

Hudson Master Plan Public Visioning Session Results

To help guide the development of the Master Plan including its goals, objectives and vision section, a series of public input sessions were held during the fall of 2019 with the assistance of town staff, volunteers board members and Nashua Regional Planning Commission Staff. Session A was organized as a *SWOT* (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. Session A was held on a Saturday morning (October 26, 2019) at Nottingham West Elementary, and then repeated the following Wednesday evening at Hills Garrison Elementary. A total of 45 people participated in one of the Session A workshops. During the SWOT analyses, participants were randomly organized into small groups to discuss and then prioritize Hudson's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The results from each of the four categories were recorded on large sheets of paper by each group and were subsequently posted around the meeting room. At the end of the session, participants were able to view the results from all groups and vote for their top selections within each of the four categories using adhesive colored dots.



October 30 SWOT Analysis at Hills Memorial School

STRENGTHS #2

Library *Honorable Mention** Churches *community* Fire & Police dept's
Town website/info

Location - Boston, maintaining convenience to amenities, Nashua
- access, proximity to 3, 93 (hospital)

Benson Park / open spaces

Sense of community

Town hall
+ employees
courteous

Alvirne ROTC HLN

Open spaces
- trail systems

CTE center

Hudson
Community
TV

Educational Options
- PMA, Starewood

Mix of Residential & Commercial
(balanced tax base)

People

Recreation Center & Dept.

Locally Run business (ex Benson Bakery)

Smith Farm

Volunteers

Town events (tree lighting, parades, ones where
everyone

Safety (safe town)

focusing on center of Hudson
when all remain involved

Example of SWOT Analysis tear sheet

The top strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats selected by participants are summarized below:

Strengths

- Location – including proximity to employment, mountains, the ocean, Boston and other attractions, was the top choice by almost all participants.
- Benson Park and other Town open spaces.
- Schools.
- Sense of community.
- Rural/small town feel.

Weaknesses

- Lack of vision.
- lack of investment in community facilities and schools.
- Lack of thoughtful development/over development.
- Traffic volumes and congestion including “pass-through” traffic.
- Opioid crisis.

Opportunities

- Schools – with particular references to proposed improvements at Alvirne and to Alvirne’s CTE Center.
- Economic Development generally along with references made to the potential reuse of existing vacant buildings, attracting new businesses and leveraging open space.

Threats

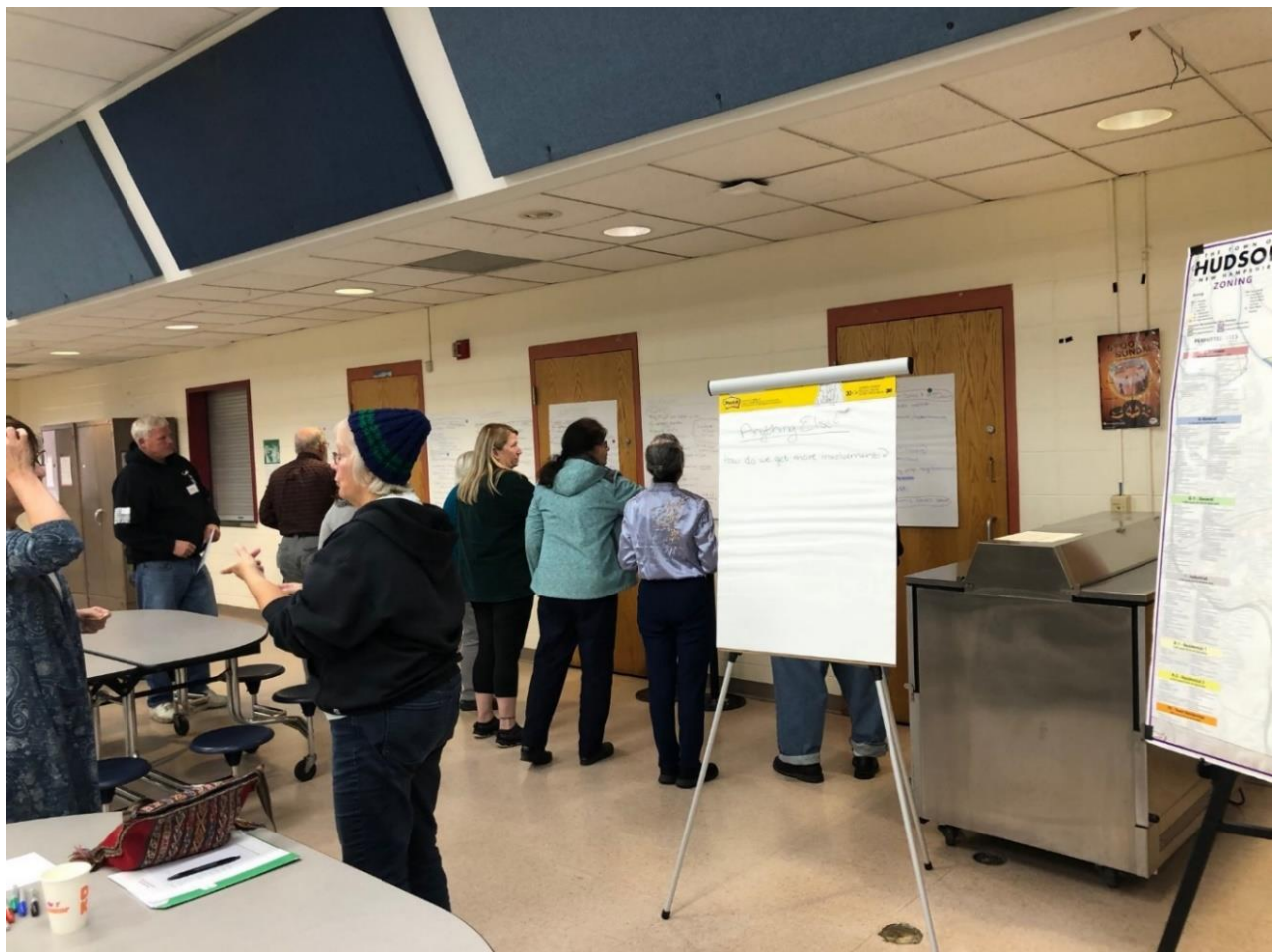
- Lack of community vision.
- Uncoordinated growth (lack of coordination between long range planning and development regulations).
- Low voter turnout and public participation.

During the SWOT analyses, the groups also discussed a wide range of issues impacting Hudson. The notes taken by the individual the groups reflected several common themes including issues related to community character, small town character, growth, development and planning, conservation and open space and traffic.

Following the SWOT Analyses, Session B public input sessions were held on November 20, a Wednesday evening, at Hills Memorial School and on the following Saturday morning at Hills Garrison Elementary. These sessions were designed to dive deeper into the main

issues raised during the SWOT analysis. 41 people participated in one of the Session B workshops. Once again, participants were broken up into random groups and asked to brainstorm on a series of four topics. Topics included the following themes:

- Vision – Community Character; what is our vision? What does small town character mean? What is it about Hudson’s character that we want to preserve; to change?
- Land Use Development (Planning & Zoning) – what do we mean by uncoordinated growth? What does good planning & development look like? How do we get there?
- Natural Resources conservation/recreation/open space: what types of areas should be prioritized? Where? How should conservation land/open space be used? How do we get there?
- Traffic – where are the greatest problem areas? What are the solutions?



Participants review and prioritize SWOT Analysis results at Nottingham West Elementary on October 23

Session B results are summarized below:

Vision. One the greatest planning needs identified by participants is the need for a community vision. The following were identified by participants as elements to be included in this Vision.

Town Center. Most groups discussed the need or desire for a defined, walkable town center that provides a sense of place and a venue to bring the community together. Possible locations included:

- What was historically the town’s walkable economic center in the vicinity of Library Park.
- The Town’s “official” historic center near Benson Park in the vicinity of the intersection of Central and Greeley Streets.
- Other locations along Lowell Road or Derry Street.

Natural Resources. Many participants identified Hudson’s natural resources as one of its most valuable assets citing the following goals:

- Expand Conservation areas and increase open space.
- Leverage existing open space assets such as Benson Park and Robinson Pond.
- Expand the existing trail network and facilitate connections between schools, parks, conservation areas and other community facilities.
- Improve access to the Merrimack River.
- Maintain and improve existing conservation and recreation areas.
- Build on existing successes such as Benson Park and Robinson Pond.
- Expand trail network to connect open spaces with one another, and with other community facilities such as schools. Trails may include accommodations for pedestrians as well as cyclists.
- Pursue additional open space areas with a focus on the Merrimack River.

Traffic. While Hudson’s location is certainly a strength, it brings with it the challenges of effective transportation and traffic solutions. The following goals were identified:

- Increase and expand transportation mobility options including public transportation (busses), sidewalks, bicycles and commuter rail.
- Alleviate congestion on Lowell Road.
- Mitigate commuter traffic passing through Hudson including through residential neighborhoods.
- Consider another Merrimack River bridge crossing.

Land Use Participants indicated a desire for a balanced, planned approach to Hudson’s land use development, with goals including:

- More open space conservation and protection in new developments.
- Focus commercial and industrial development within existing commercial/ industrial areas.
- Encourage reuse or redevelopment of existing commercial building and sites rather than on undeveloped land.
- Improve design standards for landscaping, architecture and site design.

As previously noted, the results of the Session A and Session B public input exercises together with the results of the on-line survey conducted during October and November of 2019, form the basis of the goals and community vision components of the Master Plan and will, together with on-going public input, serve to guide development of the overall plan.



SWOT Analysis at Hills Memorial School