



TOWN OF HUDSON PLANNING BOARD

2005 ANNUAL REPORT



12 School Street

Hudson, New Hampshire 03051

603/886-6005

In accordance with New Hampshire Planning and Land Use Regulations, the duties and responsibilities bestowed upon municipal planning boards involve guiding the development of their respective communities. In its efforts to guide the future development of the Town of Hudson, the Planning Board works to protect and promote the health, safety and general welfare of the community.

For many municipalities throughout southern New Hampshire, substantial residential and commercial development over the past decades has helped to strengthen the local and regional economy. At the same time, however, the strength of residential and commercial development within southern New Hampshire continues to create infrastructure capacity challenges for every community within the region. For the Town of Hudson, these challenges include planning for and implementing: (i) roadway improvement projects, (ii) sewer and water maintenance and expansion projects and (iii) delivering quality municipal services (i.e., a strong public school system, well-trained and responsive police and fire protection, and receptive administrative services) to the residents and businesses of our community.

The Planning Board recognizes that good municipal planning requires an up-to-date and broadly supported Master Plan. For this reason, over the past 4 years the Planning Board has been working with the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC), relative to updating Hudson's Master Plan. As of this writing, the Planning Board is in the final phase of updating the Master Plan. Throughout the course of the Master Plan update process, the board has focused on creating a "vision" for Hudson's future that is shared by the people of Hudson, as well as its elected and appointed officials. Key annual programs and practices that help to strengthen Hudson's Master Plan include: (i) the Capital Improvements Program (CIP), (ii) the Cost Allocation Procedure (CAP) and (iii) the Zoning Ordinance, Site Plan and Subdivision Regulations.

Development Activity

Throughout this past year, both commercial and residential development activities continued on a strong pace. The total number of applications for land use development projects in Fiscal Year 2005 was 41 versus 43 in Fiscal Year 2004. During FY05, the Planning Board reviewed 22 residential subdivision plans, approved 18 of them, resulting in the creation of 91 new residential dwelling lots. In comparison, in FY04 11 subdivisions were approved, creating 61 house lots. Other residential development included the review and approval of 3 "older persons" housing developments (Oblate Retreat, River Ridge and Roosevelt), creating a total of 189 older persons housing units. During FY05, 20 commercial site plans were reviewed, with 18 approved. This is in comparison to 15 reviewed and approved in FY04.

Merrimack River Access

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) completed the Riverwalk Phase II Report in December 2000, as requested by the Planning Board. Riverwalk Phase I & II Reports are available for review at the Community Development Department Office in Town Hall. The Planning Board is now attempting to overcome several obstacles with the assistance of the NRPC and citizen volunteers to implement portions of the Riverwalk Trail System.

Impact Fees

In the summer of 2004, the engineering firm, VHB, Inc. completed the update of the impact fees assessed on all new development, relative to implementing traffic safety and capacity enhancement improvements along Hudson's three highway corridors (Rt. 3, Rt. 102 and Rt. 111). This system was last reviewed in 1995 and is often referred to as the "CAP" (Cost Allocation Procedure) fee.

Zoning Ordinance

The Planning Board considered several amendments to the Zoning Ordinance during a number of "workshop" sessions and public hearings. Ultimately, 2 zoning amendments and a rezoning petition, supported by the Planning

Board, were submitted for inclusion on the 2005 Town Warrant. Both amendments and the rezoning petition were approved in the March 2005 election.

Master Plan

As cited above, the Planning Board is nearing completion of updating the Town's Master Plan, with the public hearing review phase scheduled to occur in December 2005. Final completion and publishing of the Master Plan Update is scheduled for mid-winter 2006. The Master Plan update consists of a comprehensive review and analysis of Hudson's past, present and future infrastructure needs and capacities. The resulting document is an update that consists of 8 separate categories which are outlined in separate chapters. The 8 chapters of the update include: Population and Housing, Economic Development, Community Facilities, Transportation, Existing Land Use, Natural Resources, Future Land Use and Historic Resources. The Master Plan update is available for review at the Hills Memorial Library, the Community Development Department Office in Town Hall, and on the NRPC web site at www.nashuarpc.org.

Capital Improvements Program

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) started in March, with the first Capital Improvements Committee (CIC) meeting conducted in April. This schedule, being earlier than previous years, allowed the CIP process to better accommodate Town personnel schedules, as well providing the opportunity to complete the CIP document well in advance of the Town's budget process.

Updating Planning Tools

In addition to plan review and amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Board worked on revisions to the Subdivision and Site Plan Regulations. Updating these planning tools is an ongoing process.

The election of Planning Board officers is held annually during the first meeting in January. The following members were elected to serve in their respective positions:

Chairman:	James Barnes
Vice-Chairman	Marilyn McGrath
Secretary	Suellen Quinlan

Other members of the Planning Board include:

George Hall	Member
Jeff Rider	Member
Karl Bond	Member (resigned in September 2005)
Richard Maddox	Selectman
William Tate	Alternate
Vincent Russo	Alternate
Thomas Murphy	Alternate

In closing, I want to thank the Town employees, who assisted the Planning Board. Without their efforts, citizen volunteerism would not work:

Sean Sullivan	Director of Community Development
John Cashell	Town Planner
Tom Sommers	Town Engineer
Pam Lavoie	Administrative Aide
Betty Holt	Administrative Aide
Sue Fiorenza	Secretary
Julie Kennedy	Secretary
Abbey Gulliver	Secretary
Stephen Buckley, Esq.	
Brad Seabury, of the Hudson Minutemen	

And, finally I wish to honor the memory of Ann Seabury who helped the Planning Board with her wit and wisdom over so many years.

Respectfully submitted,
James Barnes
Planning Board Chairman