

An aerial photograph of a town, likely Northwood, showing a main road running through the center. The town is surrounded by dense forests and rolling hills in the background. The image has a blue tint.

Future Land Use

Northwood Master Plan

Date Adopted

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Future Land Use Chapter was prepared under the guidance of the Master Plan Subcommittee and the Planning Board.

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The Master Plan Subcommittee thanks the members of the Planning Board for their contributions to this chapter.

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The Master Plan Subcommittee and Consultants express their sincere gratitude to the citizens of Northwood who participated in this Master Plan Chapter update.

The Future Land Use Chapter was prepared by EF | Design & Planning, LLC with TZM Planning.

Drone imagery: TZM Planning

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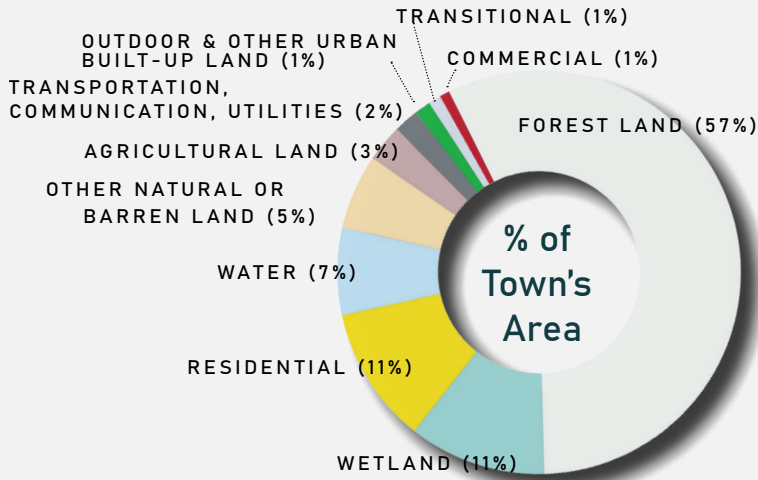
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FUTURE LAND USE SNAPSHOT

FUTURE LAND USE CHAPTER SNAPSHOT

EXISTING LAND USE TYPES¹



868 Acres of Town-owned land²

2% % of land occupied by non-residential development types¹

60% % of existing lots are smaller than the minimum lot size of 2 acres³

223 Number of new homes needed by 2040 to meet the demand⁴

EXISTING ZONING⁶

1 Zoning District (General District)
(see pg 15-16)

5 Environmental Overlay Districts
(see pg 16 + 44)

Uses permitted in the General District:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Other

83% % of survey respondents that favor protection of additional land⁵

Top characteristics to consider when evaluating conservation land:⁵

- Recreational opportunities
- Wetlands
- Public access
- Water resources
- Wildlife habitat

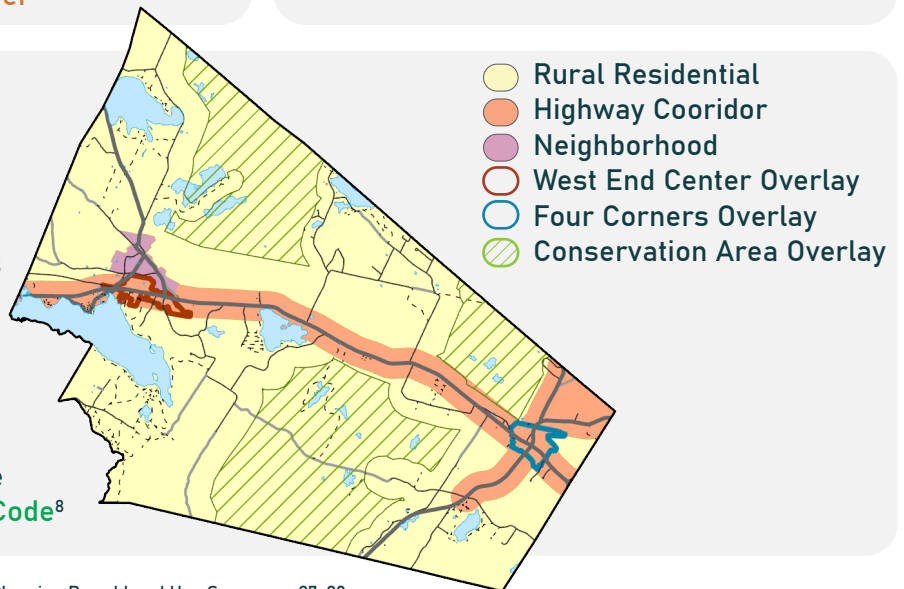
PROPOSED FUTURE ZONING⁷

3 Zoning Districts
(see pg 37-46)

5 Environmental Overlay Districts
(see pg 16 + 44)

2 Town Center Overlay Districts
West End & Four Corners

Proposed alternative type of land use regulation to consider: **Form-Based Code⁸**



1. NH Geodata Portal, SRPC, Land Use, pg 11-12
 2. Town of Northwood Assessing, pg 31-33
 3. NH Geodata Portal, Parcels, pg 15
 4. SRPC Regional Housing Needs Assessment, pg 18-19

5. Planning Board Land Use Survey, pg 27-29
 6. Town of Northwood, pg 15-16
 7. Place-based future land use concepts, pg 37-46
 8. Form-base code, pg 21-22

An aerial photograph of a lush, green forested valley. A large, calm lake occupies the lower right portion of the frame. In the center of the valley, a small, light-colored building is visible, surrounded by trees. The background shows rolling hills covered in dense forest under a clear sky.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the master plan is to set down as clearly and practically as possible the best and most appropriate future development of the area under the jurisdiction of the planning board, to aid the board in designing ordinances that result in preserving and enhancing the unique quality of life and culture in New Hampshire, and to guide the board in the performance of its other duties in a manner that achieves the principals of smart growth, sound planning, and wise resource protection. (RSA 674:2)

ABOUT THIS CHAPTER

The Future Land Use Chapter is a core component of a municipal master plan that guides policies, regulations, initiatives, and improvements in Northwood. This chapter builds off other recently completed master plan chapters and articulates specific land use goals and recommendations for Northwood.

Community input is the foundation of the master plan. A variety of community engagement techniques were used throughout 2025 to gather input from the community. The direction, creative ideas, and feedback that residents provided was essential to the preparation of this chapter and its recommendations. The opinions of residents who participated in the master plan chapter development process were diverse and at times at odds with that of others; The intent of the project team was to synthesize this input and develop a set of recommendations that broadly reflect the general sentiment expressed by the community.

This chapter aligns the ideals and principles identified in the Vision Chapter with land use regulations.

The Land Use Chapter also highlights opportunities and strategies to enhance resilience within the landscape and land use decisions. It guides land use policies and regulations over coming decades. It provides recommendations to direct development – including the types of uses and physical form, aesthetic, and relationship to public space - to certain areas while emphasizing preservation of open space in other areas.

The content of this chapter includes an overview of land use trends, existing zoning, and key needs and opportunities in four categories:

1. Residential Land Use
2. Commercial & Industrial Land Use
3. Open Space & Environment
4. Public Land, Facilities & Services.

The chapter also includes a future land use map and place-based land use concepts to guide future zoning amendments, followed by a set of recommendations and implementation guide.

Similar to other chapters of Northwood’s Master Plan, this chapter pairs community input with a data driven approach to understanding and exploring existing and future conditions. Local and regional datasets and mapping layers are used to provide context and analyze trends.

GOALS

The Future Land Use Chapter goals are rooted in the principles and intentions articulated in the Vision Chapter and input from the community.

- 1** Propose one or more town centers that will provide spaces for community members to gather indoors and outdoors, enhance residents' access to retail and services, and foster economic development and diversification of the tax base.
- 2** Maintain the community's rural character through preservation of farms and woodlots and natural buffers that sustain rural viewsheds.
- 3** Enhance the presence of indoor and outdoor, formal and informal public spaces for community members to gather and recreate.
- 4** Protect and enhance the quality of local and regional natural resources and water resources.
- 5** Provide a wide range of housing options for current and future residents.
- 6** Evaluate land use policies, regulatory changes, and capital improvements through three lenses: equity, sustainability, and resilience.
- 7** Propose zoning districts to shape distinct development patterns in different areas of the community.

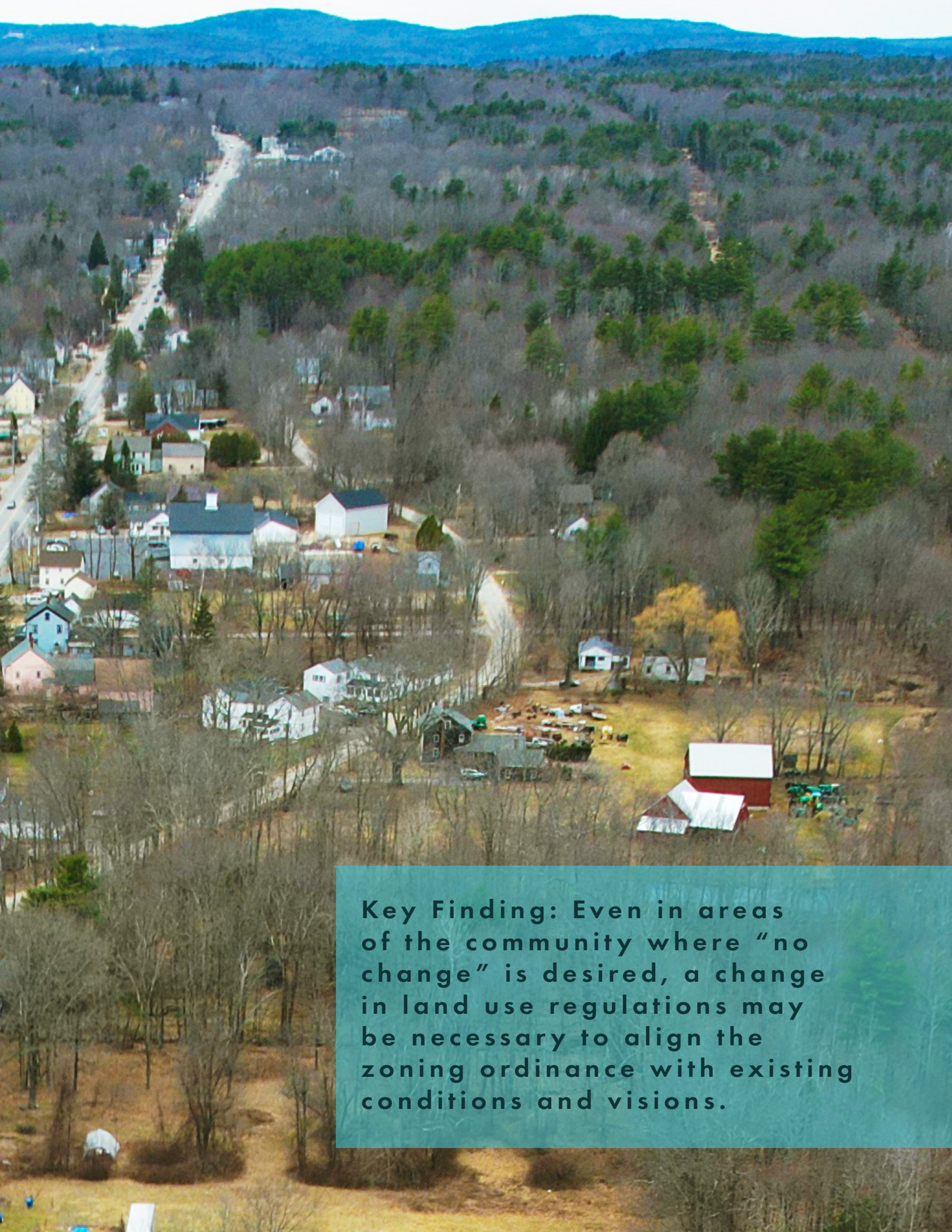
GUIDING PRINCIPLES FROM THE VISION CHAPTER

- Maintain Northwood’s rural and historic character.
- Develop a deeper sense of community, geographically and otherwise.
- Protect and preserve Northwood’s natural resources and provide citizens of all ages with recreational opportunities to enjoy these resources.
- Create diverse housing options.
- Foster safety and embrace the unique buildings, businesses, and opportunities along Route 4.
- Ensure that residential development, economic development, and protection of natural resources complement each other.

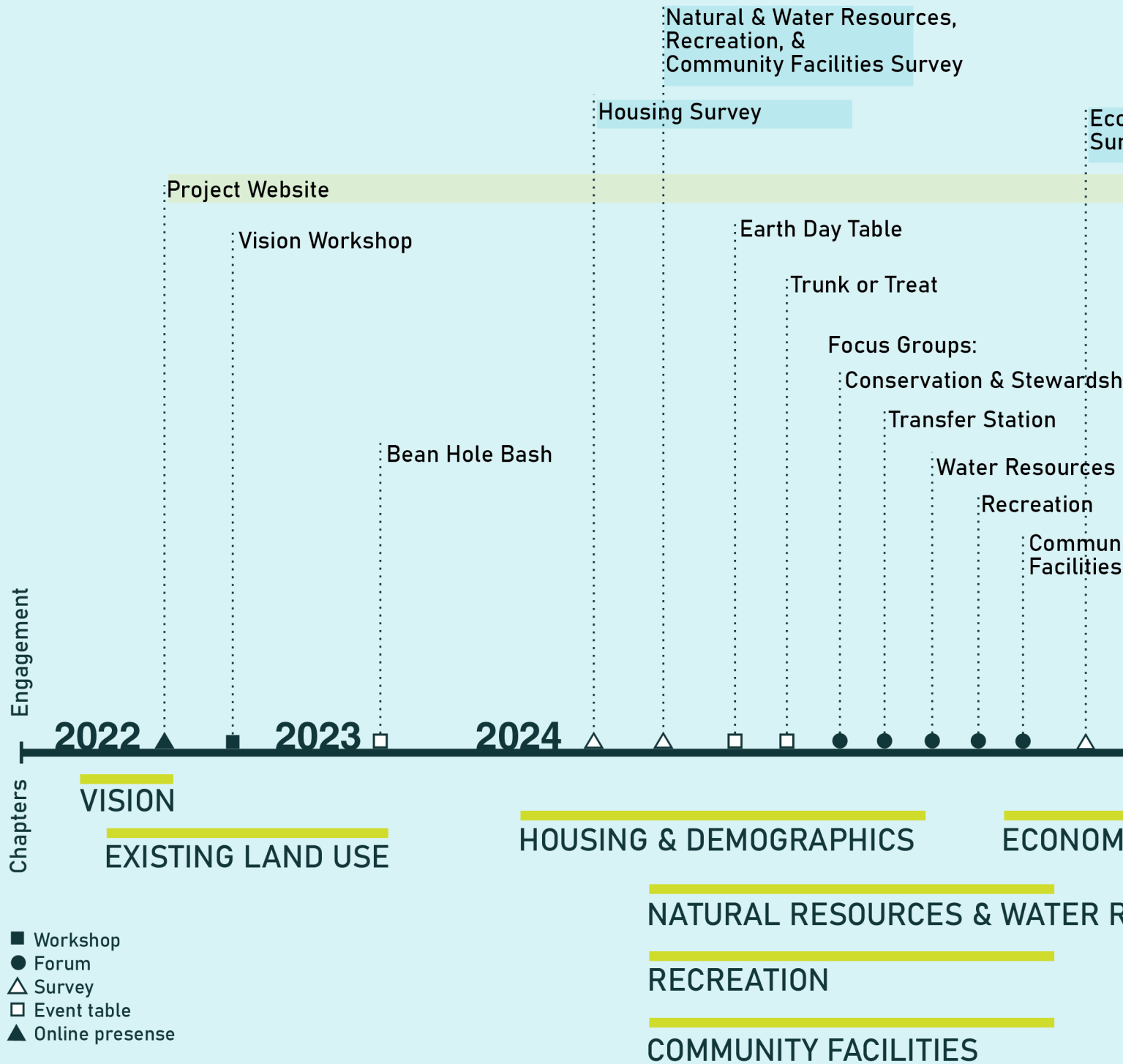


Residents participate in a land use planning sessions held by the Planning Board in 2025





Key Finding: Even in areas of the community where “no change” is desired, a change in land use regulations may be necessary to align the zoning ordinance with existing conditions and visions.



MASTER PLAN PROCESS

Economic Development
Survey

Community Land Use Workshop 1

Community Land Use Workshop 2

Economic Development
Community Forum

Trunk or Treat

Senior
Cafe Input
Session

Senior Cafe Discussion

Library Open House

Land Use StoryMap

Missing Middle
Housing Dot Poll

Future Land Use &
Visual Preference Survey

Community Center
Open House

2025

2026

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

RESOURCES

FUTURE LAND USE

An aerial photograph of a road winding through a wooded area. The road is paved and has a white center line. There are several cars on the road. To the left of the road is a large, open field. To the right of the road are several buildings, including a large, multi-story building with many windows. The background is a dense forest of trees.

OVERVIEW & TRENDS

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

Northwood is uniquely situated on the boundary of New Hampshire’s two main watersheds: the Merrimack and the Saco Watershed (which includes the Salmon Falls-Piscataqua (Coastal) watershed ([Natural Resources & Water Resources Chapter, Fig 3](#)). The Town has significant surface water resources with over 1,500 acres of lakes and ponds as well as the headwaters of multiple river systems.

Residents value Northwood’s rural feel,¹ which is attributable in part to its heavily forested landscape. Forest land is the predominant land use in Northwood, accounting for over 60% of the land area of the community. Much of this land falls within the over 3,100 acres of conservation and public lands, which include Town forest land, private conservation land, state forest, and other protected open space.²

Approximately 15% of the land area of Northwood is classified as developed land, most of which consists of residential development.³ An average of 30 building permits were issued for residential structures in the last decade. Eighty-five percent of these permits were for new construction of single-family homes.⁴ In the last five years, the Planning Board has approved two joint subdivision/site plan review proposals, one amended subdivision plan, and three minor subdivisions.⁵

Non-residential development, while permitted throughout town, is found primarily along NH Route 4 (Figure 1).⁶ Commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development accounts for under 2% of the land area of the town. In the last 10 years, five building permits for new construction non-residential development were issued.⁷



Rural character is a key theme identified in the Vision Chapter

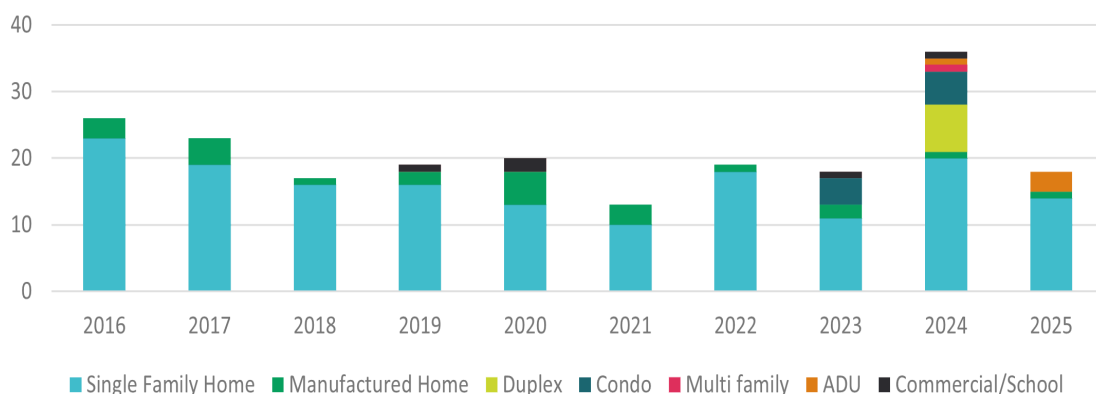
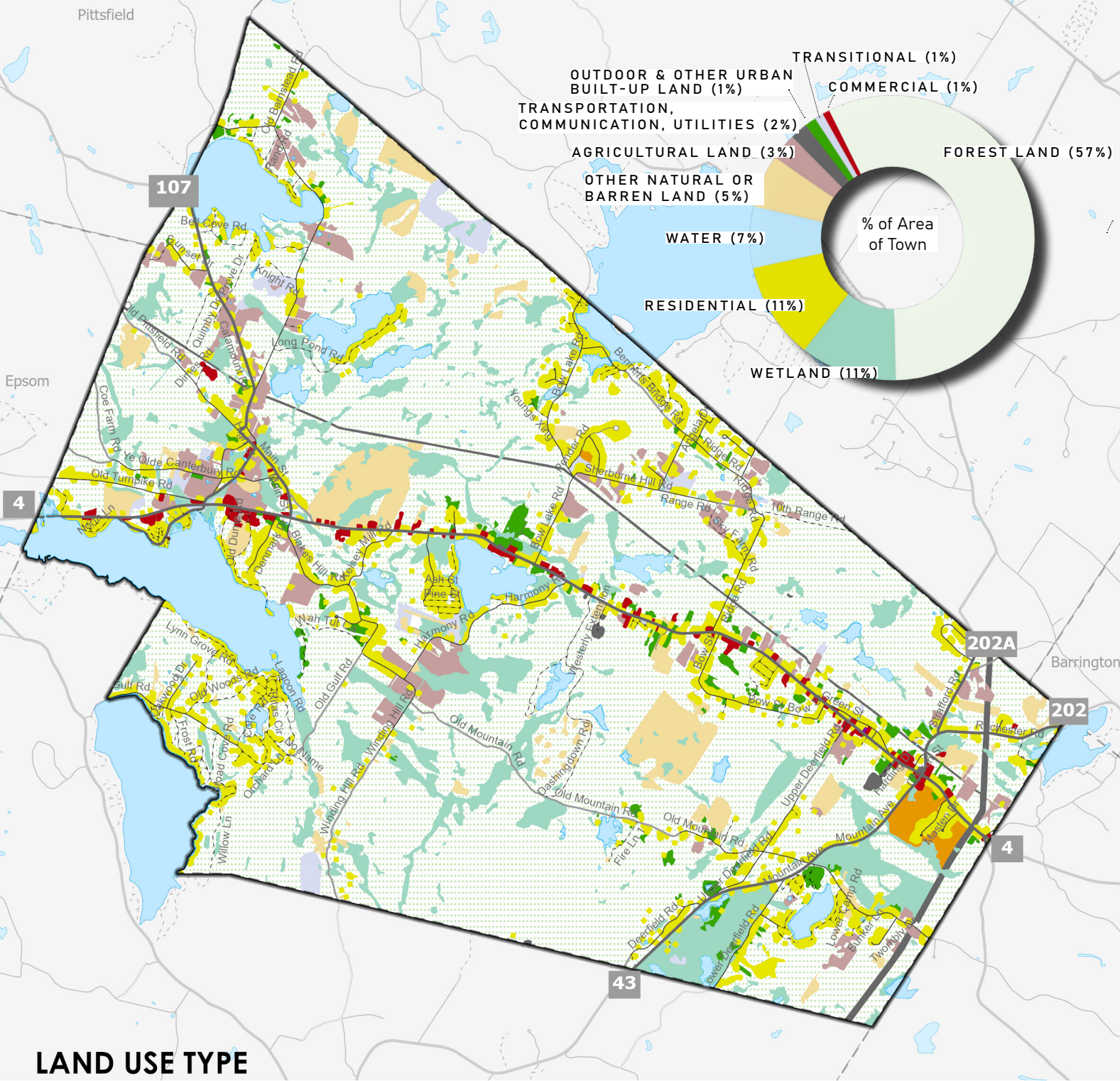


FIGURE 1. NEW CONSTRUCTION PERMITS ISSUED OVER THE LAST DECADE (SOURCE: TOWN OF NORTHWOOD)

FIGURE 2 EXISTING LAND USE MAP BASED ON 2022 DIGITIZED AERIAL IMAGERY (SOURCE: STRAFFORD REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (SRPC))



LAND USE TYPE

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Residential | Mixed Developed Uses | Transportation, Communication, Utilities |
| Commercial, Services, Institutional | Outdoor and Other Urban Built-Up Land | Vacant Land |
| Agricultural Land | Forest Land | Wetlands |
| Industrial and Commercial Complexes | Other Natural or Barren Land | Water |
| | Transitional Natural Lands | |



GIS-based Development Analysis

The greatest prevalence of undeveloped lots is on the northwest side of town, within and adjacent to the Big Woods Conservation Area Overlay District. As this area has been identified as a valuable area for protection, conservation and protection efforts should be focused on this part of the town.

While undeveloped parcels are scarce along NH Route 4, the general lack of environmental constraints, protected lands, or dense development along this highway provides opportunities for redevelopment and infill.

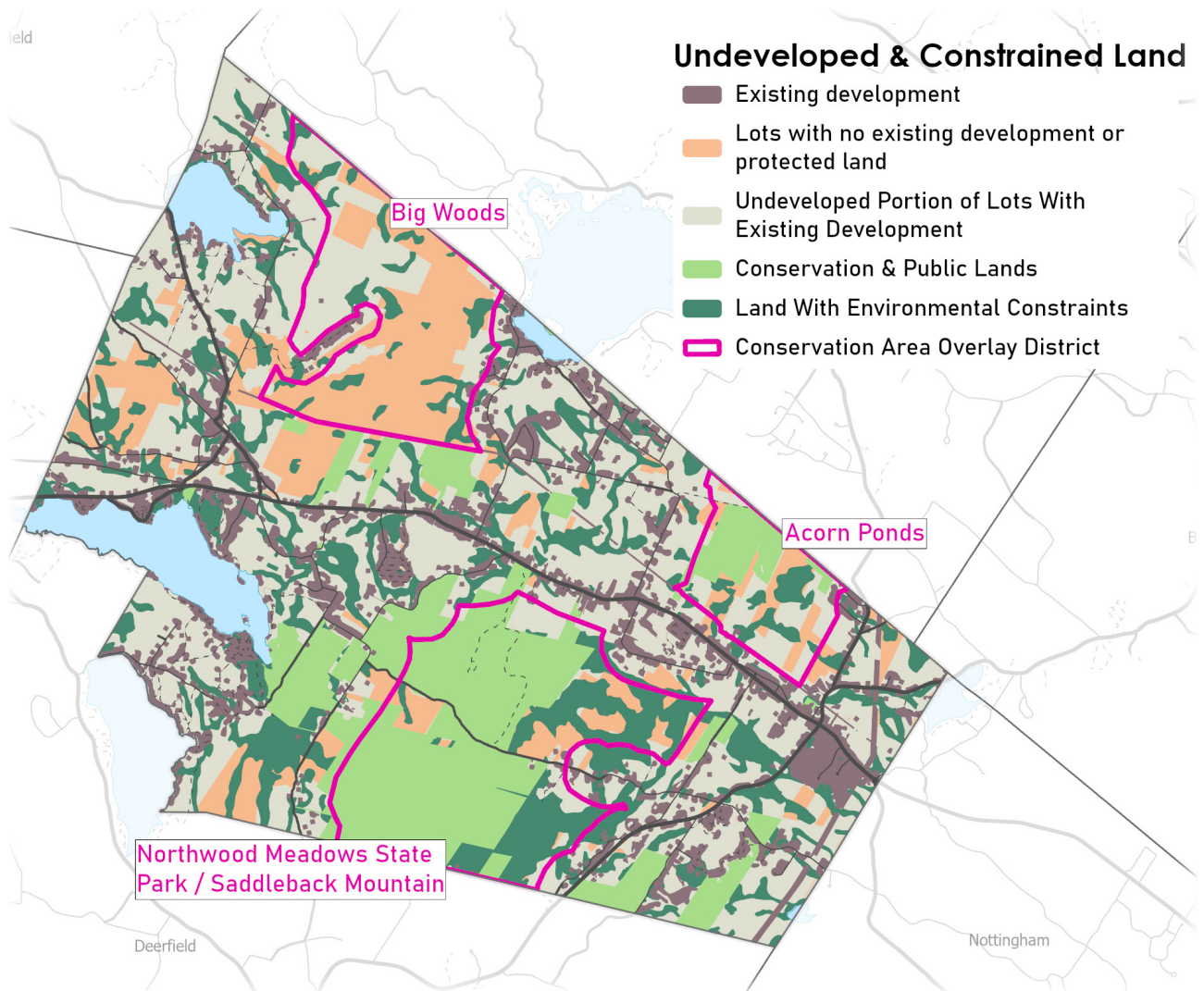


FIGURE 3. GENERALIZED MAP OF UNDEVELOPED LAND AND LAND THAT IS CONSTRAINED BY EXISTING DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPMENT RESTRICTIONS (SOURCE: NH GRANIT, SRPC, EXISTING LAND USE CHAPTER,)

NORTHWOOD'S ZONING ORDINANCE

Zoning regulates the size, location and use of buildings and other structures for the purpose of promoting the health, safety and general welfare of the community.

Northwood has one town-wide zoning district, the General District, and five overlay districts (Figure 4). The General District permits a range of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses.

The minimum lot (parcel) size is two acres town-wide. Lots that fall within the Conservation Area Overlay District must be a minimum of four acres and

General District purpose statement:

The provision for mixed uses is important to maintain the character of the community as a rural New England town, encourage economic vitality, ensure the compatibility of adjacent uses, and encourage the integration of compatible uses into the entire community.

are limited to single family residential development (Figure 5).

The overlay districts are applicable in designated areas of the community and add an additional layer of criteria and standards to that of the General District. Refer to the [Existing Land Use Chapter \(2022\)](#) of the Master Plan for more detail about existing zoning and land use.

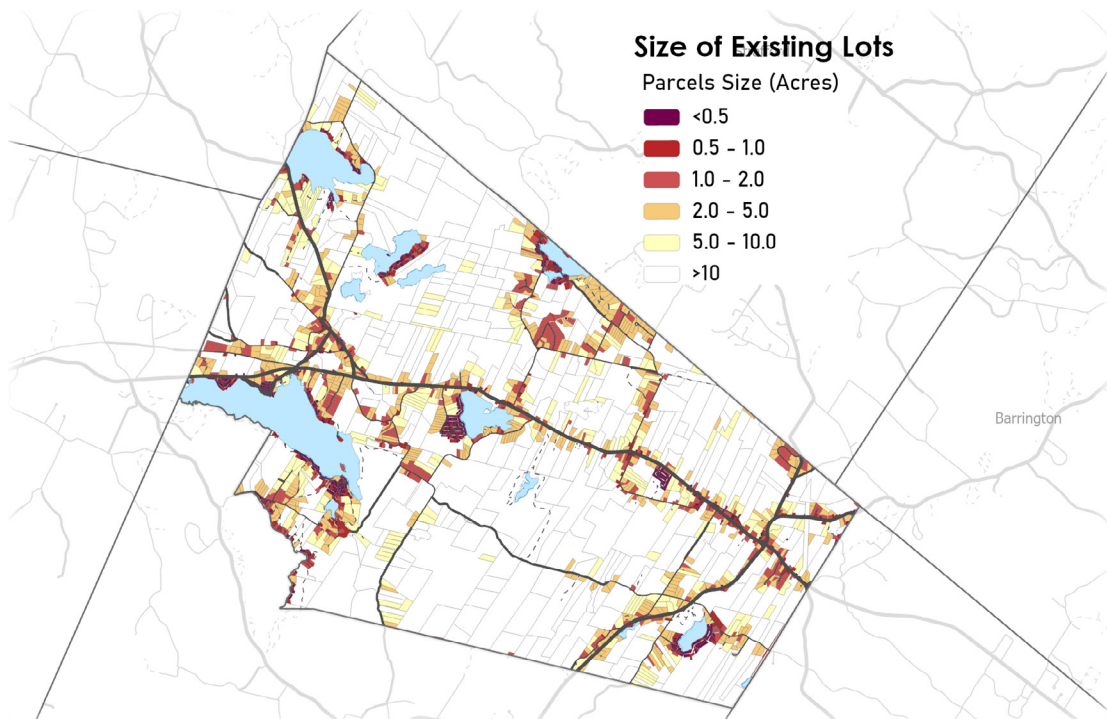
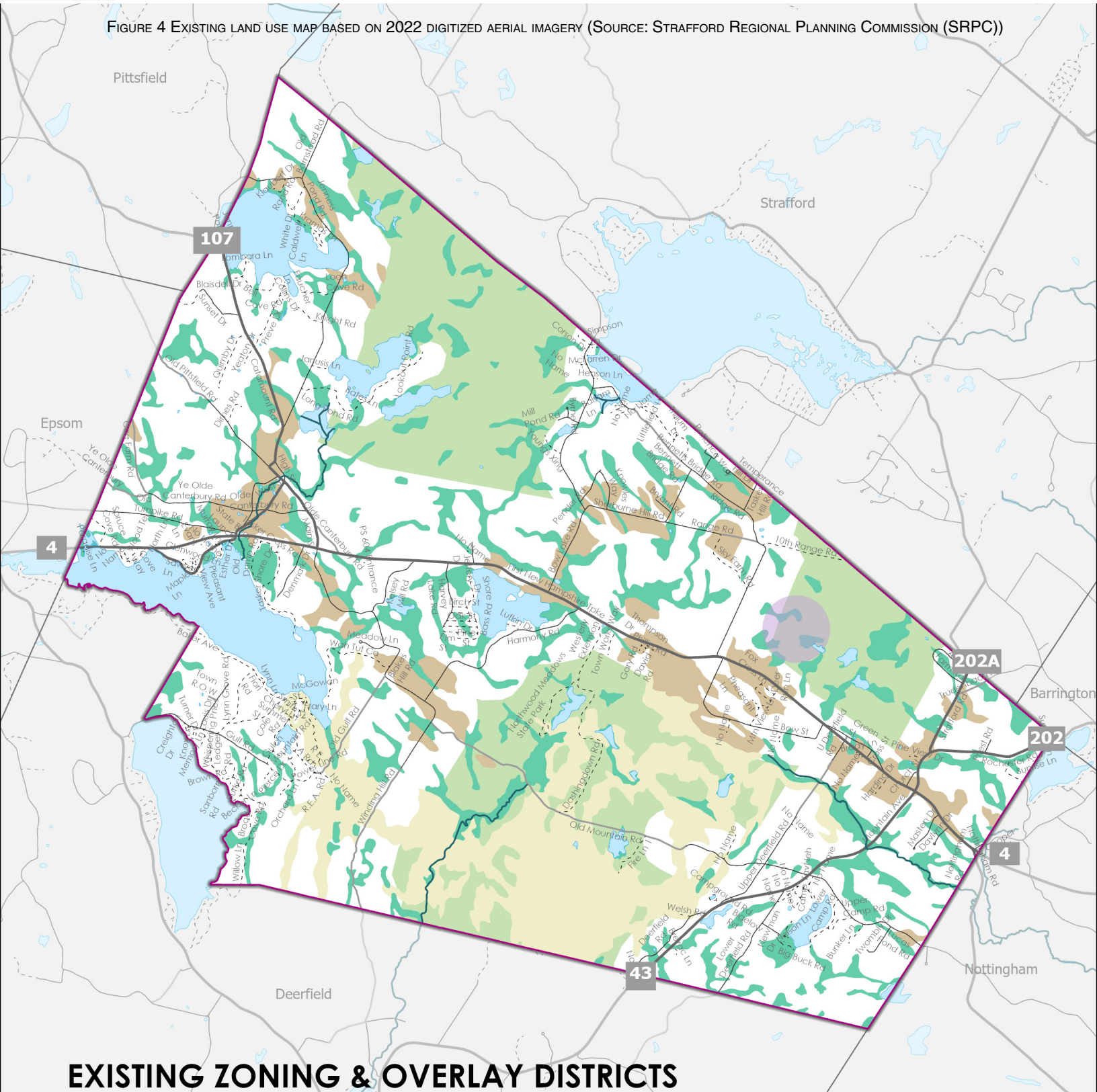


FIGURE 5. MAP OF LOTS BY SIZE (SOURCE: NH GRANIT). AN ESTIMATED 60% OF EXISTING LOTS IN NORTHWOOD ARE SMALLER THAN TWO ACRES. MANY OF THESE NONCONFORMING LOTS ARE LOCATED ALONG ROUTE 4 AND AROUND NORTHWOOD'S NUMEROUS LAKES.

FIGURE 4 EXISTING LAND USE MAP BASED ON 2022 DIGITIZED AERIAL IMAGERY (SOURCE: STRAFFORD REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (SRPC))



EXISTING ZONING & OVERLAY DISTRICTS

- General District
- Conservation Area Overlay District
- Wetland Overlay District
- Agricultural Soils Overlay District
- Steep Slopes Overlay District
- Wellhead Protection Overlay District





KEY NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES

Each of the 4 land use planning areas included in this section are explored in greater detail in other chapters of the Master Plan.

- 1 Residential land use
- 2 Non-residential land use
- 3 Open space & environment
- 4 Public land facilities and services

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

Residential uses – including single family dwellings, two-family dwellings, and multi-family dwellings – are permitted in the General District. Within the Conservation Area Overlay District, which encompasses 28% of the town, development is limited to single-family homes. Most residential development in Northwood consists of low-density single-family homes, though denser development is present in areas including the Narrows, around the lakes, and along portions of NH Route 4.

As recognized in the [Housing Chapter](#), increasing home values and sales price contribute to housing unaffordability for many current and potential future residents in Northwood.

42% of housing survey respondents reported that their housing costs exceeded 30% of their income, which is the standard metric for affordability.

A lack of housing diversity coupled with low rental stock and the community's aging population contribute to the Town's housing challenges. Northwood incentivizes the development of workforce housing and elderly housing through cluster regulations that permit more than one primary dwelling per lot.

According to the 2023 Regional Housing Needs Assessment, which analyzed and identified housing needs of residents in the Strafford Regional Planning Commission region,

Northwood has sufficient land capacity to meet the projected number of new homes needed by 2040 to meet population and employment demand and to support a more balanced housing market.⁸ A total of 233 new homes are needed in order to meet the demand of 2,477 total homes by 2040. This is equivalent to an average of 15 homes per year and represents an approximately 10% increase in the number of current homes.⁹

To align the community's vision of maintaining rural character with its objective of diversifying housing options, Northwood's land use policies and regulations will be oriented around encouraging more density in the areas best suited for residential development, while promoting protection of open space and use of buffers to sustain a rural aesthetic.

The importance of diverse housing options was identified in the Vision and Housing Chapters



New Hampshire's older population is growing and the state continues to age faster than the nation overall. By 2030, the number of adults over age 65 in the state is expected to be larger than the number of children. (Source: NH BEA).

Most homes in Northwood are single-family dwellings, while just 2% are duplexes and 1% are multi-family dwellings.¹⁰ This housing stock may not meet the long term needs of the community's older residents.

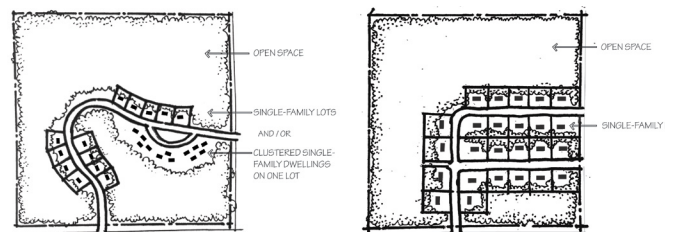
In locations away from Route 4 and other state roads, low density residential development will complement farms, forests, and scenic views. The Town's existing Overlay Districts will continue to limit the density of development and proximity of development to sensitive natural resources. Tools like Open Space Design will be encouraged in order to preserve open space as land is subdivided.

In other places in town, different zoning adaptations and measures may be required to reinforce the existing character. In the historic, denser, Narrows neighborhood, a combination of placemaking efforts (ex. signage), investment in walkability, and a reduction of the 2-acre minimum lot size is warranted. A reconsideration of the types of uses that are permitted in this area is appropriate to ensure that what the community envisions for this area is maintained.

As discussed in the Housing & Demographics Chapter and affirmed through community engagement efforts, cottage cluster development is a promising tool for residential development in Northwood. Cottage cluster regulations enable the creation of small homes in tight-knit and well-designed neighborhoods with a smaller development footprint than conventional developments. This style of development could increase infill opportunities near areas of existing development while diversifying the existing housing stock in Northwood.

Reducing Lot Size and Other Dimensional Standards

Reducing the lot size requirement is one strategy to enable the development of more affordable housing and smaller housing. Survey results showed that residents in Northwood who are comfortable with lots smaller than 2 acres outweigh those that are not comfortable with a smaller lot size by a 5:4 margin. This question did not specify a particular area of the town. As approximately 60% of the existing lots in town are currently less than 2 acres, the visual impact of modifying lot size in areas with non-conforming lots would likely be imperceptible.



Open Space Design

The 'rural pod layout (left) was favored over grid-like 'village style' layout (right) 84% to 16% (Source: 2025 Land Use Survey)

COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

Although Northwood has historically permitted non-residential uses throughout the community (outside of the Conservation Area Overlay District), commercial and industrial development is predominantly located along Route 4.

Route 4's functionality as a major transportation route dominates the identity of the town's eight mile "Main street." While the diverse uses that line Route 4 are generally compatible with one another, many lots and structures do not conform to the existing dimensional standards like lot size, frontage length, and build setbacks. The confluence of a variety of factors - scattered development, aging structures, abundant curb-cuts, and hazardous conditions for both

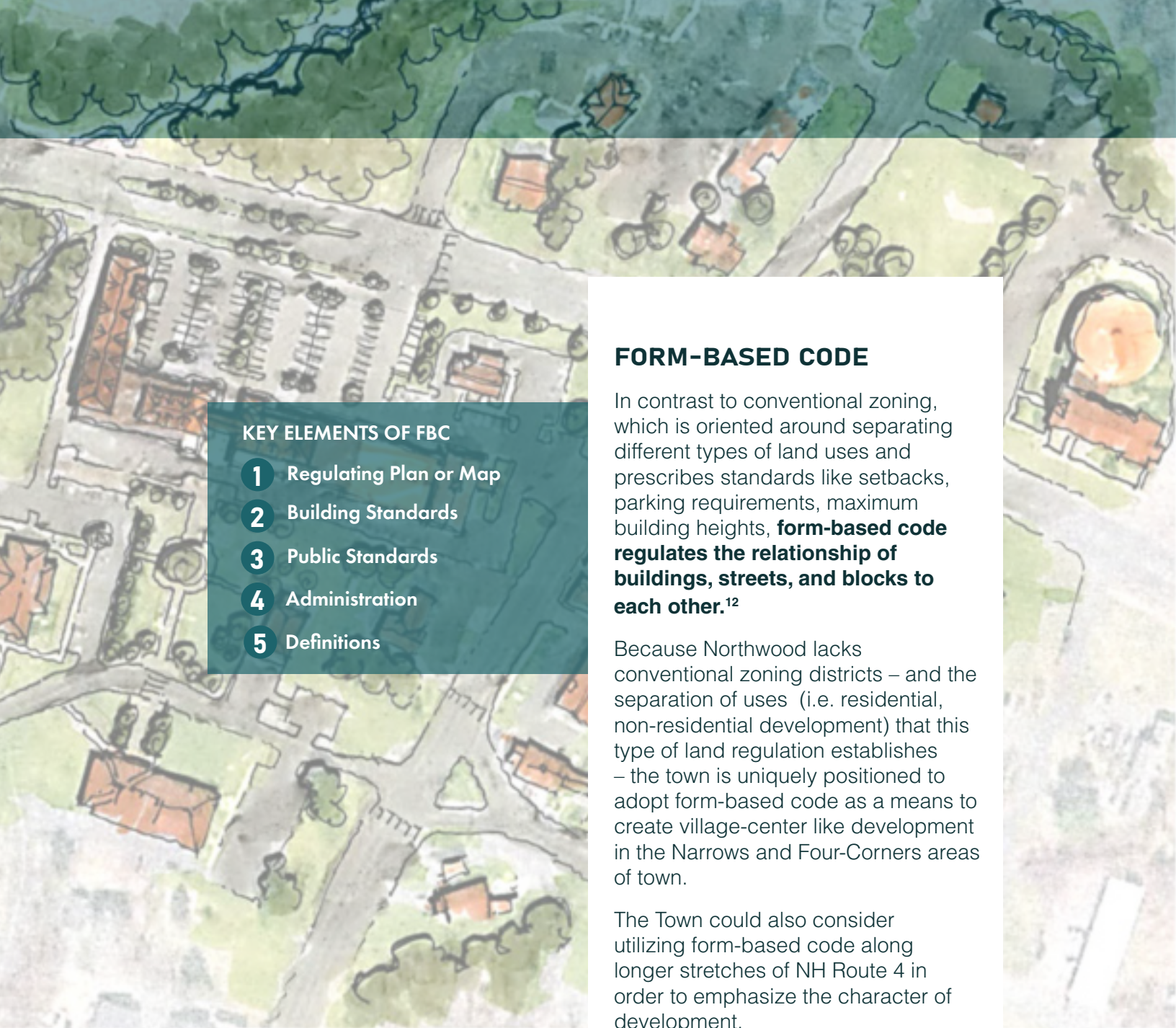
pedestrians and vehicles - result in a lack of cohesion and the absence of a public realm, both of which are important for business viability and sense of place.

In recognition that Town's uniform development regulations are not conducive to either maintaining the desired existing conditions of some locations or shaping the preferred conditions in other rural and commercial areas, the community will explore updating and modernizing its zoning ordinance. Utilizing the planning and land use tools available to New Hampshire municipalities, this effort will help bring existing development into conformance with regulations and guide physical form and desired uses. Form-based code, a land use regulation that focuses more on character and physical form on an area rather than the use of buildings, is an alternative to conventional zoning that will be explored.

Along NH Route 4, pockets of historic structures evoke a sense of heritage and establishment. However, the development patterns along this 'Main Street' lack cohesion, which – in addition to presenting safety concerns for vehicles and pedestrians - detracts from its visual appeal. Route 4's identity as Antique Alley is not as strong as it once was. Community sentiment is somewhat mixed with respect to whether single family residential development belongs on Route 4 in the long term.

Adaptive reuse of historic dwellings as mixed-use structures or businesses is a strategy to maintain historic character while evolving to align with residential and non-residential development demands.

Tools like RSA 79E can help encourage preservation of historic structures. [Learn More.](#)



KEY ELEMENTS OF FBC

- 1 Regulating Plan or Map
- 2 Building Standards
- 3 Public Standards
- 4 Administration
- 5 Definitions

FORM-BASED CODE

In contrast to conventional zoning, which is oriented around separating different types of land uses and prescribes standards like setbacks, parking requirements, maximum building heights, **form-based code regulates the relationship of buildings, streets, and blocks to each other.**¹²

Because Northwood lacks conventional zoning districts – and the separation of uses (i.e. residential, non-residential development) that this type of land regulation establishes – the town is uniquely positioned to adopt form-based code as a means to create village-center like development in the Narrows and Four-Corners areas of town.

The Town could also consider utilizing form-based code along longer stretches of NH Route 4 in order to emphasize the character of development.

“The physical design and amenities of the community provide indoor and outdoor places to gather, recreate, and connect with others.”

-Vision Chapter

Form-based code aligns with the Vision Chapter and community input. When asked to rank what is most important when thinking about development, the top two responses from survey participants were: the **look and feel of a building** and **landscaping and site design.**¹³

Town Centers

Historically, Northwood had four distinct centers: The Narrows, Northwood Center, Northwood Ridge, and East Northwood. Town centers, characterized by attractive, high quality, and pedestrian-oriented development, civic uses, and places for people to gather, are missing from the contemporary landscape. The community identified possible locations for distinct town centers, including Four Corners and the Narrows Center.

By continuing to allow residential and non-residential uses as well as mixed use development, the Town will facilitate creation of pockets of residential density that contribute to a vibrant community and business life in these ‘town centers.’ Creation of publicly accessible open space is a critical piece of village center development that will support the town’s goals of building a stronger sense of community with more places to gather.



The concept of village center development was identified during input sessions for the Vision and Economic Development Chapters

“The biggest issue is there is no center – there is nothing to bring people to stay – they just drive through from Concord to the seacoast. Why this occurred is a mystery to me, but I think it’s so important. A center is essential to a town, and Northwood lacks one.”

– Resident input (2025 Land Use Survey)

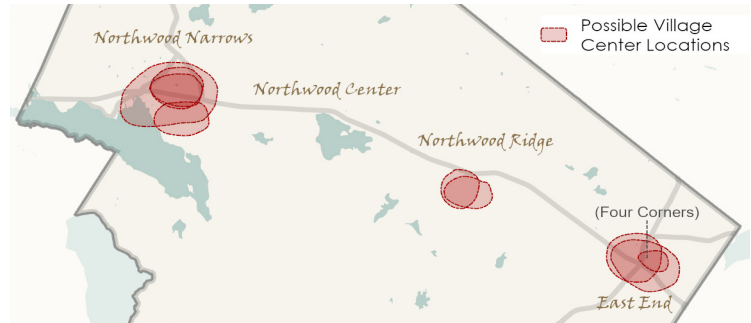


FIGURE 5. LOCATION OF HISTORIC VILLAGE CENTERS WITH POSSIBLE CONTEMPORARY VILLAGE CENTERS IDENTIFIED BY RESIDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN LAND USE WORKSHOPS

Throughout the town and within town centers in particular, independent, small-scale commercial retail and services that cater to the local population are preferred over chains, big box stores, and plazas. Community members expressed interest in a range of businesses. Restaurants, health care facilities, indoor or outdoor recreation-oriented services and retail, and coffee shops/cafes were favored most.¹⁴

The presence of Route 4 and other state highways makes Northwood a candidate for light industrial development. Provided it is well buffered from surrounding uses, indiscernible from public roads, and does not result in environmental impacts, traffic impacts, or nuisance to its surroundings, industrial development can offer communities many benefits like job creation, training opportunities, tax revenue, and investment in infrastructure. Heavy industrial uses would not be appropriate in Northwood due to possible waste, smoke, noise, and environmental pollution.¹⁵

FOUR CORNERS CENTER CONCEPT PLAN

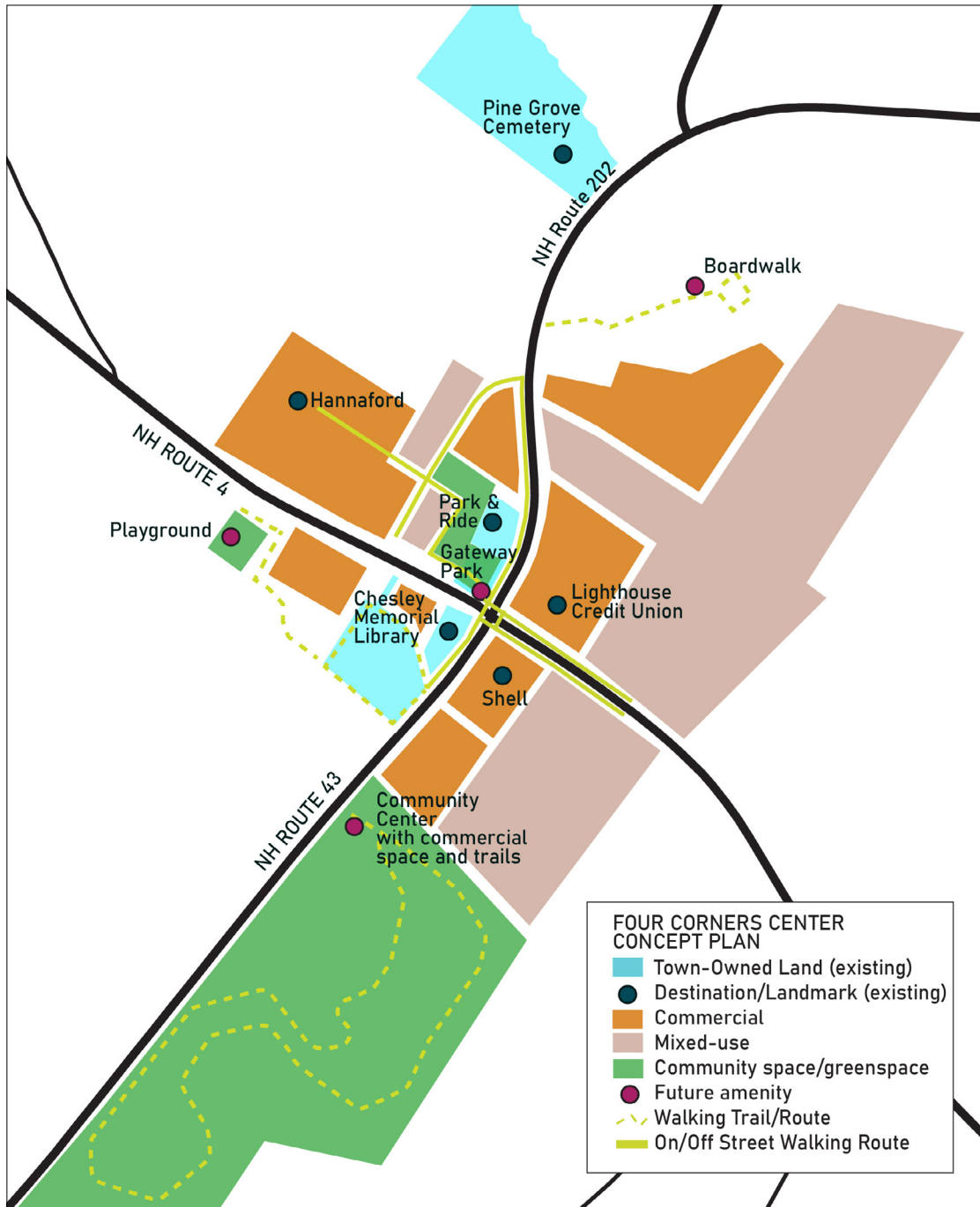


FIGURE 6. A CONCEPT PLAN WITH ENHANCED PUBLIC SPACES, MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT, AND WALKING ROUTES THAT SUPPORT A VIBRANT TOWN CENTER AT THE FOUR CORNERS INTERSECTION



TOOLS & INCENTIVES

Several incentives are available to municipalities to encourage development and revitalization:

- Economic Revitalization Zone (RSA 162-N)
- Tax Increment Finance (RSA 162-K)
- Commercial and Industrial Property Tax Exemption (RSA 72:81)
- Community Revitalization Tax Incentive (RSA 79-E)
- Residential Property Revitalization Zones (RSA 79-E-B)

Innovative Land Use Planning Tools authorized under NH RSA 674:21 can also help shape different forms of development in different areas of the community.

- A **village plan alternative** (an Innovative Land Use Planning technique RSA 674:21) or planned unit development may be appropriate for portions of the Four Corners town center.
- **Performance zoning** - which regulates development based on its quantifiable impacts on the environment and community - may encourage innovative site design, protects natural resources more effectively than rigid lot-size requirements, and can reduce the need for variances or rezoning. Examples of performance zoning include a **noise limit** measured in decibels at the property to determine if an industrial use is allowed near residential use or **traffic management standards** intended to minimize adverse traffic impacts and ensure safe sight distances .

Refer to the [Economic Development Chapter](#) for additional information about these tools.

Supporting the economy and business viability
are components of the Vision Chapter



WHAT WORD DO YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU THINK OF NORTHWOOD?



WORKSHOP SESSION 1
LIVE POLLING INPUT



WORKSHOP SESSION 2
LIVE POLLING INPUT

OPEN SPACE & ENVIRONMENT

Residents value the town's wooded and agricultural landscapes, which are a key component of Northwood's rural character. These areas provide wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, scenic vistas, and beneficial ecological services.

Balancing development objectives with protection of open space and environmental quality is an therefore an important objective of the community.

Resilient natural landscapes that have healthy, thriving ecosystems, high biodiversity, and healthy soils are better able to adapt to threats like droughts, floods, wildfires, climate change, and invasive species. These areas provide essential benefits like clean air, water, and habitat connectivity.¹⁶

Open space can make communities healthier and more resilient by protecting drinking water, preventing and controlling floods, providing drought resistance, naturally moderating temperatures, sequestering carbon dioxide in trees, and improving air quality.

- Forest Society



Protecting natural resources and providing recreations for all ages are important elements of the Vision Chapter.

"Part of the allure is the small town charm, getting outdoors and appreciating the quiet, the smell of fresh air, the wildlife, building this town up will lose that charm that brought many here to begin with."

- Resident input (2025 Land Use Survey)

Development can have significant impacts on water quality, impacting fish and wildlife as well as recreational use. Regulating the proximity of development to sensitive aquatic systems is especially important in communities like Northwood with significant lakefront property and wetlands. Impervious surfaces, faulty septic systems, use of fertilizers, and aquatic invasive species threaten water quality in Northwood. Increasing natural buffers around lakes and maintaining and replacing septic systems are critical to improving water quality in local lakes, streams, and downstream water bodies.

Forest land declined by approximately 1,600 acres from 12,640 acres in 2015 to 11,020 acres in 2022, now accounting for 62% of the total land area in Northwood.¹⁷ Protection of additional land is favored by 83% of community members who participated in the 2025 future land use survey. Land conservation efforts will be guided by the Conservation Commissions' criteria and priorities, which include land within the Conservation Area Overlay District. The Big Woods Area – an approximately 1,800-acre area within this overlay

district with little existing development – is a targeted area for open space protection.

To maintain larger blocks of open space, which have greater wildlife habitat value than fragmented patches of woods, Open Space Design subdivision layout is preferred over conventional subdivision. This layout results in protected undeveloped land

while also allowing for more flexible development patterns with a smaller footprint.

Connected open spaces are important for wildlife habitat as well as recreation. Wildlife crossings that facilitate north-south movement across Route 4 will be considered.

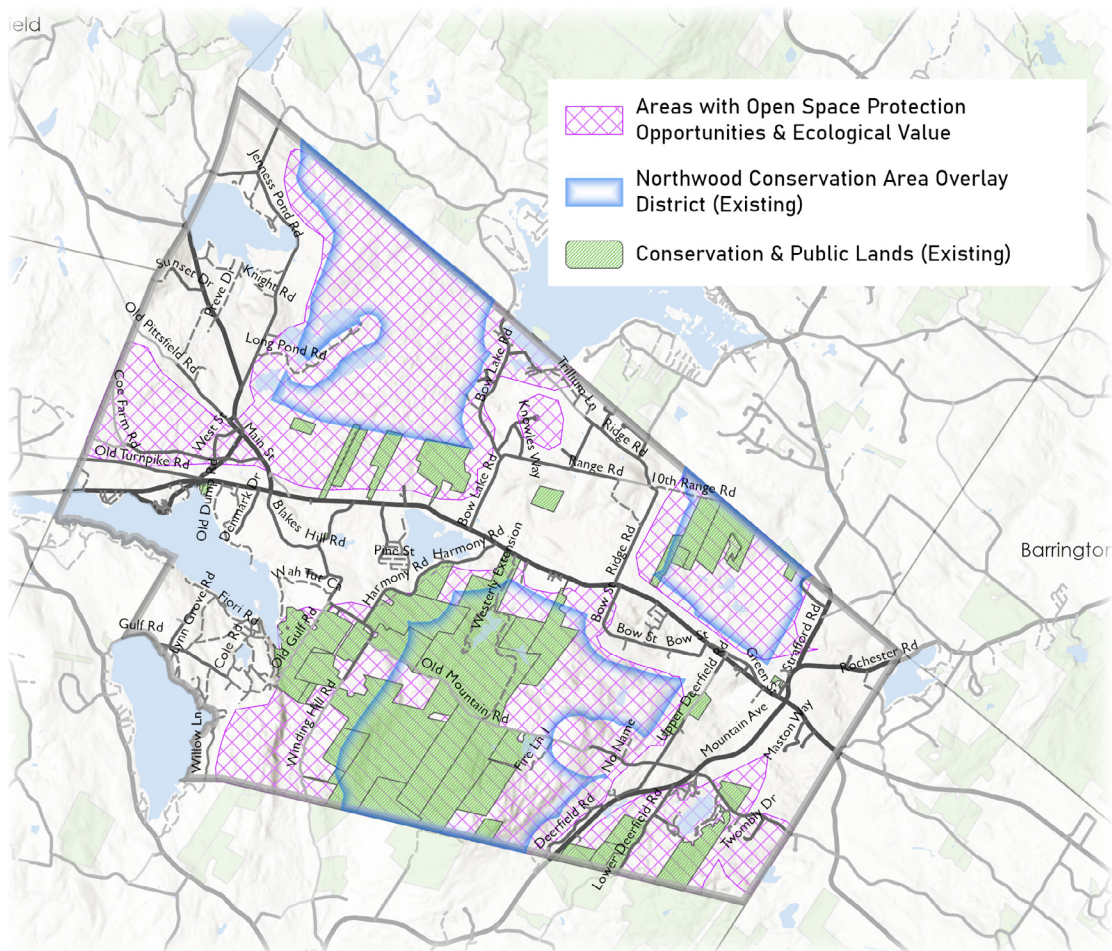


FIGURE 7. RESIDENTS’ INPUT ON AREAS WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR OPEN SPACE PROTECTION AND ECOLOGICAL VALUE SHARED DURING COMMUNITY LAND USE WORKSHOPS IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2025

COMMUNITY INPUT

83%

Protection of additional land is favored by 83% of community members who participated in the 2025 future land use survey.

Top values or characteristics to consider when evaluating conservation land:



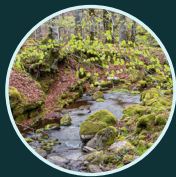
Land that allows recreational opportunities



Land that has wetlands



Land that allows public access



Land that protects water resources



Land that provides high quality wildlife habitat



Residents share their ideas during Future Land Use Workshops

PUBLIC LAND, FACILITIES & SERVICES

TOWN-OWNED LAND

The Town's portfolio of land totals 868 acres across 90 parcels.¹⁸ These properties include lots that municipal building occupy; recreation land, parks, and beaches; cemeteries; over 700 acres of unofficial conservation land¹⁹ and Town Forests properties; and other lands.

Future Use of Town Property

While most Town-owned land will continue to be used for its current purpose, the existing use and purpose of some properties may become obsolete. Facilities like the Police

Station, Narrows Fire Station, and Ridge Substation do not meet the community's current or future needs. The Community Center and the Chesley Memorial Library would benefit from more interior space and parking than currently available on their respective lots.

Northwood's fire and police services are located on three separate parcels located along NH Rt 4 and on Main Street. As documented in the [Community Facilities Chapter](#) and through multiple assessments and educational efforts, both police and fire facilities are inadequate (See Appendix 3). When the town identifies and funds a solution to upgrading its police and fire facilities, the lots and structure that currently house these services may be sold or redeveloped as new community assets.

There are a range of options for repurposing existing Town-owned land after it is no longer serving its current purpose, including the option to sell the property or to do nothing. Some amenities that the community has expressed interest in include a larger, multi-purpose community center and indoor recreation for all ages. Solar development and affordable housing are other uses that the community supports.

Park and Ride Lot

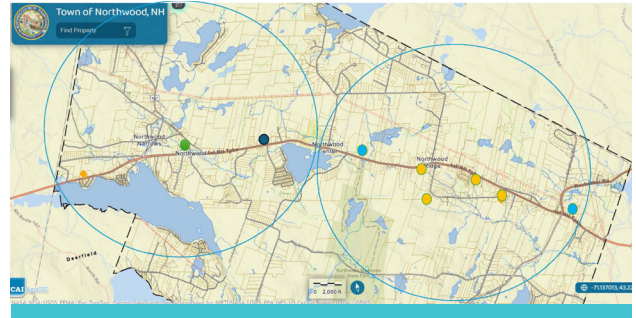
The Town owns a 0.87-acre parcel located on the northwest side of the intersection of NH Route 4 and Rochester Road, which is currently utilized in part as a park and ride lot. The lot is paved by NHDOT. This

Refer to the [Community Facilities Chapter](#) for a comprehensive map and list of Town-owned properties and documentation of desired improvements. Additionally, the [Natural Resources & Water Resources Chapter](#) and the [Recreation Chapter](#) have additional information about conservation lands, public open space, recreational assets, and public access to lakes.

Maintain and improve services will require passing a budget. The Planning Board may consider imposing impact fees. Impact fees are an Innovative Land Use Control regulated by RSA 674:21, V that may be charged to cover the costs of capital improvements that are necessitated by new developments. Impact fees may only be charged for specific improvements identified by state statute.

Future Fire Station Site Evaluation

In early 2026, the Public Safety Facilities Evaluation Committee identified potential sites for a new fire station. The four most viable sites to be considered are located near the center of the eastern service area. This would reduce fire service response time in the vicinity of Four Corners, residential neighborhoods on the east side of Town, and key commercial corridors.



site serves as a convenient meeting point for drivers but offers little more to residents or visitors. Its strategic location offers the opportunity for placemaking initiatives. Implementing incremental improvements, such as the installation of a welcome sign or public art, the addition of outdoor seating, and the facilitation of pop-up events like farmers markets or food trucks, could transform this area into a vibrant gathering space and establish it as a 'town center.' Furthermore, the inclusion of electric vehicle charging stations would significantly enhance the utility and appeal of this lot.

Town Forests and Open Space

Preserving forests, fields, and other natural areas is important to residents. It is the intent that the Town's unofficial conservation land and Town Forests will continue to be maintained as productive ecological lands. To enhance the value of these lots for wildlife as well as recreational purposes, the Town will look for opportunities to establish linkages

with nearby preserved lands. The Town forests will continue to be sustainably managed as productive woodlots via management plans.

OTHER PUBLIC ASSETS IN THE COMMUNITY

Northwood Elementary School and Coe Brown Northwood Academy are centrally located community hubs that are regularly frequented by families with school-aged children, school employees, and other residents seeking out a playground or sports field. As the town evaluates future land use and zoning changes along NH Route 4, it should prioritize developments that are compatible with and complementary to educational environments. Planning efforts should focus on creating safe, walkable infrastructure that supports students while creating a community hub through the integration of civic uses - such as community centers with after school programming - or healthcare facilities that can share resources and services. Amenities like daycares, fitness centers, coffee shops,

or co-work spaces that would create opportunities for social connections and support work-life balance for parents and other residents. After-school programming and similar supportive amenities that enhance both the local economy and the daily lives of families would further strengthen these community hubs. Establishing safe, off-road connectivity from the Northwood Athletic Fields to the elementary school is a priority.

The presence of State-owned Northwood Meadows State Park is a tremendous asset in the community. The vast acreage of this park provides critical wildlife habitat and serves as a primary corridor for linking protected lands across much of the southern portion of the community and beyond. To preserve this resource, future land use planning should prioritize the creation of safe wildlife crossings and the exclusion of industrial uses that threaten environmental integrity. As discussed in the [Economic Development](#) and [Recreation Chapters](#), by leveraging the park and local lakes as regional anchors, the town is strategically positioned to expand its outdoor-recreation tourism economy, fostering a sustainable balance between conservation and local growth.

LINKING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AMENITIES

Streetscape enhancements could establish connectivity and link public and private land, resources, and amenities in both the west and east ends of the community.

For example, the neighborhoods and destinations of the west end of town could be better connected — and provide communities members with greater opportunities for running, walking, and cycling — if safe routes were identified through signage, crosswalks, bike lanes, and other [complete streets](#) elements. The Community Center, situated at the northern end of the neighborhood in the Narrows region of town, is just one mile from the Town's Northwood Lake Beach, which is a walkable or bikeable distance for many. In between are places to eat and shop for groceries and supplies (Figure 8).

Improvements could include:

- Wayfinding and signage that help residents and visitors navigate the community also help establish a sense of place.
- Painted crosswalks to improve motorists' awareness of pedestrians.
- Sidewalks connecting amenities like Bryant Memorial Library and the Community Center
- Walking trails

Transportation improvements will be discussed further in future transportation planning efforts.

UNH Cooperative Extension's [Barrington Trails and Downtown Report](#) is a great example of how trails can be an integrated part of a community's town center.

Connectivity is one theme identified during public input for the Master Plan update.



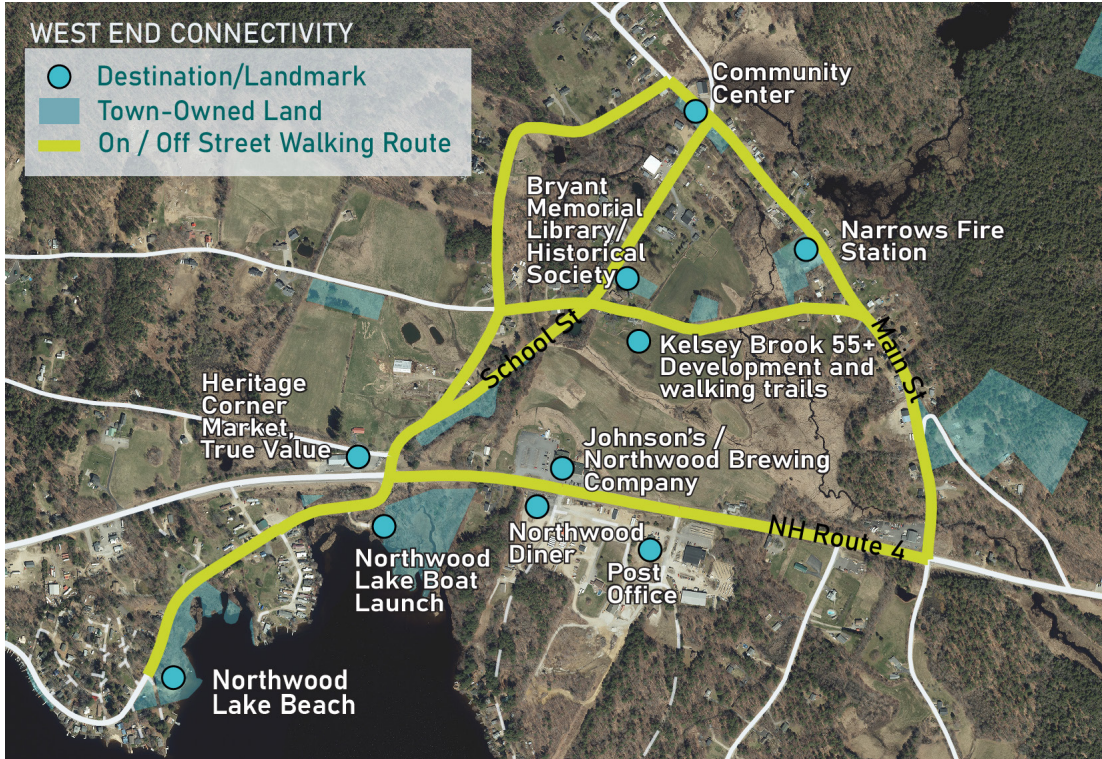


FIGURE 8. POTENTIAL ON- AND OFF-STREET WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTES THAT COULD BE ESTABLISHED IN THE WEST END OF NORTHWOOD.



FIGURE 9. THE ADDITION OF SIGNAGE, SHARROWS, AND MILE MARKERS WOULD ESTABLISH SAFER ROUTES FOR ALL USERS.

BEYOND OUR BOUNDARIES: REGIONAL COORDINATION

To ensure a sustainable and prosperous future, the community must look past municipal borders and recognize its role as a vital link between the Seacoast, Capital, and Lakes Regions.

Effective regional coordination addresses shared challenges that transcend municipal lines, such as watershed management, hazard mitigation, transportation, population dynamics, regional housing and employment markets, and resilience.

As a headwaters community at the top of the Lamprey, Suncook, and Cocheco River watersheds, Northwood holds a regional responsibility (see [Natural Resources & Water Resources Chapter Figure 3](#)). The health of lakes and forests directly impacts the water quality and biodiversity of the towns downstream. Collaborative management with watershed associations, lake associations, and conservation groups is essential to safeguard shared natural resources and enhance recreational opportunities.

Changes in zoning in nearby communities can impact the services available in the region, housing pressure, and traffic volumes in Northwood. The zoning in communities that abut Northwood – Epsom, Strafford, Barrington, Nottingham, and Deerfield – is generally for rural residential and agricultural uses. Both Epsom and Nottingham have established distinct zoning districts along the NH Route

4 corridor that include a “Flexible Commercial District” and an “Industrial/Commercial District.”

The Town should continue to leverage relationships with the Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) and the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) to advocate for corridor improvements with an eye toward enhancing multi-modal options. Regional planning opens doors for connecting Northwood to broader trail networks and exploring transit options that reduce single-occupancy vehicle dependency.

In addition to working with SRPC, the Town may benefit from engaging with other Regional Planning Commissions that are within close proximity of Northwood (i.e. Southern New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission, Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission, and Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission).

Regional partnerships allow for shared hazard mitigation strategies, ensuring that Northwood is better prepared for extreme weather events and shifting environmental conditions.

The [New Hampshire Zoning Atlas](#) provides a comprehensive database and interactive online map cataloging and portraying district-level land-use regulations affecting housing construction across the entire land area of the state.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Resilience can be defined as the capacity to withstand and to recover quickly from difficulties, or the ability to bounce back. In community planning, resilience is the proactive, long-term process of enabling a community to anticipate, absorb, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses like natural disasters, climate change, public health emergencies, and economic changes. It integrates disaster risk reduction, infrastructure strengthening, and social cohesion into regular land use and comprehensive planning to ensure safety, minimize disruptions, and foster sustainable growth.

As the regional climate shifts toward more frequent extreme weather events and altered precipitation patterns, Northwood will embrace a proactive climate resilience strategy. Building resilience means ensuring that residents, infrastructure, ecosystems, and water supplies in the community can withstand and recover from environmental stressors while continuing to support the community's needs. Refer to Appendix 3 for an overview of projected changes in temperature and precipitation and to other chapters of the master plan for more details on impacts to and planning across different sectors.

'Preparedness' is a part of the Master Plan Vision



KEY ACTIONS A MUNICIPALITY CAN TAKE TO ENHANCE RESILIENCE

Planning & Education

Know what the science says about how future precipitation, heat, and storm events will be different than in the past and incorporate into planning and decision making. Educate residents about climate impacts and what individuals can do.

Environment Protection

Utilize green infrastructure and low impact development techniques to manage stormwater, protect wetlands, and increase shade.

Social Capital Building

Enhance community networks and civic hubs to ensure vulnerable populations are supported during emergencies. Partner with businesses and organizations to expand reach. Engage a diverse cross section of community members in planning decisions.

Business Continuity & Preparedness

Increase business owner education about climate impacts and preparedness to reduce impacts to physical infrastructure and operations.

Built Environment

Maintain updated building codes and ordinances that encourage energy-efficient construction and require structures to be fire-resistant and able to withstand high winds. Locate development away from areas that are flood prone or at risk for wildlife or landslides. Develop a policy to ensure that future Town-owned structures are located away from hazards. Review culvert sizes and upgrade as needed to reflect projected precipitation. Utilize building and streetscape materials that can withstand high heat and that reflect. Reduce the carbon footprint of municipal buildings and operations.

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. A two-lane road curves through the center of the image, with several cars and a truck visible. The road is flanked by dense forests of trees, some bare and some evergreen. In the background, there are several houses and a larger building. The overall scene is a mix of natural and developed land.

PLACE-BASED FUTURE LAND USE CONCEPTS

The community recognizes that a single zoning district is insufficient to achieve the development patterns it envisions, as neither the existing nor the desired character of Northwood is uniform. Through mapping exercises and public input sessions, the Planning Board identified three areas where distinct zoning approaches are warranted. Two new overlay districts were identified.

These districts are described on the following pages and in Appendix 1.

ABOUT

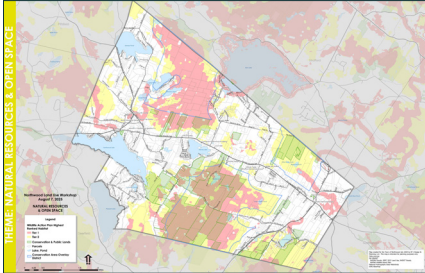
The following pages include an overview of the process of developing the future land use map, a proposed future land use map, and descriptions of each envisioned future zoning district.

The Planning Board will collaborate with the community to further refine these concepts during the process of establishing formal zoning amendments.

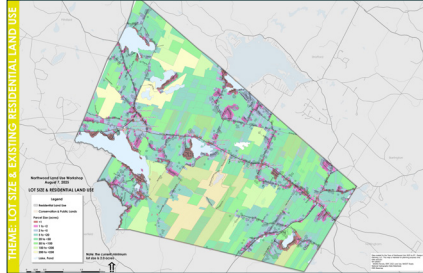


FUTURE LAND USE MAPPING PROCESS

1. WORKSHOP BASE MAPS

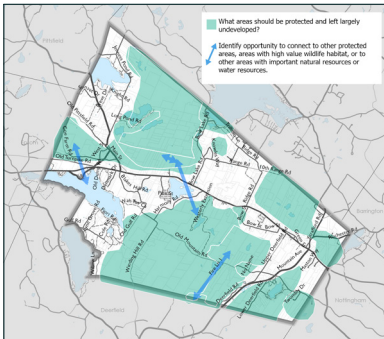


**WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN,
CONSERVATION LAND**

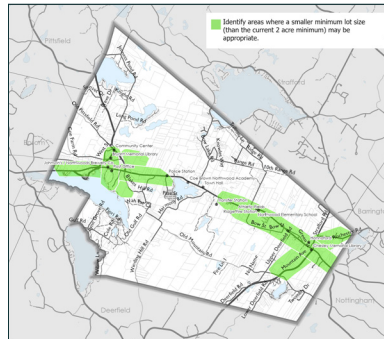


EXISTING DEVELOPMENT, LOT SIZE

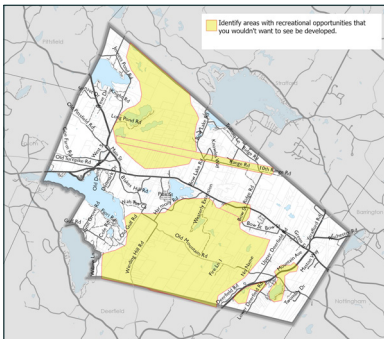
2. DIGITIZED COMMUNITY WORKSHOP INPUT



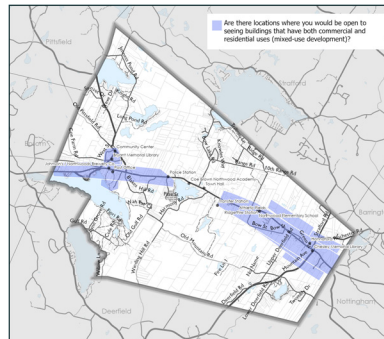
LEAVE AS OPEN SPACE



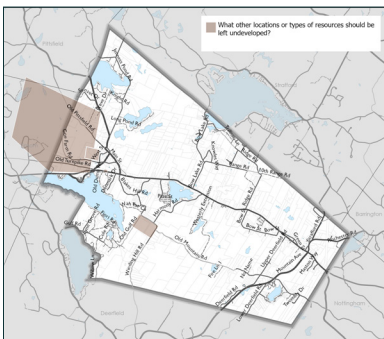
<2 ACRE MIN. LOT SIZE OKAY



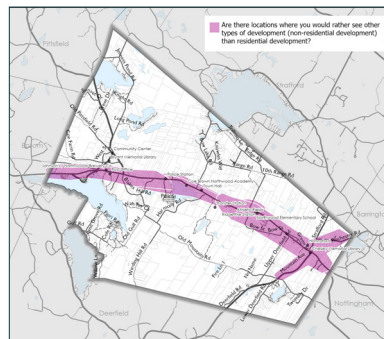
RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES



MIXED-USE BUILDINGS OKAY

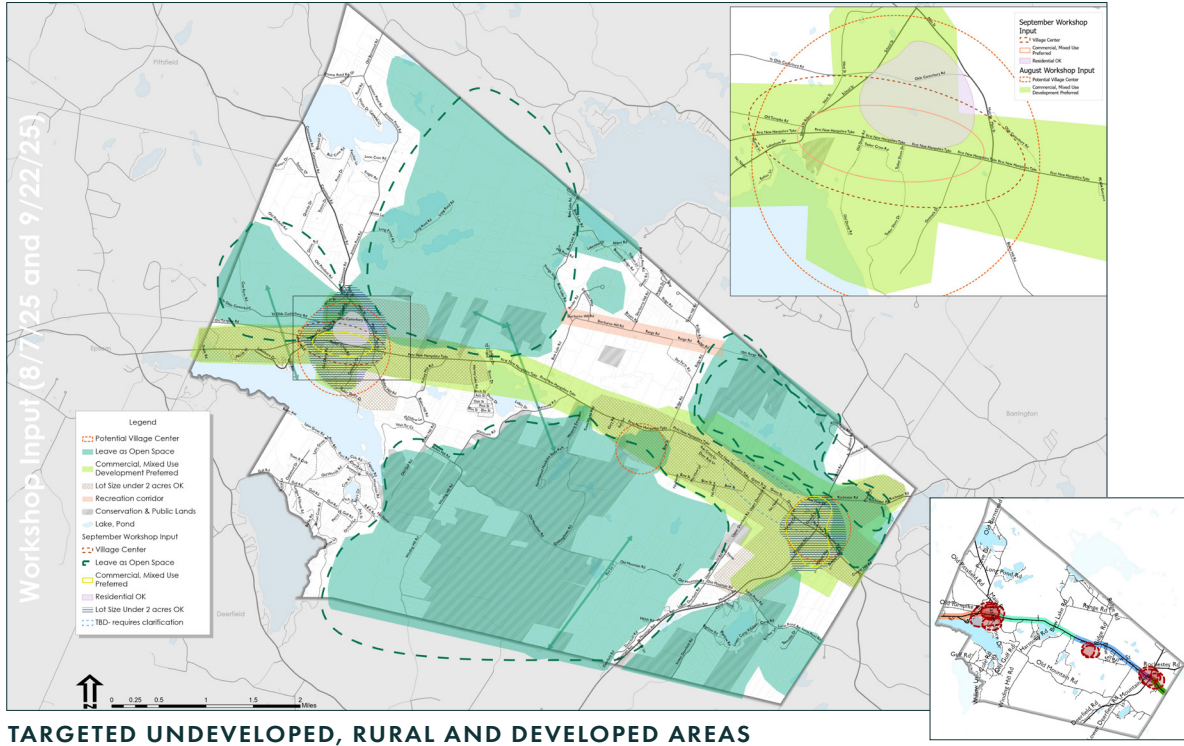


OTHER LOCATIONS TO PROTECT



NON-RESIDENTIAL PREFERRED

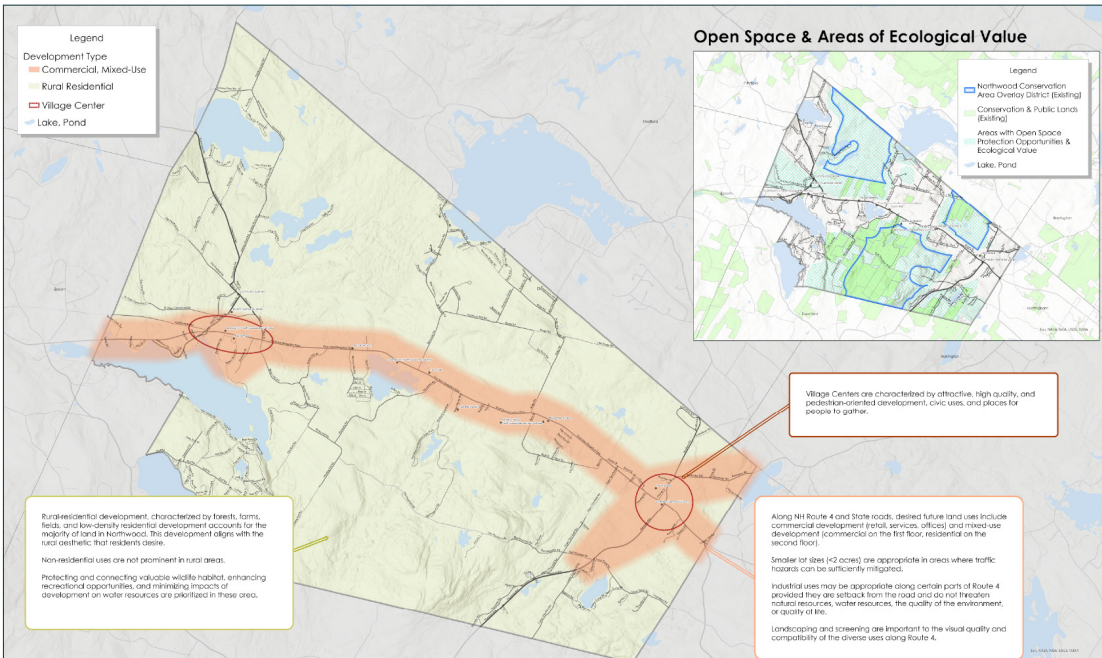
3. CONSOLIDATED INPUT



TARGETED UNDEVELOPED, RURAL AND DEVELOPED AREAS

VILLAGE CENTER & CORRIDOR CHARACTERIZATION

4. DRAFT FUTURE LAND USE CONCEPT



RURAL RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL/MIXED-USE CORRIDOR, 2 CENTERS

5. PROPOSED FUTURE LAND USE MAP

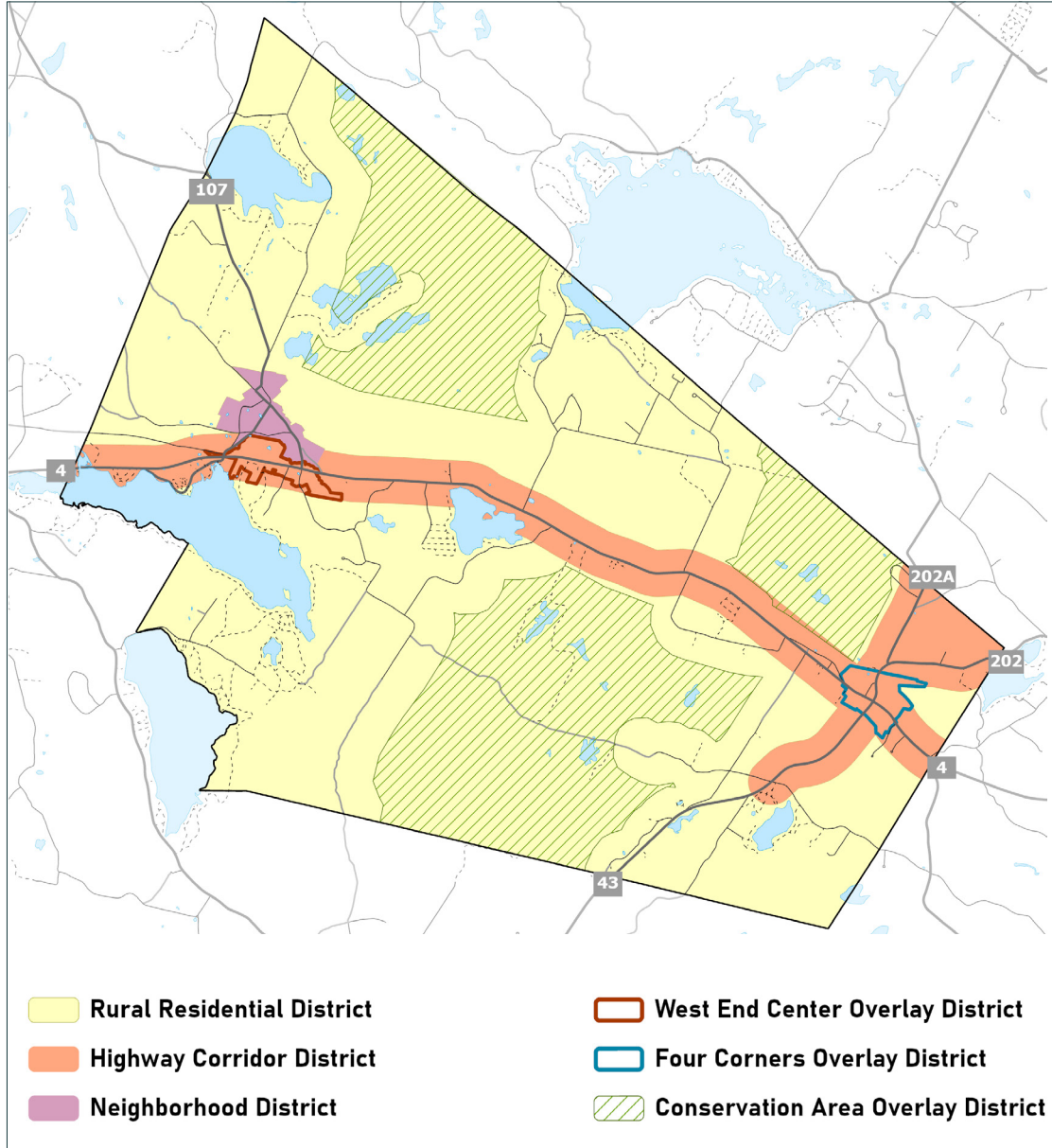
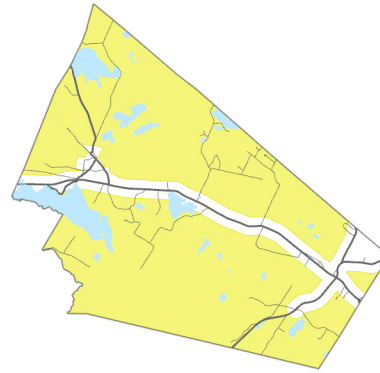


FIGURE 10. PROPOSED NEW FUTURE ZONING DISTRICTS AND OVERLAY DISTRICTS. EXISTING OVERLAY DISTRICTS NOT SHOWN: STEEP SLOPES OVERLAY DISTRICT, AGRICULTURAL SOILS OVERLAY DISTRICT, WETLANDS CONSERVATION OVERLAY DISTRICT & WELLHEAD PROTECTION.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

Rural-residential development - characterized by forests, farms, fields, and low-density residential development - accounts for the majority of land in Northwood. This development aligns with the rural aesthetic that residents desire. Non-residential uses are generally limited in these areas. Priorities in this part of the community include protecting and connecting wildlife habitat, enhancing recreational opportunities, and minimizing the impact of development on water resources.



DESIRED CHARACTER

Flexible lower density residential development with a variety of housing types and neighborhoods intermixed with forests and agricultural land

PHYSICAL FORM

- 2-acre minimum lot size
- Open Space Design development preferred
- Development is buffered from public roads
- Connected street networks minimize dead ends

GENERAL TYPES OF USES

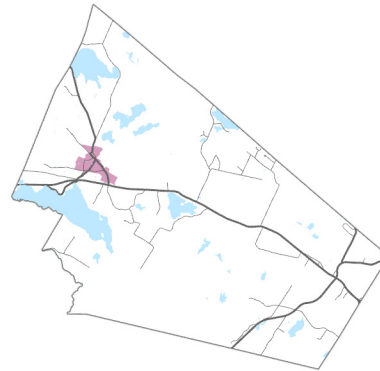
- Single-family, duplex, multi-family residential development
- Mixed use
- Home businesses
- Compatible non-residential uses
- Agriculture, forestry

PLANNING TOOLS TO SHAPE DESIRED DEVELOPMENT

- Open space design (RSA 674:21)
- Inclusionary zoning (RSA 674:21)
- Elderly and workforce housing incentives (RSA 674:59)
- Enhanced landscaping and design standards for subdivisions
- Wetland and shoreland protection around lakefronts

NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT

Along NH Route 4, Rt 202, Rt 202A, and Rt 43, desired future land uses include commercial development (such as retail, services, and offices) and mixed use development with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential units above. Smaller lot sizes (less than two acres) may be appropriate where traffic safety concerns can be adequately addressed. Industrial uses may be suitable along certain segments of these highways, provided they are set back from the roadway and do not compromise natural resources, water quality, environmental conditions, or overall quality of life.



Community sentiment is mixed regarding the long term appropriateness of single family homes along Route 4. Landscaping and screening are important tools for maintaining visual quality and ensuring compatibility among diverse uses. Adaptive reuse of historic dwellings for mixed use or commercial purposes offers a strategy to preserve historic character while accommodating evolving development needs. The town may also consider additional zoning or overlay districts along highway corridors to encourage nodes of concentrated development while also preserving undeveloped blocks that reinforce rural character, support wildlife movement, and enable scenic lake views.

DESIRED CHARACTER

Small-town, historic neighborhood and civic hub with outdoor gathering space and a strong sense of community

PHYSICAL FORM

- 1-acre minimum lot size
- Sidewalks and walking routes (Complete Streets)
- Wayfinding signage and historic markers
- New development and redevelopment blends with existing character

GENERAL TYPES OF USES

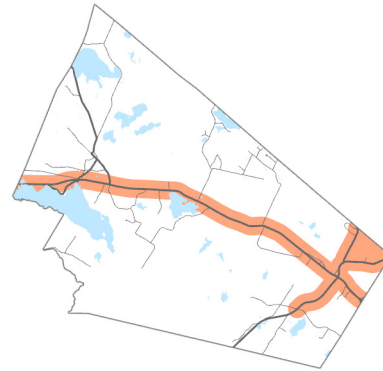
- Single-family, duplex, multi-family residential development
- Mixed use development
- Small scale, resident-oriented businesses
- Pocket parks
- Agriculture, forests, open space

PLANNING TOOLS TO SHAPE DESIRED DEVELOPMENT

- Architectural design standards
- Complete streets requirements
- Placemaking
- Historic marker program

HIGHWAY CORRIDOR DISTRICT

Along NH Route 4, Rt 202, Rt 202A, and Rt 43, desired future land uses include commercial development (such as retail, services, and offices) and mixed use development with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential units above. Smaller lot sizes (less than two acres) may be appropriate where traffic safety concerns can be adequately addressed. Industrial uses may be suitable along certain segments of these highways, provided they are set back from the roadway and do not compromise natural resources, water quality, environmental conditions, or overall quality of life.



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DESIRED CHARACTER

Rural highway with nodes of more concentrated non-residential development that provide services, retail, amenities, jobs, and tax revenue for the community

PHYSICAL FORM

- 1-3 story buildings
- High quality landscaping
- Shared curb cuts and parking
- Parking is located to rear when possible
- Allow small scale planned unit developments
- Nodes of development help to avoid suburban strip-like development
- Maintain views of scenic vistas that contribute to rural character
- Maintain wildlife crossings
- Well buffered industrial uses on individual lots or within parks.

GENERAL TYPES OF USES

- Small to medium scale commercial and office
- Larger commercial and exterior storage screened from Route 4
- Single-family, duplex, multi-family residential
- Workforce housing and more affordable housing
- Civic uses
- Light industry, light industrial parks

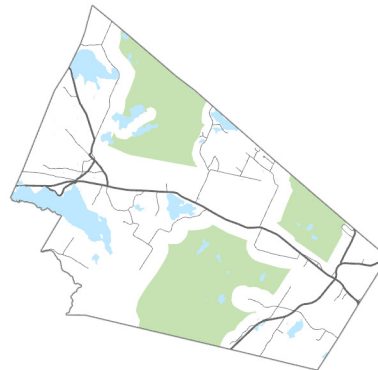
PLANNING TOOLS TO SHAPE DESIRED DEVELOPMENT

- Residential Property Revitalization Zones (RSA 79-E-B)
- Sign regulations
- Planned Unit Development (RSA 674:21)
- Planned developments allow for flexibility
- Performance standards regulate potential nuisance and potential environmental hazards (RSA 674:21)
- Commercial and industrial Property Tax Exemption (RSA 72:81)
- Adaptive reuse of historic structures and single-family homes

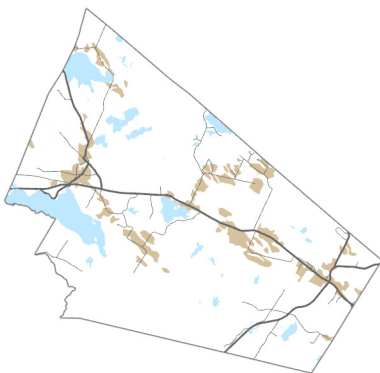
ENVIRONMENTAL OVERLAY DISTRICTS

Northwood's existing overlay districts are intended to protect water resources and natural resources. They also serve to keep development and infrastructure away from areas that are more susceptible to flooding or landslides. It is important for the community to uphold and periodically review these regulations to ensure they are effectively protecting Northwood's valuable assets and environment.

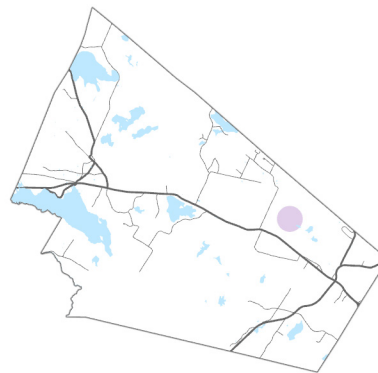
Refer to the [Natural Resources & Water Resources Chapter](#) for additional information about and recommendations pertaining to these overlay districts.



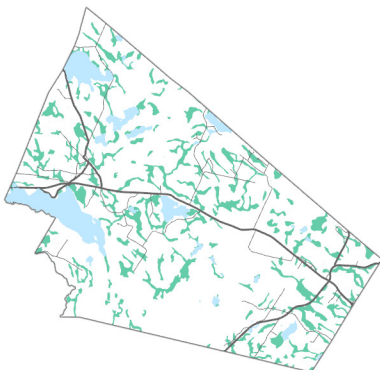
**CONSERVATION AREA
OVERLAY DISTRICT**



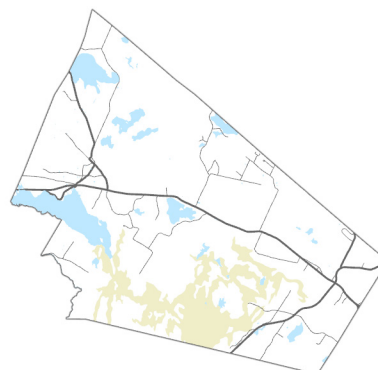
**AGRICULTURAL SOILS
OVERLAY DISTRICT**



**WELLHEAD PROTECTION
OVERLAY DISTRICT**



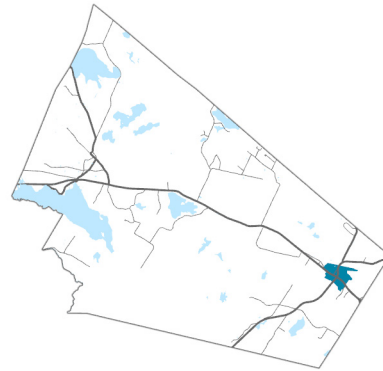
**WETLANDS CONSERVATION
OVERLAY DISTRICT**



**STEEP SLOPES
OVERLAY DISTRICT**

FOUR CORNERS OVERLAY DISTRICT

Four Corners – located at the intersection of NH Route 4, Route 202, and Route 43 – functions as a primary gateway into Northwood. This location has the potential to evolve into a walkable commercial and service center that also provides meaningful opportunities for community gathering. Strengthening this node involves establishing a clear identity through coordinated streetscape design and thoughtful site planning. Public properties within the area may be reimaged to create flexible outdoor spaces that support community events and informal social interaction.



Concentrating commercial development in this location can help reduce pressure for strip development along other areas of the corridor and reinforce a more compact pattern of growth. Mixed use structures that combine ground floor commercial activity with upper story residential units are particularly appropriate in this setting. Ensuring that buildings, parking areas, and site amenities relate cohesively to one another and to the streetscape is essential to creating a unified district character. Pedestrian safety is a central consideration, and improvements to crossing opportunities at key locations will support walkability. Off road path connections can further enhance access between businesses and amenities. Collaboration with local businesses will be important in promoting coordinated signage, shared access points, and site improvements that reinforce the identity of this area district.

DESIRED CHARACTER

A gateway to Northwood that serves as a walkable shopping and service center and place for community members to gather

PHYSICAL FORM

- High quality, dense, pedestrian-scale development with streetscape amenities
- Emphasis on infill development and flexible village plan alternative/planned unit development
- Shared parking
- 2-4 story buildings

GENERAL TYPES OF USES

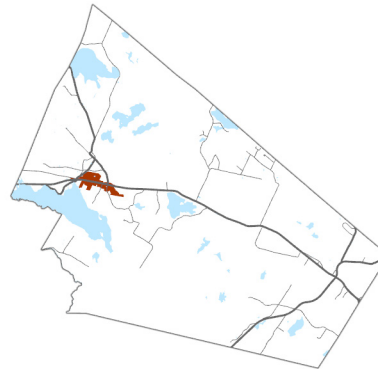
- Variety of commercial uses
- Mixed use development
- Outdoor seating
- No big box retail
- No strip malls
- No additional gas stations
- Pocket parks

PLANNING TOOLS TO SHAPE DESIRED DEVELOPMENT

- Form based code
- Village Plan Alternative/Planned Unit Development (RSA 674:21)
- Infill redevelopment
- Tax Increment Finance (TIF) (RSA 162-k)
- Tax Exemption (RSA 72:81)
- Adaptive reuse of historic structures and single-family homes

WEST END CENTER OVERLAY DISTRICT

The West End Center Overlay and Northwood Lake – contains an established cluster of retail and service uses along Route 4 that serve both local residents and the broader region. The intent of the Narrows Center Overlay District is to reinforce this area as a cohesive, pedestrian friendly center. Sidewalks, coordinated signage, and off road paths can strengthen pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods, businesses, and Northwood Lake, while also supporting multimodal access for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.



Landscaping provides cohesive appearance. Together, these improvements will help the Narrows Center function as a more accessible, attractive, and cohesive district.

DESIRED CHARACTER

Town center with a mix of retail and services along Route 4 that serve the local and regional population and walking routes that connect neighborhoods, businesses, and Northwood Lake

PHYSICAL FORM

- 1-acre minimum lot size
- 1-3 story buildings
- Emphasis on sidewalks and pedestrian connectivity
- Minimize outdoor storage

GENERAL TYPES OF USES

- Variety of commercial uses
- Healthcare
- Mixed use
- No big box retail
- No strip malls
- Outdoor seating

PLANNING TOOLS TO SHAPE DESIRED DEVELOPMENT

- Form based code
- Village Plan Alternative/Planned Unit Development (RSA 674:21)

RECOMMENDATIONS

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE (R)

1. Develop landscaping standards for subdivisions and multi-family housing.
2. Encourage infill development and density along state roads and Route 4 in particular.
3. Allow mixed-use development along Route 4.
4. Evaluate options to incorporate additional incentives for workforce housing into regulations.
5. Reduce dimensional requirements on Route 4 and in the 'Narrows Neighborhood' area described in this chapter (Future Land Use).
6. Promote neighborhood connectivity to improve access, walkability, and reduce vehicle miles traveled.
7. Enhance design standards of the subdivision regulations to promote unique, high-quality subdivisions while discouraging a generic suburban, cookie-cutter aesthetic.

COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL LAND USE (CI)

1. Establish two or more zoning districts in the community with distinct permitted uses and dimensional standards.
2. Establish village/town centers zones at the West End and Four Corners.
3. Consider utilizing Innovative Land Use planning techniques such as lot size averaging and village plan alternative in certain areas of town.
4. Explore form-based code as an alternative to conventional zoning.
5. Develop regulations for industrial uses. Allow industrial uses within the 'Highway Corridor District' described in this chapter provided that they are not visible from the public way. Require sufficient setbacks and landscaping.
6. Allow electric vehicle charging stations as a permitted and accessory use.
7. Integrate on- and off-road walking routes and sidewalks into all developments.
8. Strengthen landscaping and architectural standards of the site plan review regulations.

PUBLIC LAND, FACILITIES, AND SERVICES (P)

1. Develop a strategic plan for Town-owned lots and structures.
2. Use underutilized Town-owned land and the park and ride lot for public park space and popup uses like a farmers market or food truck.
3. Establish a committee to consider whether impact fees for a community center and/or public safety facility(ies) are warranted.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS (O)

1. Regularly update the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and Site Plan Review Regulations. Seek grant funding to support these efforts.
2. Consider utilizing conditional use permitting for Innovative Land Use Planning techniques (NH RSA 674:21).
3. Enhance resilience planning efforts in cooperation updating the local hazard mitigation plan and emergency operations plan.
4. Discourage development in poorly connected areas at risk of becoming inaccessible (ex. the Gulf) and/or work to develop alternative access to improve emergency egress.
5. Work with landowners and NH DOT to develop a comprehensive transportation master plan that includes:
 - Walking paths along NH Rt 4 and Rt 107
 - Enhanced crosswalk safety at NH Rt 4, 202, and 43
 - A safe crossing over Rt 4 to connect amenities on the north and south sides of the highway near Northwood Lake
 - A wildlife crossing plan for NH Rt 4.

Several recommendations pertaining to land use regulations and policies have already been identified in other recently adopted master plan chapters: Housing & Demographics, Natural Resources & Water Resources, Economic Development, Community Facilities, and Recreation. Refer to Appendix 2 for Land Use Recommendations Identified in Other Master Plan Chapters (2022-2025) to view these additional recommendations from adopted chapters.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation Table Key

Recommendation Category

| | |
|----|---------------------------------------|
| R | Residential Land Use |
| CI | Commercial & Industrial Land Use |
| P | Public Land, Facilities, and Services |
| O | Other |

Cost

| | |
|---------|-------------------------------------|
| Minimal | <\$5,000 or in kind/volunteer hours |
| Low | >\$5,000-\$10,000 |
| Medium | >\$10,000-\$50,000 |
| High | >\$50,000 |

Responsible Party

| | |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| BC | Budget Committee |
| CC | Conservation Commission |
| EDC | Economic Development Committee |
| FD | Fire Department |
| LUD | Land Use Department |
| PB | Planning Board |
| PD | Police Department |
| PSC | Public Safety Facilities Comm. |
| PW | Public Works |
| RC | Recreation Committee |
| RD | Recreation Department |
| SB | Selectboard |
| TA | Town Administrator |

Priority

Low, Medium, High ranking is based on the Master Plan Subcommittee and Planning Board's determination of which projects are most important to complete at the time this chapter was prepared. Ease of implementation was considered during the prioritization.

Potential Partner

| | |
|-------|--|
| NHDOT | NH Department of Transportation |
| NHFG | NH Fish & Game |
| SRPC | Strafford Regional Planning Commission |
| SEDD | SRPC Economic Development District |
| REDC | Rockingham Economic Development District |

IMPLEMENTATION

| # | Recommendation | Responsible Part(ies) | Target Date | Priority | Cost | Potential Partners |
|-----|--|-----------------------|--------------------|----------|---------------|---|
| R1 | Develop landscaping standards for subdivisions and multi-family housing. | PB | 2027 (in progress) | Medium | Low | SRPC, Consultant |
| R2 | Encourage infill development and density along state roads and Route 4 in particular. | PB | 2028 | Medium | Low | EDC, REDD, SEDD |
| R3 | Allow mixed-use development along Route 4. | PB | 2027 (in progress) | High | Minimal | SRPC, Consultant |
| R4 | Evaluate options to incorporate additional incentives for workforce housing into regulations. | PB | Ongoing | Medium | Variable | Workforce Housing Coalition, SRPC, Consultant, Developers |
| R5 | Reduce dimensional requirements on Route 4 and in the 'Narrows Neighborhood' area described in this chapter (Future Land Use). | PB | 2028 | Medium | Minimal | SRPC, Consultant |
| R6 | Promote neighborhood connectivity to improve access, walkability, and reduce vehicle miles traveled. | PB | Ongoing | Medium | Variable | SRPC, NHDOT, PD/FD |
| R7 | Enhance design standards of the subdivision regulations to promote unique, high-quality subdivisions while discouraging a generic suburban, cookie-cutter aesthetic. | PB | 2027 | High | Low-Medium | SRPC, Consultant |
| C11 | Establish two or more zoning districts in the community with distinct permitted uses and dimensional standards. | PB | 2029 | Medium | Low | SRPC, Consultant |
| C12 | Establish village/town centers zones at the West End and Four Corners. | PB | 2030 | High | Low | SRPC, Consultant |
| C13 | Consider utilizing Innovative Land Use planning techniques such as lot size averaging and village plan alternative in certain areas of town. | PB | 2030 | Medium | Low to Medium | SRPC, Consultant |
| C14 | Explore form-based code as an alternative to conventional zoning. | PB | 2029 | Medium | Medium-High | Consultant |
| C15 | Develop regulations for industrial uses. Allow industrial uses only within the 'Highway Corridor District' as described in this chapter provided that they are not visible from the public way. Require sufficient setbacks and landscaping. | PB | 2028 | Medium | Low | SRPC, Consultant |
| C16 | Allow electric vehicle charging stations as a permitted and accessory use. | PB | 2028 | Low | Minimal | SRPC |

IMPLEMENTATION

| # | Recommendation | Responsible Part(ies) | Target Date | Priority | Cost | Potential Partners |
|-----|---|-----------------------|--------------------|----------|-------------|---|
| C17 | Integrate on- and off-road walking routes and sidewalks into all developments. | PB | in progress | High | Minimal | SRPC, Consultant |
| C18 | Strengthen landscaping and architectural standards of the site plan review regulations. | PB | in progress | High | Minimal-Low | SRPC, Consultant |
| P1 | Develop a strategic plan for Town-owned lots and structures. | SB | 2029 | High | Minimal | Town staff, committees, boards, departments |
| P2 | Use underutilized Town-owned land and the park and ride lot for public park space and popup uses like a farmers market or food truck. | SB | 2029 | Low | Minimal | PB, EDC, TA |
| P3 | Establish a committee to consider whether impact fees for a community center and/or public safety facility(ies) are warranted. | PB, SB | 2027 (in progress) | Medium | Minimal | BC, Town staff |
| 01 | Regularly update the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and Site Plan Review Regulations. Seek grant funding to support these efforts. | PB | ongoing | High | Minimal | LUD |
| 02 | Consider utilizing conditional use permitting for Innovative Land Use Planning techniques (NH RSA 674:21). | PB | 2027 | Low | Variable | SRPC, Consultant |
| 03 | Enhance resilience planning efforts in cooperation with updating the local hazard mitigation plan and emergency operations plan. | SB, PB | 2030, ongoing | High | Variable | PB, FD, PD, SRPC, Consultant |
| 04 | Discourage development in poorly connected areas at risk of becoming inaccessible (ex. the Gulf) and/or work to develop alternative access to improve emergency egress. | PB | Ongoing | High | Low | PW, FD, PD, PSC, SRPC, Consultant |
| 05 | Work with landowners and NH DOT to develop a comprehensive transportation master plan that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> walking paths along NH Rt 4 and Rt 107 enhanced crosswalk safety at NH Routes 4, 202, and 43 a safe crossing over Rt 4 to connect amenities on the north and south sides of the highway near Northwood Lake a wildlife crossing plan for NH Route 4 | SB, PB | 2023 | Low | High | NHDOT, PB, SRPC, PW, Consultant, NHFG |

Endnotes

- 1 Northwood Planning Board Housing Survey (2024), Vision Survey (2022)
- 2 NH GRANIT, Northwood Conservation Commission, Natural Resources & Water Resources Master Plan Chapter
- 3 2022 Digitized Land Use Data from NH GRANIT and Strafford Regional Planning Commission
- 4 Northwood Building Department, via email from Building Inspector and Code Enforcement Officer
- 5 Planning Board Case Lists 2020 - 2025
- 6 2022 Digitized Land Use Data from NH GRANIT and Strafford Regional Planning Commission
- 7 Northwood Building Department, via email from Building Inspector and Code Enforcement Officer
- 8 Strafford Regional Planning Commission '23 Regional Housing Needs Assessment. https://strafford.org/uploads/documents/plans/rpc/rhna_2023.pdf
- 9 Strafford Regional Planning Commission '23 Regional Housing Needs Assessment. https://strafford.org/uploads/documents/plans/rpc/rhna_2023.pdf
- 10 American Community Survey 2024 5-year estimates, Table B25024)
- 11 NH Housing Toolbox. Missing Middle Housing
- 12 Form-Based Codes: A Step-by-Step Guide for Communities. Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. <https://formbasedcodes.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/CMAP-GuideforCommunities.pdf>
- 13 Northwood Master Plan Subcommittee and Planning Board 2025 Land Use Survey
- 14 Economic Development Master Plan Chapter and Community Input
- 15 Northwood Master Plan Subcommittee and Planning Board 2025 Land Use Survey
- 16 Open Space Institute
- 17 2022 Digitized Land Use Data from NH GRANIT and Strafford Regional Planning Commission
- 18 Town of Northwood 2025 Annual Report
- 19 Unofficial conservation land is defined by the Conservation Lands Standards as not permanently protected through any legal mechanisms such as deed restrictions or conservation easements. It is owned by a public institution, public agency, or other organization whose mission may not be focused on conservation, but whose clear intent is to keep the land for conservation, recreation, or educational purposes and in mostly natural land cover.