do not seem credible, given the realities of the real estate market.

Pillsbury Lake

Pillsbury Lake Community was developed in 1965 and created as a separate district to manage the water resources. The Town of Webster collects and disburses the taxes in Pillsbury Lake Community, including a unique precinct tax. There are about 150 homes in Pillsbury Lake and, in effect, it is the largest subdivision in Webster and represents 19% of the tax base, excluding utilities. The town of Webster has 1,275 parcels of land. Pillsbury Lake has a total of 478 lots, or 37.5% of the total parcels on 242.92 acres. The water district owns a total of 344 acres of land.

Pillsbury Lake Community was established as a seasonal resort. The water delivery system from community wells was constructed to accommodate seasonal use, as were the septic systems. There has been a moratorium on hook ups to the community wells for the past two years. The current problem is the community now includes predominantly year round homes and the water system wasn't designed to accommodate the use it is experiencing. Growth continues in Pillsbury Lake and current market value of the waterfront or lake access property has at least doubled in the past few years, due to the shortage of such properties and the lowest mortgage interest rates in 20 years. Since 1991, about 50% of all the building permits issued in Webster were for the Pillsbury Lake Community. Current zoning ordinances require a 2-acre minimum for building in Webster, including Pillsbury Lake. Since Pillsbury Lake was designed prior to the zoning ordinance, nearly all pre-existing lots are less than the 2-acre minimum (unless several lots have been merged by one owner). The dense development contributes to the water quality problems currently experienced at Pillsbury Lake.

Pillsbury Lake is classified as a eutrophic body, which means that unlike the larger, deeper and younger bodies of water in the state, Pillsbury Lake is "old." It is filling with debris quickly and could, in a few decades, fill up and turn into a marshland. The Pillsbury Lake Water District pays thousands of dollars a year to kill the foliage in the lake but it continues to be a problem. The lack of regulation of housing development and construction on Pillsbury Lake – which brings in fill, sand, rock and new septic leaching – is a major contributor to the potential demise of the Lake. The demise of Pillsbury Lake would erode Webster's tax base.

The moratorium on water hookups requires new development to have on-site wells and septic for two bedrooms only. It appears that contractors skirt that issue by building larger homes and designating additional rooms, which can be additional bedrooms, as dens or utility rooms or offices. Some of the land around Pillsbury Lake is wetlands and much of the recent building has been on or within 50 feet of the waterfront.

The present zoning ordinances and enforcement issues in Webster may not adequately protect the water resources. For example, one lot at Pillsbury Lake had three septic systems installed in less than an acre on waterfront property.

In accordance with an article adopted at the town meeting in March 2004, the town established its authority to have a certified soil scientist approve the septic system prior to state approval.

Housing Issues and Strategies

When considering Webster's housing needs for the future, it's important to keep in mind the goals of maintaining the town's rural character and protecting the environment. If Webster faces considerable growth pressure, it may be necessary to consider administrative and zoning

regulations that allow for different types, styles, prices and densities of housing to accommodate a diverse population. The following ideas are presented for consideration in planning for future housing needs:

- Consider adopting growth management regulations to slow the development of growth in Pillsbury Lake and other areas as necessary to promote water quality and other environmental issues.
- Revise the building permit application to include certification of compliance with the Shoreland Protection Act.
- Revise the Zoning Ordinance to strengthen the requirement for the merging of small, contiguous, non-conforming lots under common ownership, thereby creating conforming or more nearly conforming lots more likely to comply with setback requirements, well safety radii and septic system design constraints.
- Require the building inspector to review the building plans and physically check the site to insure compliance with the setbacks from the road and the driveway placement as well as setbacks from water bodies.

Chapter 7 – Transportation

Introduction

A safe and efficient transportation network is essential for the development of a prosperous community. Over the past several years, development trends in Webster have been largely influenced by its natural beauty and proximity to Concord. It is likely that these will continue to play major roles in the development of Webster and the central New Hampshire region. This Transportation Chapter reaffirms a commitment to the preservation of the rural and open space character of Webster and seeks to promote an integrated system of transportation for the 21st Century.

Rural character and sense of place are important components of a high quality of life in Webster. Webster's rural atmosphere is defined by its forests, fields, recreational trails, rustic gravel roads, historic stone walls, and numerous water bodies. These features are important to the fabric of the community and need to be protected and preserved. However, as development increases, many residents and landowners are concerned that Webster's rural atmosphere and unique sense of place will slowly erode as the Town increasingly becomes a bedroom community and a "cut-through" to and from other communities. This Chapter hopes to identify Webster's transportation infrastructure resources and propose strategies to preserve and enhance them.

Planning for future transportation needs should be carried out in a manner that not only accommodates anticipated future growth of the Town but will also help insure that development will occur in a responsible manner. Through comprehensive planning and construction of identified roadway improvements, the Town can develop a transportation network that will meet the needs of the community for the foreseeable future. Sound and thoughtful transportation planning is an essential part of guiding development in order to preserve valued features of the community and achieve and enhance community goals.

The purpose of this Chapter is to provide an inventory and assessment of Webster's transportation network, detail sources of funding for projects, identify new alternative modes of transportation for the Town's population, and provide policy recommendations to improve the existing transportation network and achieve the overall community transportation goals.

Community Survey Results

In the summer of 2003, the Master Plan Steering Committee sent out a survey to every landowner (1,100 total) in Webster, with a 30% response rate. The following four survey questions and responses are relevant to the Transportation Chapter.

Do you think the condition of paved and unpaved roads in Webster is acceptable?

Yes	219	68%
No	71	22%
No Opinion	32	10%

The updating of Class VI roads(not town maintained) to Class V (town maintained) should be:

Encouraged	87	27%
Discouraged	164	51%
No Opinion	73	22%

The issuance of building permits for homes on Class VI roads should be:

Encouraged	71	23%
Discouraged	146	47%
No Opinion	96	30%

How important is it to you, if it involves a tax increase and/or additional public spending, to expand, provide, protect, or improve the following?

	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Opposed
Scenic Roads	81	127	78	19
Non-motorized recreational trails	51	111	104	39
Highway and Public Works	37	141	94	18
Bike Paths	35	127	97	42
Upgrading Dirt Roads	33	82	132	45

State Highway Classifications

A system used to classify Town- or State-owned roadways in New Hampshire is the State Aid Highway Classification System. This system was created under the requirement set forth by RSA 229-231, to determine the responsibility for the reconstruction and maintenance of roadways located in the State. This system is also used to determine the eligibility of roads for State funding. This classification system consists of six categories (Class I through Class VI highways). See the **Highway Classification Map** for more detail.

Class I, Trunk Line Highways

This classification consists of all existing and proposed highways on the primary state system, except all portions of such highways within the compact sections of communities, providing said sections are Class I highways. There are no Class I Highways in Webster.

Class II, State Aid Highways

This classification consists of all existing and proposed highways on the secondary state systems, except those in compact sections of cities and towns. All sections of these roadways must be improved to the satisfaction of the NHDOT and are maintained and reconstructed by the State. The Town must maintain all unimproved sections of these roadways, where no state or federal

moneys have been expended, until they are improved to NHDOT satisfaction. All bridges maintained with state or federal funds shall be maintained by the State, while all other bridges shall be the responsibility of the municipality. Route 127 is a Class II Highway.

Class III, Recreational Roads

This designation is assigned to all roads leading to, and within, state reservations designated by the New Hampshire Legislature. The NHDOT assumes all responsibility for construction and maintenance. There are no Class III Highways in Webster.

Class IV, Urban Highways

This designation is assigned to all highways within the compact areas of municipalities listed in RSA 229:5 V. The compact section of any city or town shall be the territory within such city or town where the frontage on any highway, in the opinion of the DOT Commissioner, is mainly occupied by dwellings or buildings where business is conducted, throughout the year. No highway reclassification from Class I or II to Class IV shall take effect until all rehabilitation needed to return the highway surface to reputable condition has been completed by the State. There are no Class IV Highways in Webster.

Class V, Rural Highways

This classification consists of all traveled highways that the town or city has the duty to maintain regularly. Pleasant Street and Deer Meadow Road are two examples of Class V Highways in Webster.

Class VI, Unmaintained Highways

Roads under this category consist of all other public ways, including highways subject to gates and bars, and highways not maintained by the Town in suitable condition for travel for more than 5 years. Dublin Lane and Rogers Drive are two examples of Class VI Highways in Webster. The following table shows the breakdown of the six different classes of roads, by mileage, in the Town of Webster.

Webster Roadway Mileage by Classification*

Road Classification	Description	Miles
Class I	Trunk Line Highway	0.0
Class II	State Aid Highway	13.4
Class III	Recreational Roads	0.0
Class IV	Urban Highways	0.0
Class V	Rural Highways	31.8
Class VI	Unmaintained Highways	5.4
Total		50.5

Source: NHDOT 1/1/98 Report
 * Does not include Private Roads

Current Traffic Counts for Roads with Count Data

The majority of traffic counts conducted by the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) and the Central NH Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC) are non-permanent counts. These

counts are normally collected over a period of three to seven days between the months of May and October. The Towns themselves select the roads to which counts are to be conducted on. The selection process involves the Selectmen, the Road Agent, the Planning Board, and the Police Department. The traffic counters operate by sensing air pulses that are created when vehicles pass over the rubber tubes that have been stretched across the roadway and are connected to the traffic counters.

As with any mechanical counting device, traffic counts are prone to a variety of errors being introduced into the count. The rubber tube may experience a failure, which could end the count prematurely or simply cause the machine to under or over count the vehicles passing over it. Due to the short counting period, there could be a local gathering that we (CNHRPC or NHDOT) were not aware of that could artificially elevate or lower the count. Other factors that can contribute to error include busy roads, vehicles turning near traffic counters, trucks, or slow travel speeds. Some of these errors can be adjusted for using other data, but those adjustments are not made for all counts. In general, traffic counts, particularly older counts, should be used as a general guide for how many vehicles are utilizing a given roadway.

From 1994-2003, NHDOT and CNHRPC monitored traffic at 13 locations in Webster. The numbers in the table on the next page represent a snapshot of the average weekday traffic from May to November on selected roadways.

Regular monitoring of traffic is critical to the planning process, as accurate projections are required for logical transportation and land use planning. By utilizing this data, the Town can identify corridors that may be impacted by future development trends.

Suggestions

- Ensure that the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Police Department, and Road Agent are giving thought to the location of the traffic counts and coordinating the location requests to ensure that the requests are not conflicting.
- Annually publish the traffic count numbers in the annual report to help educate the public on these issues.
- The Planning Board should use traffic count numbers, if available, when reviewing development proposals.
- Traffic count information could be used when prioritizing local road improvements.

Average Daily Traffic Counts for Webster Roads, 1994-2003

Road	Location	Y1994	Y1995	Y1996	Y1997	Y1998	Y1999	Y2000	Y2001	Y2002	Y2003
Centennial Drive	From Deer Meadow to Corn Hill	-	-	-	289	-	-	-	-	-	120*
Clothespin Bridge Rd.	Over Blackwater River	400	-	-	-	390	-	-	980	-	569
Clothespin Bridge Road	Between NH 127 and Deer Meadow	-	-	385	-	-	-	-	-	-	484
Corn Hill Road	Boscawen Town line	-	-	342	-	-	-	-	-	-	554
Deer Meadow Road	at Concord Town Line	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1036	-
Deer Meadow Road	Over Deer Meadow Brook	460	-	-	-	510	-	-	642	-	-
Little Hill Road	East of Warner/ Webster Road	150	-	-	-	100	-	-	182	-	-
NH 127	East of Warner TL (NB-SB)	840	930	-	940	-	-	-	-	-	795
NH 127	Over Blackwater River	1200	-	-	-	1200	-	-	1400	-	-
Tyler Road	Over Blackwater River	260	-	-	-	-	-	-	1500	-	-
White Plains	Warner TL	-	-	-	-	400	-	-	452	-	459
White Plains Road	at Blackwater River Dam	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	307	-
White Plains Rd	Warner TL	-	-	323	-	400	-	-	452	-	461

Source: CNHRPC Traffic Count Information, 2004

*This count was taken after road was posted for no thru traffic.

Commuting Patterns

The 2000 Census is a good source of information on commuting patterns in the central New Hampshire region. In 2000, 469 Webster residents (47.7% of employed Webster residents) were commuting to Concord, Hopkinton, and Manchester to work, while 55 people were commuting into Webster for work from Boscawen, Bow, and Allenstown, which represents a small number of workers from those communities.

Commuting Patterns in Webster, 2000

Top 3 Locations Where Webster Residents are Commuting to		Top 3 Locations Where People are From that Are Commuting Into Webster	
Location	Number	Location	Number
Concord	357	Boscawen	26
Hopkinton	65	Bow	15
Manchester	47	Allenstown	14

Source: 2000 Census

Understanding the commuting patterns of the labor force in the community can assist in planning roadway improvements that will make important travel routes more efficient and safe, and will promote sound economic growth.

Speed Limits

Speed limits have been the usual method of improving pedestrian safety and other non-motorized modes of travel, as well as ensuring motorist safety. In both rural and urban areas, the minimum speed limit a town can impose is 25 miles per hour. Limits can be made lower at intersections (RSA 265:63, (a)) and in school zones (265:60, II (a)). As can be seen on the **Speed Limit Map**, most areas within town have no posted speed limits.

Suggestions

- Webster could investigate establishing a standard of 25 mph or less in densely developed neighborhoods that have seen a large increase in traffic and/or numerous motor vehicle accidents.
- Place speed limit signs at major entry points and intersections that say “Speed limit 35 mph unless otherwise posted.”
- Increased signage, lights, and/or pavement markings should be installed in the area around the school for increased safety.
- The Police Department and the Board of Selectmen should create a method for tracking all complaints about speeding vehicles. This list should be reviewed annually to assess if greater enforcement and/or revised speed limit postings should follow.

Accident Data

One of the most obvious methods of identifying where transportation improvements are needed is to analyze the location, frequency, and type of accidents that occur at various locations in the

community. From 1996-2003, 83 motor vehicle accidents were reported to the Webster Police Department. The **Accident Location Map**, provides the accident locations, by year, of reported automobile accidents, which may be due, in part, to the conditions of the road.

Special Classifications of Roads

Private Roads

Private roads are roads that have been constructed by and remain in the ownership of private parties, such as developers or the homeowners the road serves. The Town currently does not allow the development of new private roads or the building along existing private roads, nor does the Town maintain any of the existing Private Roads.

The following is a list of the 12 private roads within the Town of Webster. These can also be seen in the **Private Road, Scenic Road, and Class VI Road Location Map**.

- Brookfield Circle
- Cashell Lane
- Cut Road
- Frost Lane
- Hemlock Hollow Road
- Kimball Lane
- Longver Lane
- Newport Circle
- Rolfe Road
- Trumbull Pond Road
- Walker Pond Road
- Westwind Village Road

Scenic Roads

In New Hampshire, communities have the ability to protect the character of specific scenic roads by enacting the provisions of RSA 231:157 at annual Town Meeting. Any Class IV, V, or VI highway can be designated a Scenic Road using the procedure in RSA 231:157. Ten people who are either Town voters, or who own land abutting the road (even though not voters) may petition. The voters of the Town may, at any annual or special town meeting, by vote designate the road as a Scenic Road. A town may rescind its designation of a Scenic Road using the same procedure.

The effect that Scenic Road designation has is to legally require a hearing, review, and written permission by the Planning Board before the Town, or a public utility, can remove (or agree to the removal of) stone walls, or can cut and remove trees with a circumference of 15 inches, at 4 feet from the ground. However, this Planning Board requirement is full of exceptions. The Planning Board can be bypassed – and only Selectmen permission is needed - if the Highway Agent wishes to cut trees that have been declared a "nuisance" under RSA 231:145-146, or which, in the Highway Superintendent's opinion "pose an imminent threat." Moreover a public

utility can cut the trees for the "prompt restoration of service" without anybody's permission (RSA 231:158, II). The Scenic Road law does not prohibit landowners from the cutting of trees or removal of stone walls (RSA 231:158, IV) located on their property.

In recognition of the fact that State law itself is not very stringent, the New Hampshire Legislature added RSA 231:158, V, in 1991, which gives a town broad power to impose scenic road regulations that are different from, or in addition to, those contained in the State law. These additional regulations could include giving protection to smaller trees or by inserting criteria for the Planning Board to use in deciding whether to grant permission. Though some critics of the law believe it to be too weak, RSA 231:157 remains one of the few techniques available for the preservation of culturally important and scenic roads.

There are three designated Scenic Roads in Webster – Mutton Road (South), Bashan Hollow Road, and Gerrish Road (South). These roads can also be seen on the **Private Road, Scenic Road, and Class VI Road Location Map**.

The diversity of roads in Webster contributes to the Town's unique and historic atmosphere. Maintaining the gravel roads and roads with scenic attributes will further enhance the character of the community.

Class VI Roads

Class VI roads are roads that are not maintained by the Town, may be subject to gates and bars, and are almost always gravel. The **Private Road, Scenic Road, and Class VI Road Location Map** highlight the location of current Class VI roads.

Suggestions

- Webster should create a Private Roads Policy that would outline the conditions under which the Town would consider accepting a pre-existing Private Road as a Town road.
- The Town should make available information on the State Scenic Road Law and what such designation means.
- Those roads that have been designated as Scenic Roads should have markers or street signs indicating that designation.
- The Town should consider creating a Scenic Road Policy that is more stringent than the State policy to ensure protection and preservation of the attributes along the designated Scenic Roads.

Bridges

Bridges are key components of the highway system, as they connect road segments across streams, lakes, rivers, and other roads. Bridges are the most expensive sections of roads and the lack of adequate bridges creates transportation bottlenecks. Currently, there are a total of 6 bridges in the Town of Webster.

The NHDOT maintains an inventory of all bridges in New Hampshire using Federal Sufficiency Ratings (FSR), a nationally accepted method for evaluating bridges. A FSR represents the relative overall effectiveness of a bridge as a modern day transportation facility. A FSR greater

that 80 means that the bridge is in overall good condition. A bridge having an FSR between 50 and 80 is eligible for Federal bridge rehabilitation funding. A bridge with an FSR less than 50 is eligible for either Federal bridge replacement or rehabilitation funding.

Functionally Obsolete refers to a bridge with substandard deck width, under clearance, approach roadway alignment, or inadequate waterway. Structurally Deficient refers to a bridge with one or more deteriorated components whose condition is critical enough to reduce the safe load carrying capacity of the bridge.

The Bridge Network, which encompasses six Town-owned and State-owned bridges, is an important and necessary component of the comprehensive transportation infrastructure.

Webster Bridges

Bridge	Feature Crossed	FSR	Obsolete or Structurally Deficient	Year Built	Owner
White Plains Road (Schoodac Rd.)	Knights Meadow Brook	97.9		1930	Town
NH-127	Blackwater River	63.8		1941	State
Tyler Rd. (South)	Blackwater River	70.3		1951	Town
Clothespin Bridge Rd.	Blackwater River	54.7	Obsolete	1954*	Town
Tyler Rd. (North)	Blackwater River	64.5		1937	Town
Deer Meadow Rd.	Dear Meadow Brook	72.6		1935	Town

Source: NHDOT Mini Bridge List, 1997

* Re-decked in 1985

Suggestions

- Replace Clothespin Bridge in a manner that fits the rural character of the town, and allows for a more useable and safe bridge, including sidewalks along the bridge for pedestrians.
- Webster should work to repair, replace, and/or upgrade all bridges where necessary.
- The Town should actively apply for federal, state, and local grants to help fund the maintenance/upgrading of the town-owned bridges.

Town Road Construction Standards

How streets are designed and built is a key part of well-planned, orderly growth. The design and construction of roads affects the visual quality of communities, public safety, and quality of life for years to come.

Different streets have different functions, thus requiring different designs. Road design standards should have built-in flexibility that fits with natural contours, that preserves natural features, and meets other community objectives. Rigid design standards can lead to over-designed roads, which encourage excessive vehicle speeds, and present a less attractive neighborhood streetscape. Sound road design considers topographic features, to assure proper

road functions and to minimize impacts to vegetative and other natural features. Flexible street alignment and design standards allow new roads to fit well with the land, and preserve the natural features to the area as much as possible.

Webster's current road design requires all new streets to have a 50 foot-wide right-of-way (ROW), 10 foot-wide paved travel lanes, and 5 foot-wide shoulders. There is no provision for flexibility for natural features or the topography of the land when designing new Town roads.

Many communities are taking the position that smaller, "less built" roads, servicing residential areas help to preserve the residential "community feel" of a neighborhood, rather than a cut-through to other areas of Town. By allowing for smaller, narrower roads, that meet all necessary pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular safety and transportation standards, Webster can retain the small-town feel that it cherishes.

Provisions for flexible design requirements for Town roads will allow the Planning Board and developer the necessary flexibility to design, approve, and build roads that are at the appropriate scale. Keeping pavement and travel lanes to a minimum width, relative to a streets function, helps keep speed down, preserves a more appealing streetscape, reduces costs to the developer and Town, and allows the Town to retain its rural look and feel while accommodating growth.

Suggestions

- The Planning Board, Road Agent, and Highway Committee should review and evaluate the Town's current road standards as to their appropriateness and make any necessary changes.
- Requirements for landscaping and underground utilities should be researched by the Planning Board and incorporated into the Town Road Construction standards.
- Create new road construction standards that allow new roads, built in rural areas, to be consistent in design with the rural roads with which they connect.
- The use of a hammerhead design for dead-end streets should be allowed.
- Create a minimum road length for new subdivision roads.
- Allow new roads to be longer than 1,200 feet if provisions are made for emergency ROW/access and/or fire protection provisions, such as the installation of cisterns.
- The design and planning of new streets should follow natural contours and preserve natural features whenever practical; minimize traffic speed, volume, noise, congestion, and hazards to pedestrians; and minimize the amount of paved area to reduce storm water runoff, thereby protecting water resources and reducing construction costs.

Driveways

Driveways, although less complex than newly proposed roads, can have just as much of an impact on abutting properties and public safety. A driveway permit needs to be obtained from the Town, through the Road Agent, or the State of NH through NHDOT if the driveway is accessed from a state route.

Suggestions

- The requirement that for the first 25 feet of driveway that connects to a town road, there be a maximum slope of 8% for all new driveways should be added to the Town regulations.
- Definitions for “driveway” and “shared driveway” should be added to the Zoning Regulations and Subdivision Regulations.
- Create a provision in the Subdivision Regulations that allows for shared driveways with the conditions that the shared driveway is in the best interest of the Town, that an easement is recorded allowing for such shared driveway between property owners, and the inclusion of a deed restriction that specifies that the driveway can not ever be considered for acceptance by the Town for reclassification as a Town Road. The Towns legal counsel would need to review the easement and deed restrictions prior to approval.
- For all Subdivisions, the locations of the proposed driveway needs to be shown and be required as part of the approval process.
- When reviewing an application for a driveway permit, the entire driveway design and potential impacts need to be considered to ensure that emergency access, soil erosion, and water runoff will not be issues of concern.

Webster Transportation Management

Road Management Plan

Many communities have a 5-10 year road management plan that outlines all of the maintenance for each town-owned road within that time period and its associated cost. The plan is updated annually and should be used by the Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, and the Zoning Board of Adjustment when reviewing development proposals and building permit applications. The Selectmen could also use the plan as a basis for the transportation budget for each year.

A baseline inventory of all town-owned roads should be done before a Road Management is created. This inventory should include the names of all town-owned roads, when they were first built, the Class of the Road, the travel and ROW widths, the length, the surface material used, when they were accepted by the Town, when they were discontinued, and the current condition.

The financing of and planning for transportation maintenance and improvements can be difficult to accomplish in small communities with limited resources. However, by having a long-rang maintenance plan for all roads, budgeting can be done more easily and comprehensively.

Winter Maintenance of State Roads

The Town of Webster currently carries out winter maintenance (snow plowing) on Tyler Road and White Plain Road, which are State Roads. The Town receives no money for this maintenance though the state Highway Block Grant Aid Program, meaning that the Town is solely paying for the winter maintenance of these State roads.

During the period following 1905 when the State began the development of a permanent highway system, the alignment of many State Aid Highways did not coincide with routes evolving as important connectors to cities, Towns, and Trunk Line Highways. The segmented

assignments resulted in many isolated sections of State Aid Highways, which were of minor significance to the Secondary State Highway System. The situation led to legislation in 1937, which divided Class II Highways into Class 2-A Highways having Statewide significance and Class 2-B Highways, which included the remainder of those roads previously receiving state aid (Tyler Road and White Plain Road). It is a policy of the NH Department of Transportation to only maintain those roads year-round that are significant to the State network (2-A Highways). (See RSA 228:27, 230:3; 230:4; and 235:12)

An avenue that some communities have taken is to request a reclassification of Class 2-B Highways to Class V. Such action would increase the mileage used to determine Block Grant Funds for the Town of Webster and eliminate NH DOT from any permitting, signing, etc. on those roadways.

Highway Committee

The Highway Committee was created in 1996 and consists of four members that are appointed by the Board of Selectmen for 3 year terms. The Committee acts as an advisory body to the Road Agent and gives recommendations for road maintenance priorities to the Board of Selectmen.

Conclusion

The overall goal the Transportation Chapter is an attempt to articulate a vision and a means by which that vision can be achieved for the Town.

Chapter 8 – Future Land Use

Introduction

Since its incorporation, Webster has evolved from an agricultural community to a primarily rural, residential community with many residents commuting daily to surrounding areas, such as Concord, for employment. There are home-based and small businesses located in Webster, which provides a local employment base but does not draw many people in from outside the Town for employment opportunities.

As Webster considers the planning of its future land use, thought must be given to how the land is currently being used and regulated in order to evaluate future outcomes and development. The Current Land Use Chapter contains information on how land in Webster is currently being used and regulated.

As Webster moves into the 21st century, the following goals can serve as starting points for discussions on zoning changes, land development regulations, and actions taken by the Town on the issues of land conservation, business development, and community facilities expansion.

- 1) Develop a long-range picture for future land development.
- 2) Promote development that complements the natural and historic resources of the community.
- 3) Ensure that all development in Town happens in a manner that ensures community services and assure that the Town economy is not negatively impacted.
- 4) Allow for housing options to be built in Webster in order to meet the needs of current and future residents and state mandated housing developments.
- 5) Provide for open space throughout the Town that can be used by the public for recreational activities.
- 6) Promote Public Health and Safety.

This Chapter describes the Zoning recommendations that the Town of Webster can undertake in order to move toward achieving the future land use goals listed above. The recommendations contained within this Chapter are proactive, comprehensive, and long-range in scope and should not be considered a “quick fix.” Rather, the recommendations should be looked at as a starting point for further discussions on how Webster wants to grow and develop in the next 10 years.

Community Survey Results

In the summer of 2003, the Master Plan Steering Committee sent out a survey to every landowner (1,100 total) in Webster, with a 30% response rate. The following 10 survey questions and responses are relevant to the Future Land Use Chapter.

*How important do you think each of the following is to the Town?
Please check all that apply*

	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Rural Atmosphere	249	57	5
Natural Resources	199	96	8
Scenic Areas	158	118	30
Historic Character	144	125	35

*Would you like to see the following types of housing
Encouraged or not encouraged in Webster?*

	Highly Encouraged	Encouraged	Not Encouraged
Single Family	185	100	15
Conservation (Cluster)*	110	73	107
Elderly	59	141	88
Individual Mobile Homes	20	82	193
Two Family homes	12	102	176
Conversion into apartments	7	53	222
Condominiums/ town houses	7	58	230
Apartments 5+ units	5	14	275
Mobile Home Parks	4	19	276
Multi-Family 3-4 Units	2	25	262

* Answer given contradicts answer given in later question about density and land conservation

In your opinion, which statement describes Webster's residential rate of growth?

Growing too fast	140	43%
Growing too slowly	5	1%
Growth is acceptable	139	43%
No opinion	43	13%

Should the Town take measures to control growth?

Yes	266	82%
No	23	7%
No opinion	35	11%

Which of the following methods would you support to balance growth with the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas?

Encourage private donation of land and/or development rights	227
Town purchase of land for conservation	187
Current Use designation	142
Land Trusts	131
Rezoning	79
Town purchase of development rights	77
Impact Fees	74

*Which of the following enterprises/services would you like to see in Webster?
Please check all that apply*

Home based businesses	157	Grocery stores	100	Professional office park	53
Agricultural related businesses	148	Restaurants	99	None of the above	47
Post Office	144	Recreational businesses	73	Retail shopping mall	29
Day care/after school care	139	Light industry	73	Hotels/motels	26
Health clinic/doctor's office	117	Tourism related businesses	57	Heavy industry	11

Should Webster try to encourage light commercial/industrial (Non-residential) growth to broaden its tax base?

Yes	125	38%
No	154	47%
No opinion	48	15%

Webster zoning regulations currently require that a newly created building lot, anywhere in town, be at least two acres in size. Should we:

Maintain the existing uniform two-acre	168	48%
Increase the two-acre minimum	63	18%
Decrease the two-acre minimum	18	5%
Est. different zones with minimum lot sizes tailored to each	103	29%

*Should the developer of a large parcel be given the option of clustering homes on lots smaller than the normally required minimum size in exchange for protecting the remainder of the parcel as open space?**

Yes	122	37%
No	174	53%
No Opinion	30	10%

* Answers contradict those given on housing question

The issuance of building permits for homes on Class VI roads should be:

Encouraged	71	23%
Discouraged	146	47%
No Opinion	96	30%

Should we require underground utilities for any new, large developments on any new or upgraded roads?

Yes	204	63%
No	61	19%
No opinion	57	18%

Land Use Considerations

Aquifer Protection

Aquifers are important natural resources because they store large amounts of water that can be used for private or municipal wells. An Aquifer Protection Ordinance could be established to preserve and maintain the existing and potential groundwater supplies, aquifers, and groundwater recharge areas of the Town, and protect them from adverse development or land-use practices; to preserve and protect sources of drinking water supply for the public health and safety; and to conserve natural resources.

Pillsbury Lake

The Subdivision Covenants from 1965, when the land around Pillsbury Lake was subdivided, require that any land development plans for the Pillsbury Lake area be submitted for review and approval to the Pillsbury Lake Management Committee. This includes all municipal and state

approvals, such as building permits, septic systems, Site Plans, lot line adjustments, and voluntary mergers.

The District would encompass the same boundaries as Pillsbury Lake Management, Inc.

Wetlands Regulations

Wetlands provide numerous functions and values, including flood control, water storage and groundwater recharge, erosion and sediment control, pollution filtration, and wildlife habitat. The purpose of Wetlands Regulations would be to protect and regulate the use of wetlands in the Town of Webster. The Regulations would be outlined in the Zoning Ordinance and could include a set of criteria that, if met, would constitute compliance with the Regulations.

Strategies/Resources to Meet Future Land Use Goals

The following strategies could be employed to help meet future land use concepts.

Growth Management Ordinance

The purpose of a Growth Management Ordinance is to regulate and control the timing of residential development in accordance with the objectives of both the Master Plan and the Capital Improvements Program.

Impact Fees

A municipal impact fee represents a one-time, up-front charge on a new development to pay for future public capital costs serving new development, or to recover past expenditures in capacity to accommodate that development. Impact fees are most commonly used in New Hampshire for the funding of schools, roads, and recreational facilities. However, impact fees are also being used for fire protection, police department, library, solid waste, water and sewer, and municipal administrative facilities.

The amount of any assessed impact fee should be a proportional share of the municipal capital improvement costs, which are related to the capital needs created by the new development. The impact fees must not be spent on upgrading, replacing, or maintaining existing facilities and services, which already exist prior to any new development. The Town has six years in which to spend the collected fee. If it is not used within that period of time the money must be returned to the property owner.

Site Plan Review Regulations

The Town of Webster Site Plan Review Regulations should be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure best management practices that will benefit the future development of the Town. Subdivision regulations should incorporate language to allow the Planning Board to require a subdivider to pay for necessary off-site capital improvements.

Subdivision Regulations

Subdivisions are defined as the division of a parcel of land into two or more lots or other divisions of land for the purposes, whether immediate or future, of sale, rent, lease, condominium conveyance or building development. Most of the subdivisions that have taken place in Webster in over the last 10 years have been rather small and limited in number (see the Current Land Use Chapter for more information). However, this trend is not likely to continue due to residential development pressure throughout the region and the availability of large tract

of land in Webster. Ensuring that the Regulations are periodically reviewed and updated to ensure best management practices will benefit the future development of the Town.

Conclusion

As Webster continues to develop and grow future land use needs to be carefully planned and the Town needs to be proactive if it is to be consistent with the nature of the community to which current residents aspire.

Appendix 1: List of Webster's Hills

There may be different names for the same hill. Generally accepted names and elevations are:

<u>Hill</u>	<u>Approximate Elevation</u>	<u>Location</u>
Sweatts Hill	860ft.	east side Lake Winnepocket
Round (Pond) Hill	840ft	west side Lake Winnepocket
Corser Hill	840ft	from Pearson Hill Rd. to Old Meeting House
Cook's Hill	820ft	west of north end of Mutton Rd.
Rattlesnake (Potash) Hill	820ft	west of Corser Hill
Rattlesnake Hill	820ft	between Gerrish Rd. & Tyler Rd.
Little Hill	800ft	off White Plains Rd.
Clough & Sanborn Hill	800ft	western edge of town, C & S Rd.
Ox Pond Hill	800ft	north of Dustin Rd.
Guideboard Hill	760ft	south end of Little Hill Rd.
Putney Hill	760ft	east of Winnepocket Rd.
Whittier Hill	754ft	north of Ox Pond Hill
Chase Hill	660ft	east of Tyler Rd.
Pillsbury Lake Hunting Preserve Hill	660ft	east of Pillsbury Lake.
(Unnamed hills):		
Wildlife Management Area Hill	700ft	northwest corner of town
Hill southwest of Walker Pond	680ft	southwest of Walker Pond
Hill west of Clothespin Bridge	620ft	west of Clothespin Bridge

(Elevation Source: Webster USGS, 7.5 minute series, Topographical Map)

Appendix 2: List of Conservation and Open Space Lands of Webster

Webster's Permanent Conservation Lands (with Tax Map Page and Lot Number):

- New Hampshire Fish & Game Department's 855 acre Leonard Wildlife Management Area (1-13)
- New Hampshire Fish & Game Department's 107 acre Knight's Meadow Marsh (1-12)
- New Hampshire Fish & Game Department's 18 acre Huntoon Bog Pond (6-49)
- New Hampshire Fish & Game Department's 17 acre marsh on Route 103 and Warner River (7-49)
- The 59 acre Paul P. Mock Memorial Forest at Sweatt's Mill on Blackwater River (town owned) (16-75)
- The 52 acre Riverdale Natural Area on Tyler Road on the Blackwater River (Town owned) (8-12)
- 3.4 acre William Pearson Memorial Park at Sweatt's Mills (Town owned) (5-8)
- 1 acre Sweatt's Mill Island in the Blackwater River, below the dam (gift to Town).(5-5)
- 316 acre Pillsbury Lake Hunting Preserve (Pillsbury Lake District). (9-6)

Webster's Privately Owned, Permanent Conservation Easements: (showing conservation or other organization holding the easement, and tax map page and lot number):

- 268 acres on the west side of the Blackwater River (SPNHF: Society for the Protection of NH Forests) (7-40 and 8-23-4)
- 16 acres on the west side of the Blackwater River (SPNHF) (5-71-2)
- 28 acres on the east side of the Blackwater River (SPNHF) (8-23-1,2,3)
- 24 acres of upland pasture and woods on Tyler Road (SPNHF) (8-27)
- 13 acre conservation easement at Sweatt's Mill allowing access to Mock Forest (Town) (6-72-3)
- 56 acres on Bashan Hollow Road (SPNHF) (9-41, 9-42)
- 200 acre easement on Lake Winnepocket (ASNH: Audubon Society of NH). (5-63+)
- 20 acres of wetlands on Beaverdam Brook North of Long St. – the Schildbach Easement (Town) (3-24+)
- 7.5 acres on Blackwater River at Hopkinton town line (SPNHF). (8-42)
- 68 acres on Roby Road (SPNHF) (4-41)
- 4.5 acres on Blackwater River (Town of Webster) (8-31-1)

Land owned and managed by SPNHF (Society for the Protection of NH Forests):

- 92 acres off north end of Mutton Road (connects to SPNHF land in Salisbury) (3-1)
- 122 acres Shea Forest on Clough and Sanborn Hill Roads. (7-24)
- 25 acres on Corn Hill Road, the Woodman Forest, which connects to SPNHF land in Boscawen. (6-53)

Appendix 3: Rationale for Buffers for Wetlands and Surface Waters

The ability of buffers to protect wetlands and surface waters is documented in the scientific literature. The recommendations for buffers in this chapter are based upon Buffers for Wetlands and Surface Waters, A Guidebook for New Hampshire Municipalities. The term “buffer” is defined as “a naturally vegetated upland adjacent to a wetland or surface water.” In this definition, “naturally vegetated” includes the following: uncut or undisturbed forest, minimally disturbed or managed forest, and abandoned pasture or fields. Buffers reduce the adverse effects of human activities on the wetland or surface water by protecting water quality, protecting and providing wildlife habitat, reducing direct human disturbance from dumped debris, noise, carnivorous pets, and many other possible effects; and maintaining aesthetic diversity and recreational value. A buffer thus provides a mosaic of interdependent functions.

Natural Woodland Buffer is defined in the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act (RSA 483-B) as a forested area consisting of various species of trees, saplings, shrubs, and ground covers in any combination and at any stage of growth.

Vegetation in buffers provides hydrologic stabilization by intercepting rainfall, slowing meltwater and overland flow, and promoting infiltration. Wetlands and surface waters without vegetated buffers will experience sharper fluctuations in water levels during storm events, which can be disruptive to aquatic life. With runoff flowing more rapidly into wetlands and surface waters during and immediately after storm events, the flood storage capacity of wetlands and surface waters may be exceeded. This could result in flooding of downstream uplands. Wetlands and surface waters with buffers will experience steadier infiltration, and more gradual and natural changes in water levels, minimizing downstream flooding potential. Moreover, vegetation provides a visual and aural (sound) screen from human activities in upland areas for people using the wetlands or surface waters for recreation. Recreational activities are likewise enhanced by maintenance of water quality, wildlife habitat, and ecological integrity of the wetland that buffers facilitate.

Clear water: Natural vegetation along streams mediates storm runoff and prevents erosion of mineral soils, thus minimizing stream sedimentation. Shaded streams stay colder, and therefore have higher oxygen content than warmer water, and undergo less dramatic daily temperature fluctuations than water exposed to direct sun. Trout and other species that require highly oxygenated water and stable temperatures therefore depend on trees, shrubs, and herbaceous growth to maintain water quality.

Organic debris falling into streams is the primary source of nutrients to that habitat. Logs and branches provide refuge from predators and shelter for turtles and fish. The condition of the streambank is highly dependent on root structures of trees. Undercut banks are important for fish, which rest in their shade, undetected by predators above. Turtles hibernate on stream bottoms, often choosing sites under root tangles. Pools and riffles are created by fallen trees and branches. Buffers provide food, cover, habitat and protection from human disturbance for many wildlife species. Buffers provide food for bears, deer, migrant birds, and many other species. Buffers provide cover and cavity trees necessary for some nesting birds. There are 21 wetland-dependent bird species in New Hampshire and 18 more bird species that are commonly found in wetlands. Turtles nest in upland habitat and depend upon a thick shrub habitat.

Water quality: We have mentioned the beneficial effects of buffers on surface runoff and sediment control. Buffers prevent an excess of nutrients, especially phosphorus, which cause the

accelerated growth of algae, which blocks sunlight and inhibits the growth of other aquatic plants. Algae “blooms” give way to decomposition, which consumes available oxygen in the water, suffocating fish and other aquatic organisms. Phosphorus and nitrogen are two nutrients most responsible for the eutrophication of ponds and lakes. Nitrate from agricultural and septic system runoff can enter drinking water and harm people, especially young children, because it interferes with the body’s ability to absorb oxygen. Buffers help reduce the entry of excess nutrients into wetlands and surface waters by slowing the flow of surface runoff, and trapping nutrients in the soil surface.

Pathogens: Pathogens are disease causing agents such as bacteria, viruses and parasites. Pathogens may be killed or rendered harmless as they are carried in subsurface flow through the soil. Pathogens from septic systems that are situated too close to surface waters or the water table, or are not designed or maintained properly, may contaminate drinking water supplies or cause harm to those who come in contact with the water through recreational activities.

Other pollutants: Buffers may remove some metals such as copper or zinc from runoff. Leaves in the canopy of forested buffers can neutralize acid caused by acid rain. Pesticides and petroleum may be slowly broken down by microbial activity. Some pollutants may pass through the buffer unchanged. Neither salt nor heavy metals such as cobalt, lead, or mercury are removed by natural buffer processes. Furthermore, pollutants that are stabilized in the buffer may become mobilized if the buffer is disturbed by flooding, excavation, or soil erosion during periods of high flow.

Buffer Width: A buffer’s capacity to capture pollutants depends in part on the width of the buffer, or the distance between the wetland or surface water and the land use from which the wetland or water body is being buffered. A wider width is generally more effective. Studies show that after the point at which most pollutants have been trapped, additional distances do not contribute significant reductions in pollutants. A site specific buffer width determination model is impractical to implement, requiring a layperson to have technical expertise in mapping, soils, determining slopes, etc. Such a method would take time and money to apply. The logistics, legal implications, and monitoring of different buffer widths on adjoining lots further complicates such a scenario.

In Buffers for Wetlands and Surface Waters, pages 29 – 33 provide towns like Webster with guidance on local actions that can be taken to protect buffers next to wetlands and surface waters. This section covers areas such as “Criteria for Determining Where the Buffer May Not Be Appropriate,” and “Existing Non-conforming Land Uses Within the Buffer Area,” and harmful land uses such as salt storage sheds, automobile junk yards, solid or hazardous waste facilities, and more. “Prohibited Uses,” “Special Exceptions,” and “Permitted Uses” can all be found in this section of the book.

Appendix 3 provides an overview of the science provided in the Buffers Guidebook; we recommend a full reading for those interested in fully understanding a rationale for buffers.

Appendix 4: Land Conservation Strategies

The following options could be employed to help meet the conservation recommendations that are listed throughout Chapter 5.

Acquisition

Sometimes the best and simplest way to protect a key parcel of land is through outright acquisition and management. Acquisition may be through gifts or purchases and ensures that the property stays in the use that the donator prefers.

Bond Issue

The Town may agree to borrow money for a conservation project through a municipal bond issue.

Conservation Funds

Some towns have created separate conservation funds or open space acquisition funds specifically for the purpose of paying for land acquisition. Money for these funds may come from Town budget appropriations, land use change taxes, or proceeds from managing or selling Town property, just to name a few.

Appropriation from Town Budget

The Town can regularly set aside money for a conservation fund in their annual Town budgeting process. The Town should consider funding a capital reserve account, through the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), to fund the acquisition of easements and conservation lands. These funds could also be used for match requirements when opportunities arise in which other agencies are funding most of the cost.

Land Use Change Tax

When a property that has been paying the lower Current Use Tax rate is removed from that program, the land use change tax penalty is paid to the Town that the property is located in. The penalty is 10% of the full market value of the land when it leaves the current use program. Some Towns put all of this money directly into the conservation fund.

"Municipal Bill Round-Up"

An additional funding source for a variety of activities, such as greenway acquisition, easement acquisition, and creating bike trails and sidewalks, is the use of a "round up" program for tax bills, utility bills, and registration fees. Under such a program, the taxpayer could voluntarily round his/her bill payment up to a designated amount above the actual bill and designate it to any of the desired programs listed.

Proceeds from Managing or Selling Surplus Town Property

Towns that have property or resources that they manage often can provide income to the Town, as well as the Conservation Fund. This is frequently through timber harvest operations on mature forest land owned by the Town. The proceeds from the sale of surplus Town property can also be dedicated to the Conservation Fund.

Cooperative Ventures with Private Organizations

When the interests of the Town to conserve open space match with the interests of a private organization, the potential for a cooperative partnership to protect land exists. This tactic will require some creative thinking and introductory discussions by Town officials with area organizations who have, or could develop, an interest in conserving open space.

Grants from Foundations

The Town would need to research available grants and develop proposals to seek funding to conserve a particular piece of property or type of resource within the Town. Funding could be sought from foundations at the local, state, regional, and national level.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a federally funded program administered through the Department of Resources and Economic Department. Eligible projects must be outdoors and can include land acquisition for conservation, open space, or the development of an active recreation area, and the expansion or rehabilitation of existing areas. Approximately \$600,000 is available each year with a \$100,000 cap per project.

Tax Deeds

When the Town acquires property because the owner has not paid all of the taxes on the property, the Town can keep and manage the land and include it as part of the Towns conservation plan.

Town Surplus Funds

The Town can apply funds, if they are available, that are left over from prior years budgets to fund conservation projects.

Conservation Easements

Conservation easements are restrictions that landowners voluntarily place upon their property that legally bind the present and future owners of that property, restricting their ability to use some of those rights in order to protect the natural features of the land. Each conservation easement is custom tailored to the interests of the landowner, the receiving entity and the unique characteristics of the property. The land can be sold or deeded by the original owner and subsequent owners, but the restrictions of the easement are binding on all future owners. Typically conservation easements prevent development of land uses such as construction, subdivision and mining, but allow uses such as agriculture, forestry, wildlife habitat, scenic views, watershed protection and education. Conservation easements may or may not allow public access.

The conservation easement exists between a willing landowner and a qualified recipient, which can be the Town or State governments or various conservation organizations. Many public agencies and private organizations make these permanent agreements with landowners and oversee their compliance.

Conservation Subdivision Design

Rather than filling all available space with similar sized houses centered on uniformly sized lots, this development option focuses the construction in a smaller portion of the total land being

developed, and promotes permanent protection of the open space not used for construction. The land selected for permanent open space protection should be designed to fulfill the open space interests of the entire community.

Land Trust

The Town could support non-profit land trusts such as Five Rivers Trust that accepts and pursues property and easements for land of local concern.

SOURCES for the Chapter on Natural Resources

Chase, V.P., L.S. Deming, F. Latawiec, 1995. Buffers for Wetlands and Surface Waters: A Guidebook for New Hampshire Municipalities. Audubon Society of New Hampshire.

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Many helpful citizens of Webster, NH

Appendix 5: Affordable Housing Requirement

State and Local Regulations

The New Hampshire Legislature has promoted the need for communities to develop affordable housing through the creation of NH RSA 674:2,III; RSA 672:1, III e; and RSA 674:32.

NH RSA 674:2, III, requires communities preparing Master Plans to include an analysis regarding the existing and anticipated affordable housing needs of the community. This portion of the Master Plan is to be based on the most recent regional housing needs assessment, as prepared by all Regional Planning Commissions, in addition to other pertinent data.

NH RSA 672:1, III e, specifies the purpose and benefit of local land use regulations and zoning. This section states:

“All citizens of the state benefit from a balanced supply of housing which is affordable to persons and families of low and moderate income. Establishment of housing which is decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable to low and moderate income persons and families is in the best interests of each community and the state of New Hampshire, and serves a vital public need. Opportunity for development of such housing, including so-called cluster development and the development of multi-family structures, should not be prohibited or discouraged by use of municipal planning and zoning powers or by unreasonable interpretation of such powers.”

Lastly, NH RSA 674:32 bars the regulatory prohibition of manufactured housing and sets specific standards for the location of such housing in all municipalities. This is discussed in more detail in the Manufactured Housing section of this Chapter.

Webster’s Theoretical Fair Share of the Regional Affordable Housing Stock

As a result of the growing concern over access to affordable housing, all Regional Planning Commissions in New Hampshire have been charged by the Office of Energy and Planning to develop an affordable housing needs assessment for each community, within their region, every five years.

Because of the lack of 2000 Census data when the *Affordable Housing Needs Assessment* report was written (2000), CNHRPC determined that it would be more appropriate to develop estimates based upon a variety of data, rather than base the report on 1990 Census data. The vast majority of the data utilized in the preparation of this assessment was provided by the New Hampshire Office of State Planning, the New Hampshire Department of Employment Security, and the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration. The *Affordable Housing Needs Assessment* report is scheduled to be redone in 2005 for the central New Hampshire region.

The analysis conducted in this report utilizes the following formulas and definitions.

Estimated Number of Households at 80% of Median Income in 1998

The Department of Housing and Urban Development defines low to moderate-income households as those that earn 80% of the community’s median income, or less. To estimate the number of low to moderate-income households in the central New Hampshire region in 1998, the 1990 estimate for that value is scaled by the ratio of the 1998 HHOEP estimate of community population to the 1990 census population data.

Averaged Result

The “averaged result” factors the community’s share of the regional population, the community’s share of the regional job base, the community’s share of the regional income (wages paid), and the community’s share of the region’s total assessed property values. These figures are considered generation and capacity factors for affordable housing. These figures are added together and then averaged into a single figure for purposes of determining theoretical need.

$$\text{Avg. Result} = [(\text{Community Share of Regional Population}) + (\text{Community Share of Regional Employment}) + (\text{Community Share of Total Regional Wages Paid}) + (\text{Community Share of Regional Assessed Value})] / 4$$

Theoretical Community Share of Affordable Housing for CNHRPC Region

This figure uses the variables of the “averaged result” and the total number of low to moderate-income families, and generates a figure that explains how many affordable housing units a community should theoretically provide based upon generation and capacity figures existing in the community.

Theoretical Share = (Averaged Result for community) x (13,770) where 13,770 is the most recent calculated estimate of the number of low to moderated income households in the Central New Hampshire Region.

Total Credits (a.k.a. the number of affordable housing units existing in the community)

Total Credits accounts for all housing in each community that is suspected to be affordable. The formula is dependent upon the assumption that all manufactured and multifamily housing units in a community are affordable.

$$\text{Total Credits} = [(2 \times \text{Number of Multifamily and Manufactured Housing in Community}) + (\text{Estimated Number of Households at 80\% of Community Median Income})] / 3$$

Future Planning Goal

This figure indicates how many affordable housing units a community should strive to develop in the near future to meet its theoretical share.

$$\text{Future Planning Goal} = (\text{Theoretical Share}) - (\text{Total Affordable Housing Credits})$$

Based on the affordable housing need assessment conducted by CNHRPC in 2000, Webster had less than its theoretical fair share of the affordable housing base for the central New Hampshire region. The formula used by CNHRPC indicated that Webster contained approximately 87 units of affordable housing, which was 71 units less than its theoretical fair share of 158 units. This formula is based on the assumption that all multi-family and manufactured homes in the region should be considered affordable housing, which is not always the case. The table below compares Webster’s affordable housing stock and future goals to all other communities in the central New Hampshire region.

Summary of 2000 Affordable Housing Needs for the Central New Hampshire Region

Town	Theoretical Community Share of Regional Affordable Housing Stock	Total # of Existing Affordable Housing Units *	Future Planning Goal (# of Units Community Should Develop)
Allenstown	392	1,054	0
Boscawen	308	490	0
Bow	1,072	176	896
Bradford	171	147	24
Canterbury	225	75	150
Chichester	236	149	87
Concord	6,150	8,849	0
Deering	167	192	0
Dunbarton	245	103	142
Epsom	415	448	0
Henniker	493	557	0
Hillsborough	563	648	0
Hopkinton	806	416	390
Loudon	502	402	100
Pembroke	735	996	0
Pittsfield	374	772	0
Salisbury	122	69	54
Sutton	190	107	83
Warner	310	317	0
Webster	158	87	71

Source: CNHRPC *Affordable Housing Needs Assessment*, May 2000

* Assumption that all manufactured housing and multi-family housing units are affordable

Affordable housing can be developed using five methods.

1. Subsidize the development. Here subsidies and grants are used to pay development costs, requiring less payment from the renter/homeowner.
2. Subsidize the renter/owner. Grants (such as down payment assistance for homeowners), subsidies or rent vouchers reduce what a renter/owners pays for the housing usually because of the resident's limited income or other circumstances.
3. Reduce development costs through town regulations. Planning and zoning requirements have a significant impact on development costs and thus housing costs. For example, more housing units per acre reduces costs; less housing units per acre increases costs. Thus, towns can encourage (or discourage) affordable housing through town land-use regulations or by allowing incentives to developers that agree to build housing affordable to certain income levels. For example, regulations could allow smaller lots, reduced setbacks, lower impact fees or relief from other regulatory controls that drive up costs making certain housing developments cost prohibitive.

4. A developer can create a development with a mix of affordable and market-rate units mixed throughout with the price from the market-rate development offsetting the costs of providing affordable housing. In this scenario, the market-rate and affordable housing units can look exactly the same and be mixed throughout the development.
5. Combining methods. Because development costs are so high, as compared to incomes, a developer must often use a combination of these methods.

Affordable housing is an issue that is considered and worked on by all levels of government and housing developers both for-profit and non-profit. The Federal government promotes affordable housing through various programs administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. State government promotes affordable housing through the passage of several laws requiring communities to permit affordable housing and through periodic funding.

Furthermore, New Hampshire has also created several Commissions and Departments, such as the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority, to examine and foster the development of affordable housing opportunities. Ultimately, housing must be built in a local community, and thus, communities must ensure their regulations, procedures and support exists for a varied housing supply.

Appendix 6: Resources/Strategies to Meet Housing Needs

The following programs, organizations, and funding sources are resources that Webster can use to address some of the issues outlined in the Housing Chapter.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

Administered by the Department of Resources and Economic Development, the New Hampshire CDBG Program receives several million dollars annually, which communities may compete for to finance affordable housing projects, including rehabilitation of affordable housing units, or expansion of infrastructure to serve affordable housing units. Since its inception in 1983, the CDBG program has renovated or purchased over 8,500 dwelling units in New Hampshire.

Common CDBG projects include:

- Acquisition and rehabilitation of properties through Housing Trusts;
- Single family housing rehabilitation loans and grants;
- Loans and grants for land lords that provide decent, safe, and sanitary affordable housing to low to moderate-income renters; and
- The acquisition and rehabilitation of structures to provide alternative living environments, such as elderly homes, group homes, and boarding houses.
- Expansion of water and sewer infrastructure to benefit existing and/or proposed housing developments.

Communities that apply for CDBG funds are required to have a properly adopted Community Housing Plan. Such a plan must be adopted by the Selectmen at a properly noticed public hearing, and is considered valid for 3 years by the CDBG program.

Concord Area Trust for Community Housing (CATCH)

The Concord Area Trust for Community Housing is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to creating and preserving affordable housing, and to helping renters become owners, throughout Merrimack County. CATCH helps communities by increasing the housing stock within a community, educating and supporting residents looking to buy their first home, and maintaining the properties they already own. CATCH accomplishes these goals through the initiative and dedication of local members and volunteers.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has been fostering affordable housing in many of the nation's communities since its inception in 1965. HUD administers numerous programs to provide housing for low to moderate-income families.

Popular rental assistance programs include:

- Section 8 Housing: Program whereby private landlords enter into a contract with the federal government where, in exchange for providing sub-market rent to low to moderate-income families, the landlord receives a government subsidy.

- Public Housing: Program in which the federal government provides resources for the operation of housing units owned and operated by local, state, or federal entities.
- Subsidized Private Housing: Program in which housing units are owned and operated by a private entity, but are partially funded with public resources to reduce rent. This is similar to the Section 8 Housing program.
- HOME Grant Program: A program created to provide local and state entities with start-up money to develop affordable housing projects.

HUD also administers several popular home ownership programs for low to moderate-income families.

Growth Management Ordinance

The purpose of a Growth Management Ordinance is to regulate and control the timing of residential development in accordance with the objectives of both the Master Plan and the Capital Improvements Program, which need to be adopted by the Planning Board before a Growth Management Ordinance can be implemented.

Housing Development Trust

The Housing Development Trust is a broad based funding program that provides funding for either owner-occupied or rental housing to benefit lower-income households. The program is intended to support projects that could be financed through conventional means. Funds are to be targeted to very low-income groups and the NH Housing Finance Authority gives priority to projects meeting the following qualifying standards:

1. Projects containing the highest percentage of housing units affordable to very low income people.
2. Projects based on the longest commitment to very low-income people.
3. Projects addressing demonstrated housing needs.
4. Projects containing the highest possible proportion of units available for families with children.