

**Master Plan
for the
Town of Hancock
New Hampshire**

Adopted by the Planning Board Effective January 1, 2020

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INTRODUCTION

A master plan is a planning document that sets out, in broad strokes, a description of a community and a series of statements or principles which will guide its future physical development. It serves to guide the overall character, physical form, growth, and development of the community. It provides guidance to local officials when they are making decisions on budgets, ordinances, capital improvements, and zoning and subdivision matters. And it is a tool that can help officials deal responsibly with change and control growth in an orderly and constructive manner.

The "vision" set out in the Master Plan serves as an official policy guide for the community. Any ordinance pertaining to the use of land or the growth and development of the municipality should conform to the goals and policies of the plan.

Under state statutes, the preparation of a master plan is the official duty and responsibility of the planning board. The statutes (RSA 674:1) specifically require that the planning board will update and amend the master plan from time to time. Hancock initially adopted a Master Plan in 1977 and renewed its plan in 1987 and 1997.

Since the last update, the planning board established a Master Plan Advisory Committee, an open committee which welcomed all members of the community. That committee had the benefit of community input in many forms, notably the earlier Master Plans; a well-attended and well-documented Vision to Action Forum in 2003 which spawned active committees dealing over the intervening years with open spaces, community housing and improvements on Main Street; a comprehensive Capital Improvements Program in 2004 which analyzed population and housing trends and scheduled municipal and non-municipal capital requirements forecasts together with annual updates each year since 2004; an extensive survey of community attitudes in late 2006 and early 2007; Planning Board work on Workforce Housing during 2008 and 2009; and hearings on this plan.

This document was drafted by the Planning Board with significant contributions made by working groups over the previous twenty years as well as community volunteers.

Ultimately, responsibility for adopting the plan rests with the Planning Board.

In order to obtain direct input from Hancock's residents the Planning Board issued a written survey made available at several gathering places in town including the town hall, post office, dump and popular commercial businesses. Residents were asked to complete and return to these same locations. Other options for survey availability were online via the town's website again to be turned in at the same locations. The Planning Board also sponsored a public meeting held at the Meeting House on December 13, 2017 which was well attended whereby residents had the opportunity to share their vision for Hancock's future with the Planning Board and other residents. In conclusion the Planning Board felt they had received a fair and valid sampling of residential opinions in regard to their vision for Hancock's future.

The results of these efforts showed residents generally expressed satisfaction with the principles which had guided the community in the past. They liked living in a small town with a rural character. They liked living in a place where volunteer activity is the normal way to solve problems. They respected the physical heritage which they found here, both the natural

environment and the built environment. They liked the safety of the community. They liked the current balance between economic activity and residential and recreational uses. There was very little which could be called clamoring for change with two exceptions: (i) the need for more affordable housing for both young families and retired people and (ii) better infrastructure for telecommunications including broadband internet and cellular services.

VISION

RSA 674:2 - II. provides that “The master plan shall include, at a minimum, the following required sections:

“(a) A vision section that serves to direct the other sections of the plan. This section shall contain a set of statements which articulate the desires of the citizens affected by the master plan, not only for their locality but for the region and the whole state. It shall contain a set of guiding principles and priorities to implement that vision.”

The Planning Board solicited town residents’ opinion through a written survey questionnaire disseminated through various gathering places in town. Responses were collected and collated by the board. A well-attended public meeting was held at the Meeting House providing an opportunity for town residents to vocalize their own vision for the future. Based on information collected through these methods we believe that the following statements encapsulate the desires and objectives of Hancock citizens with respect to the development of the town and the region:

- Preserve the cultural, historic and natural assets of Hancock.
- Encourage a participatory civic environment that induces a sense of safety and well-being.
- Encourage conditions that provide moderate priced residential housing to promote young families to move in which could also be used by older residents as they downsize from larger homes. The board recognizes that rising construction costs remain a challenging factor.
- Encourage small scale economic development consistent with Hancock preservation values.
- Encourage conditions that will provide increased availability of mobile communication services (such as cell service) and broadband internet access services. This would be beneficial to public safety and entice small scale and home-based businesses to operate effectively in a changing business world.
- Encourage land use policies which preserve open spaces, recreation and agricultural activities.
- Encourage policies that support the use of renewable energy sources consistent with the residential scale of the community from all sources including wind and solar where appropriate in all zoning districts of town.

The two most popular changes called for by participating residents was affordable housing and better broadband internet and cellular communication services. To explore how these desires

may be met a Telecommunication Committee has been formed and will make concrete suggestions to the Select Board. This committee has since provided an in-depth report available on the town website.

The Planning Board studied available options to facilitate more affordable housing but has found a significant obstacle to be the high cost of construction. These costs are driven in part by high material and labor costs but also expenses associated with current state-wide building regulations that make the minimum cost per square foot exceed reasonably affordable levels for residential space.

LAND USE

RSA 674:2 – II (b) requires the Master Plan to contain “[a] land use section upon which all the following sections shall be based. This section shall translate the vision statements into physical terms. Based on a study of population, economic activity, and natural, historic, and cultural resources, it shall show existing conditions and the proposed location, extent, and intensity of future land use.”

Existing Land Use

Overview

Hancock is a predominantly residential town with an historic village center and a low population density. The land, itself, is generally hilly and stony, with a wide variety of soil types. Only a small proportion of the land is cleared, with the remainder as woodland and bush ranging from old forest to relatively new growth. Former pastureland, now overgrown, is typical.

The bulk of economic activity is centered on lots the predominant use of which is residential. Home occupations and home-based businesses are important, but other commercial and institutional uses are limited. Only nine lots are taxed as commercial. Land in conservation plays a central role. The result of this mix of uses is a rural character, which the residents cherish and wish to maintain.

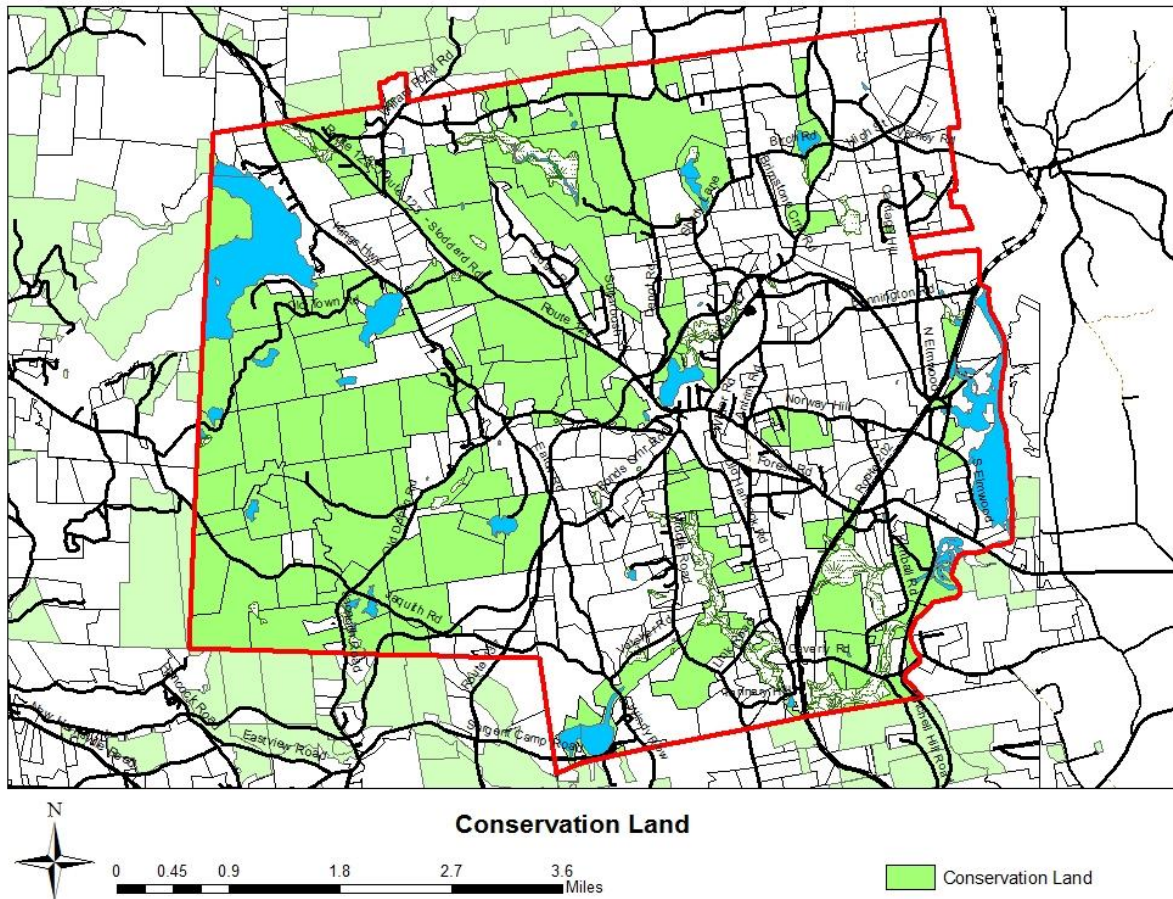
Conservation Land

Conservation Land is defined under RSA 79-B:2, IV as follows:

"Conservation restriction" means a permanent restriction of open space land by deed granted in perpetuity, and further, as defined by RSA 477:45, I, to a federal, state, county, local or other government body, or to a charitable, educational, or other nonprofit corporation established for the purposes of natural resource conservation and as further defined in RSA 79-B:2, X

There are 20,003 acres of land in the Hancock township of which 8685 acres are in conservation land. This represents more than 40% of the land in Hancock and most of which is forest land. There are 15,568 acres of forest in Hancock and it is arguably the predominant use of land in town. (MSI Report)

The following map shows the extent of these restrictions.



In some cases, this land has been developed, in part (as by a dwelling or agricultural use) or may have limited development in the future. Nevertheless, these private restrictions – over which the town has little or no control – both define the character of the town and limit its future development.

Conservation serves important functions, particularly the preservation of clean air and clean water, the preservation of animal habitat and biodiversity and public recreation. In Hancock, the abundance of conservation land is also an element in the success of local educational institutions which are important as employers. The land also produces revenue from forestry and agriculture.

These uses are also in line with state and local policies encouraging the preservation of open spaces. *See* RSA 477:45-47. From a municipal finance point of view, conservation land requires few public services, thus reducing public expenditures.

Residential Land

Housing is the second largest use of land. Approximately 772 lots, amounting to 7,028 acres, are currently developed for residential use.

Population and Growth

Our best historic data for the population of Hancock is derived from the ten-yearly US Census.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Population</i>
1850	1012	1940	631
1860	844	1950	612
1870	692	1960	722
1880	689	1970	909
1890	637	1980	1193
1900	642	1990	1604
1910	642	2000	1739
1920	531	2010	1654
1930	561		

It will be interesting to see what we learn from the upcoming 2020 census. The New Hampshire Employment Security (NHSC) website estimated that the population of Hancock in 2017 was 1640, a slight decrease. In contrast, the American Community Survey (ACS) is the US Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program that produces and disseminates the official estimates of the population for the nation, states, counties, cities, and towns. The ACS had estimated the population of Hancock in 2017 was 1861, which would be a significant increase but also did not reflect a true number.

Census showed the following population figures for Hancock and abutting towns from 1960 to 2010.

<i>Table #1A</i>						
REGIONAL POPULATION	<i>1960</i>	<i>1970</i>	<i>1980</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2010</i>
Antrim	1121	2122	2208	2360	2449	2637
Bennington	591	639	890	1236	1401	1476
Greenfield	538	1058	972	1519	1657	1749
Hancock	722	909	1193	1604	1739	1654
Harrisville	459	584	860	981	1075	961
Nelson	222	304	442	535	634	729
Peterborough	2963	3807	4895	5239	5883	6284
Totals	6616	9423	11460	13474	14838	15490

We have calculated percentage changes in population figures during each decade for each town, as follows:

<i>Table #1B</i>						
REGIONAL POPULATION GROWTH RATES BY DECADES	<i>1960s</i>	<i>1970s</i>	<i>1980s</i>	<i>1990s</i>	<i>2000s</i>	<i>2010s</i>
Antrim	89.3%	4.1%	6.9%	3.8%	7.7%	T.B.D.
Bennington	8.1%	39.3%	38.9%	13.3%	5.4%	
Greenfield	96.7%	-8.1%	56.3%	9.1%	5.6%	
Hancock	25.9%	31.2%	34.5%	8.4%	-4.9%	
Harrisville	27.2%	47.3%	14.1%	9.6%	-10.6%	
Nelson	36.9%	45.4%	21.0%	18.5%	15.0%	
Peterborough	28.5%	28.6%	7.0%	12.3%	6.8%	
Totals	42.4%	21.6%	17.6%	10.1%	4.4%	

For convenient reference, the growth rate figures for Hancock have been annualized¹ for each decade, as follows:

<i>Table #1C</i>						
HANCOCK ANNUALIZED POPULATION GROWTH	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
	2.33%	2.75%	3.01%	0.80%	-0.50%	T.B.D.

Accordingly, modest growth rates have turned to modest shrinkage in the preceding decade.

¹ Thus, to use Hancock's growth in the 1990's as an example, a growth rate of .80% for each year (compounded yearly) between 1990 and 2000 will give an 8.4% rate for the entire decade.

Housing

The 2010 Census also reported the following housing statistics for Hancock:

Geography: ZCTA5 03449

Subject	Number	Percent
OCCUPANCY STATUS		
Total housing units	864	100.0
Occupied housing units	724	83.8
Vacant housing units	140	16.2
TENURE		
Occupied housing units	724	100.0
Owner occupied	609	84.1
Owned with a mortgage or loan	397	54.8
Owned free and clear	212	29.3
Renter occupied	115	15.9
VACANCY STATUS		
Vacant housing units	140	100.0
For rent	11	7.9
Rented, not occupied	1	0.7
For sale only	20	14.3
Sold, not occupied	2	1.4
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	91	65.0
For migratory workers	0	0.0
Other vacant	15	10.7

Subject	Number	Percent
TENURE		
Occupied housing units	724	100.0
Owned with a mortgage or loan	397	54.8
Owned free and clear	212	29.3
Renter occupied	115	15.9
TENURE BY HOUSEHOLD SIZE		
Owner-occupied housing units	609	100.0
1-person household	141	23.2
2-person household	279	45.8
3-person household	86	14.1
4-person household	74	12.2
5-person household	16	2.6
6-person household	12	2.0
7-or-more-person household	1	0.2
Renter-occupied housing units	115	100.0
1-person household	59	51.3
2-person household	31	27.0
3-person household	9	7.8
4-person household	8	7.0
5-person household	6	5.2
6-person household	2	1.7
7-or-more-person household	0	0.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Summary File 1, Tables H3, H4 & H5

TENURE BY AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER		
Owner-occupied housing units	609	100.0
15 to 24 years	6	1.0
25 to 34 years	17	2.8
35 to 44 years	65	10.7
45 to 54 years	147	24.1
55 to 64 years	161	26.4
65 years and over	213	35.0
65 to 74 years	126	20.7
75 to 84 years	60	9.9
85 years and over	27	4.4
Renter-occupied housing units	115	100.0
15 to 24 years	4	3.5
25 to 34 years	23	20.0
35 to 44 years	20	17.4
45 to 54 years	29	25.2
55 to 64 years	19	16.5
65 years and over	20	17.4
65 to 74 years	10	8.7
75 to 84 years	8	7.0
85 years and over	2	1.7

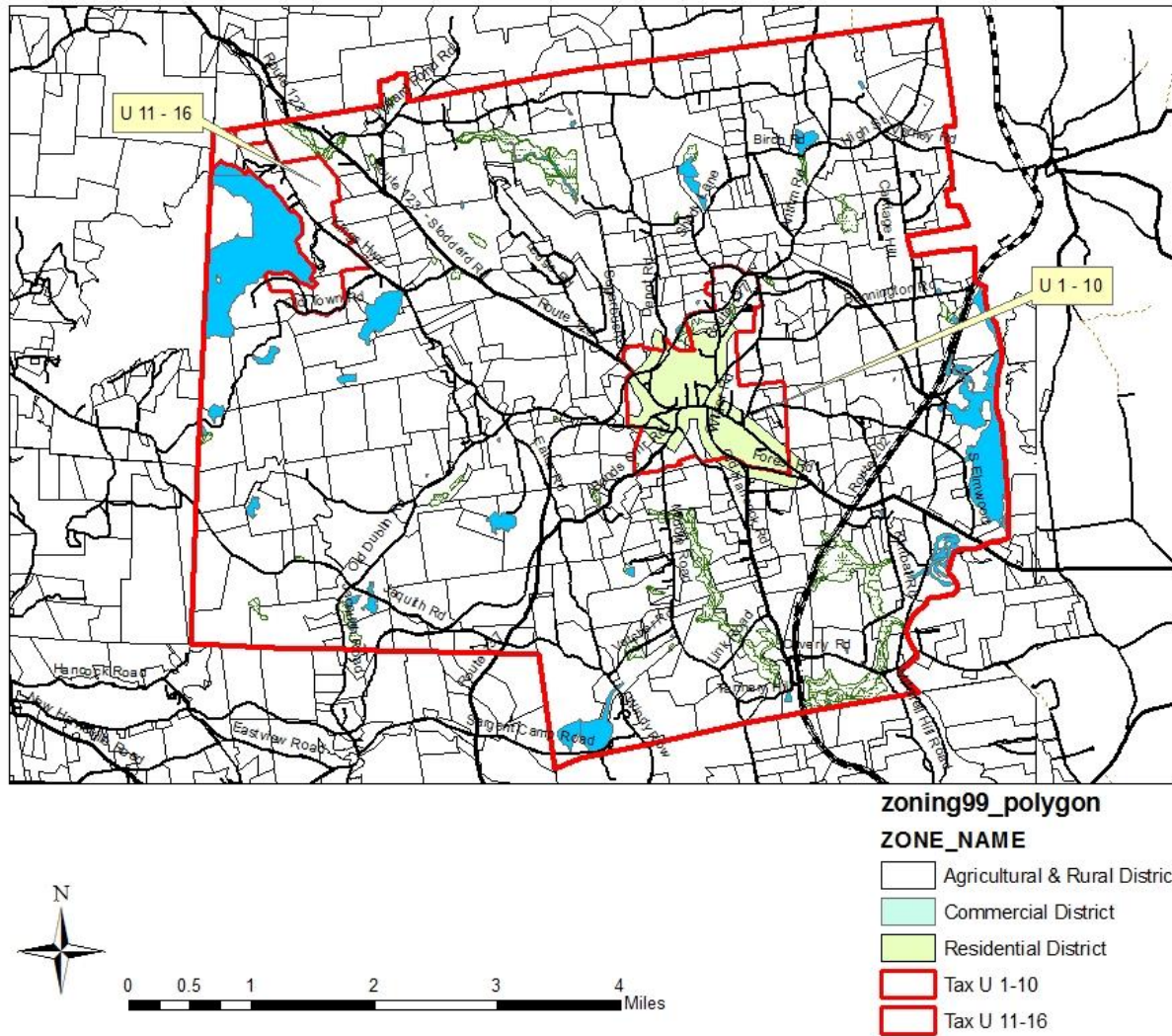
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Summary File 1, Tables H4 & H16 & H17.

Historically, the growth rate for housing has exceeded the growth rate for population.

Table #1C						
HANCOCK ANNUALIZED POPULATION GROWTH	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
Annualized population growth rate	2.33%	2.75%	3.01%	0.80%	-0.50%	T.B.D.
Annualized housing growth rate			3.84%	1.20%		

We attribute this difference to two important factors, (i) the falling size of family households in “occupied” homes and (ii) the increasing number of seasonal or “unoccupied” homes. These factors reflect national demographic trends which may prove difficult to predict in the future.

The tax records break the town into 16 “urban” and 16 “rural” districts. Ten of the “urban” districts are clustered around the village center, while the balance is on the northeastern shore of Lake Nubanusit in the extreme western part of town. The balance of the town is classified, for tax assessment purposes, as “rural”. Broadly speaking, these districts reflect Hancock’s current zoning districts, although the western “urban” area is in the “rural and agricultural” zone for zoning purposes. The map below shows these districts:



Residential land use within these districts varies substantially, particularly as to density but also as to character.

The following statistics characterize the respective areas:

	R1-R16	U1-U10	U11-U16	Exempt	Total
Dwellings	564	216	37	21	838
Rentals	60	40	1	19	120
Developed Lots	531	204	37	69	841
Undeveloped Lots	346	43	15	0	404
Total Lots	877	247	52	69	1,245
Acres	16,039	747	439	1,739	18,965
Density	0.04	0.29	0.08		
Acres/dwelling	28.44	3.46	11.88		
Average Size of Developed lots	12.01	2.60	3.26		
Median Size of Developed lots	5.150	1.220	1.400		

The eastern “urban” area has, at its center, a collection of mid-nineteenth century dwellings, inns and businesses built to front on a late eighteenth or mid-nineteenth century street plan. This core has been designated as an historic district and is protected by an active Historic District Commission. The great majority of buildings on this area of Main Street are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In this village center area, including Main Street, School Street, Hosley Road, Tombstone Territory (a private road) and portions of Bennington Road and Bonds Corner Road, there are about 45 residences using under one mile of road. Lot sizes average about three-quarters of an acre with a median size of .6 acres.

Outside the immediate core, the street patterns within the “urban” area are curvilinear, following old cart roads, with houses predominantly facing the roads. This area includes portions of Antrim Road, Bennington Road, Bonds Corner Road, Brennan Woods Road, Cross Road, Depot Road, Duncan Road, Forest Road, Longview Road, Norway Hill Road, Peterborough Road, Quinn Road and Wilder Road. There are about 160 residences with a median lot size of 1.5 acres and an average lot size of just over three acres. These sizes are relatively small by Hancock standards, but nevertheless spacious, village lots.

The western “urban” area about Lake Nubanusit is not, in fact, urban, but an area of principally seasonal homes – many of a rustic character - used as second homes and for recreation. Here, dwellings typically face the lake, not the road. Lot sizes, which are modest, were determined by a former owner who subdivided the land in the early part of the 20th Century; the median lot size is 1.4 acres, but the average is over 7 acres. The Hancock shore of Nubanusit Lake is the location of approximately thirty-four cottages and homes. The buildings are generally well placed relative to the shoreline, so that the view of the land from the lake is not that of a typical cottage colony. Much of the area is served by private rather than town roads.

The shoreline length is about three miles (excluding the shore of the "island"), and existing homes are mostly along the northeastern end of the lake on less than two miles of the shoreline.

Within the “rural” area of the town, the terrain and soils differ markedly between the eastern and western portions with the western areas having steeper slopes; these differences are reflected in the development patterns.

Thus, the western area is more sparsely settled and, because of the conservation restrictions which predominate, is unlikely to grow significantly in density.

Within the rural area, there are a handful of modern subdivisions which resulted in a pattern of four acre lots, but none involved construction of the dwellings by the developer.

In these areas, the road pattern – not a street pattern – conforms to older roads. Rarely, new subdivision roads have been built. In this area, it is less likely that the houses will face the road; many are situated on interior sites and face a view or southern light. Homes spread to an average of about 8 per mile of road

Housing in Hancock comes in a variety of sizes and price ranges. Using assessment figures from 2008, the assessed building value of each quintile of housing fell in following ranges:

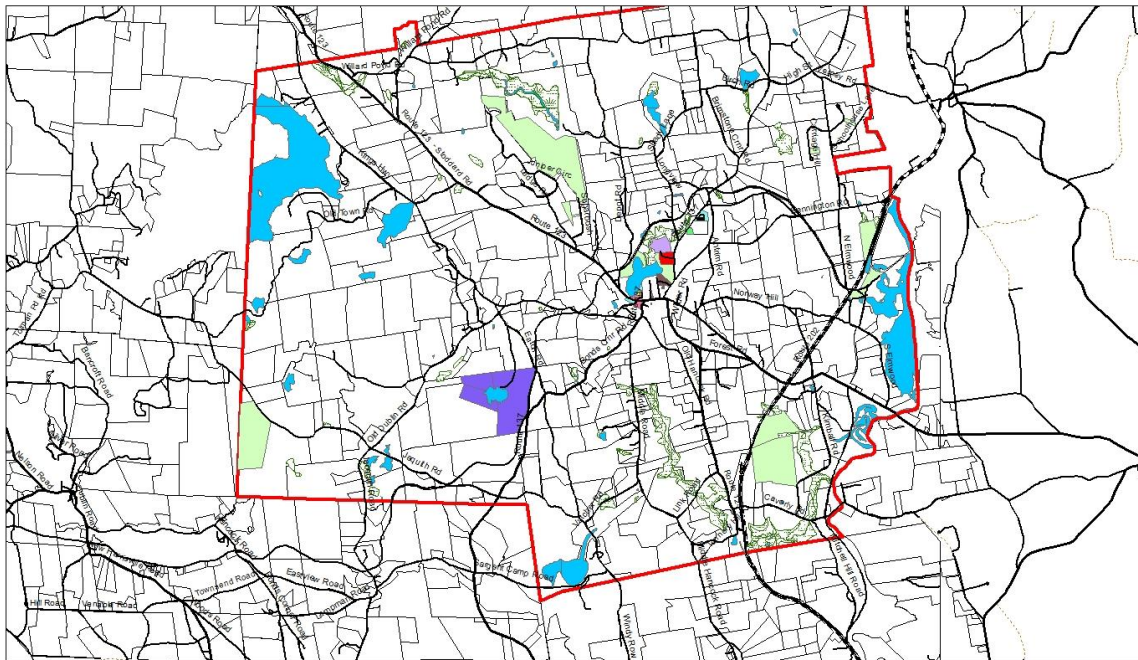
Quintile	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Min	0	116,000	156,100	203,300	265,700
Med	92,250	135,400	179,250	226,700	330,100
Max	115,900	156,100	203,300	265,100	838,000

Although the worldwide financial crisis in 2008 resulted in a ten-year decline in market values this began to reverse by 2018 whereby values have more than recovered.

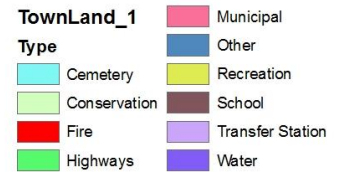
Throughout Hancock, dwellings are predominantly of “one off” design. The Planning Board is not aware of any major subdivision in which a developer mass produced dwellings in ‘cookie cutter’ fashion. As a result, Hancock is characterized by a variety of housing designs, sizes and styles throughout the town.

Town Land and Facilities

The town, itself, owns about 787 acres of land for a variety of municipal purposes. The following map shows its land holdings. Roads are not included in this figure.



Town Owned Land



Uses of this land are summarized as follows:

<i>Use</i>	<i>acres</i>
Conservation land	543.21
Water Supply	175.00
Transfer Station	13.15
Recreation	12.58
Municipal buildings	12.21
Cemeteries	10.88
Other	8.14
School	5.20
Fire	3.00
Highways buildings	3.00
Library	0.72
Total Town Owned	787.09

Town owned land near and around the town Common

Town Office Building

Built in 1836 by the Baptist Society on town land as the Literary & Scientific Institute (p. 229, Hayward's *History of Hancock*), the building was moved and put on a "substantial foundation" when it became the Center district school in 1893 (Hancock Town Report). The conversion for use as a town office building was completed in October 2001 (Hancock Town Report).

The town continues to operate under a town meeting form of government and has a high level of volunteer participation in civic activities.

Police Building

The existing building was brought in as a temporary classroom to relieve overcrowding at the elementary school in 1995 (2013 email communication from Marianne Adams at Hancock Elementary School). The temporary structure was moved onto a full garage basement in 1998-99 and the Police Department moved into it in 1999 (Hancock Town Report).

Meetinghouse

Built in 1820, the present clapboard structure replaced the first meeting house (built 1789) which had been destroyed by fire in 1819. The design was based on meetinghouses in Dublin, NH, Fitzwilliam, NH, and Templeton, Ma. In 1850, the structure was moved slightly to the north to line up with the Vestry and other buildings on Main Street, put on a full foundation, and a floor was added to divide the church sanctuary from the town hall.²

While the Town owns the land, the building is jointly owned by the Town of Hancock and the First Congregational Church of Hancock. The Hancock Meetinghouse is one of only two remaining Meetinghouses in the state of New Hampshire that is still jointly owned by town and church. A formal maintenance and upkeep agreement was signed by the Town and the Church on January 8, 2018.

In 2010 a Historic Building Assessment (HBA) was prepared for the Meetinghouse by Preservation Consultant Elizabeth Durfee Hengen. This led to major renovations in 2014 which included; replacing the slate roof, replacing the heating systems, upgrades to electrical and fire alarms systems, exterior painting, structural work in the crawlspace and a roof truss, upgrades to the fire escape, new accessible toilet rooms, making the first floor meeting room accessible, renovations of the first floor meeting room, stage and kitchen, and installing a platform lift to the second floor.

In 2016 and 2017 the exterior windows were historically restored, and new storm windows were installed. In 2018 the steeple was repaired and repainted. As part of that work the lightning protection system was upgraded.

² Source – Historic Structures Report prepared by Elizabeth Durfee Hengen 2010

Vestry

This brick building was built in 1836 by the Congregational Society as "an apartment for the occasional worship of God" and an academy room (p. 230-231, Hayward's) on land purchased by the First Congregational Society of Hancock on 22 January of that year, not on Hosley Grant land. Although not owned by the town, the Vestry is available for use by organizations and townspeople, for a fee, by contacting the church secretary.

Post Office

Built on Town land by the Hancock Light Battery militia unit in late 1875 as an armory and public hall (p. 171-172, Hayward's), the building was purchased by the John Hancock Grange in 1881 (1894 *Peterboro Transcript* article). The Grange deeded the building back to the town in early 1986. That year the first floor was remodeled and was officially opened as the post office at ribbon cutting ceremonies on December 28, 1986 (Hancock Town Report). The U.S. Post Office continues to operate out of this space under lease from the town.

Town Common

The common land was part of the Hosley Grant, given by James Hosley to the town in 1785. (p. 97, Hayward's). The bandstand was built in 1909 and paid for by private donations. (p. 48-49, *Second Hundred Years*). The Common is overseen by a three member Common Commission.

Town Beach

In 1938, the town voted to hire a supervisor of the beach and offer swimming lessons. (Hancock Town Report). The town recreation committee still operates the town beach on Norway Pond, immediately behind the Post Office building. It has limited parking facilities to the west of the Post Office and seasonal portaloos, docks and swimming floats with some periods of life-guard supervised swimming.

Town owned land on Main Street

Library

The Library lot was originally 57 feet wide and 80 feet deep and was purchased by the Town on 8 June 1880. The oldest part of the Library was built in 1881-2 and opened for use in July 1882, with funds given to town by Adolphus C. Whitcomb (*Peterborough Transcript*, various issues, 1881-1882) and enlarged in 1925 with funds left by Miss L. Helen Kimball for that purpose (p. 173-174, *Second Hundred Years*).

The library undertook an extensive fund-raising campaign and the building was enlarged again in 1988. It now has a main library, a children's section and the Daniels Room used for meetings, presentations and art exhibits. Currently the town pays all library employee salaries and benefits and maintains the grounds, while library trust funds support all interior maintenance and improvements. A Memorandum of Agreement for maintenance was signed by the Town and the Library on 25 September 2019.

Old Fire Station

The Old Fire Station behind the Hancock Market on Main Street was reconstructed in 1945 (Hancock Town Report) from a dismantled barn from Dublin (Doris Rogers' notes for

Second Hundred Years located at the Historical Society). The Old Fire Station is currently used by several town departments for storage.

Town owned land in or near the village.

Elementary School

Hancock is one of nine towns comprising the Conval School District. The Conval School District owns the school building but leases the land under it from the Town. The term of the lease expires 31 December 2049, with the option for the District to renew it for successive 10-year periods. The lease also shall terminate when the premises are no longer needed for an active public school. At the termination of the lease, the District shall provide the Town with the right of first refusal to purchase the facility. The District is responsible for repairs and maintenance on the building, sidewalks, Elementary Lane, the parking area and the children's playground, as well as the power and telecommunication poles and lines. The Town is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the baseball and soccer fields near the school. The Hancock Elementary School, located in the village, currently houses Kindergarten through Grade 4. Grades 5 through 12 attend Great Brook Middle School in Antrim and Contoocook Valley Regional High School in Peterborough.

The school has 7 classrooms, all currently in use, 4 as grade level classrooms, 1 for Occupational Therapy, 1 for Special Education/small group instruction, and 1 for school counselor/school psychologist office. Current 2017-2018 enrollment for all students, Readiness through Grade 4, is 53 students; projected enrollment for 2018-2019 is 55 students (email from HES Principal Amy Janoch).

Fire Department

The Hancock Fire Department was founded in 1907 and is now located at 40 Bennington Road. It is an all-volunteer fire and rescue service of 24 members, 6 female and 18 male (email from Fire Chief Tom Bates).

The fire station was constructed in 1980 (Hancock Town Report). It is equipped with an emergency standby generator system which allows it to double as the Town Emergency Operations Center. The building has six apparatus bays, office space and a meeting room with kitchen. The command center within the facility was built by members from funds raised by the department in 1993 (email from Fire Chief Tom Bates).

Equipped with 6 trucks (2 engines, 2 tankers, 1 rescue and 1 brush) and 1 boat, the department is part of an area-wide Mutual Aid System that gives added protection to the town through the availability of fire-fighting equipment and personnel from neighboring towns. The fire department also owns 15 SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus) with spare cylinders, a breathing air compressor and fill station, complete NFPA-compliant turnout gear for each firefighter, 12-lead AED cardiac monitor, BLS (basic life support) equipment, and fire suppression equipment of ladders, hoses and nozzles, as well as supplemental attack equipment for each apparatus (email from Fire Chief Tom Bates).

Moose Brook Park

A recreation facility behind the fire station incorporates a baseball field, soccer field and tennis courts. It was opened for use in 2004 and is operated by the recreation committee. The park bears the same name as a former recreation facility on Bennington Road just west of the bridge over Moose Brook which was opened in 1938 and destroyed just weeks later by the great hurricane.

Transfer Station and Recycling Facility

The Transfer Station and Recycling Facility, or the 'Dump' as it is commonly known, is located off Bennington Road adjacent to the Hancock Fire Station on a parcel of land approximately two and one-half acres in size. It is a circular area of land partially surrounded on its west side by the Moose Brook outlet from Norway Pond. This site was opened as early as 1929 and was approved as a sanitary landfill on January 31, 1973 by letter from the New Hampshire Dept. of Health Services.

At the Town Meeting in 1990, the voters passed a warrant article approving the closing of the sanitary landfill and the construction of a solid waste transfer station and recycling facility on the site. The construction was completed during 1990, the landfill was closed, and the new facility went into operation on November 7, 1990.

The Dump is located at the approximate center of the site and consists of a core facility and several satellite areas. The access from Bennington Road circles through the site and expands to approximately four lanes to handle peak traffic flow and to allow residents to efficiently stop and unload waste materials at the various stations.

In 2003 the transfer station was enlarged. The building includes three main parts, the first is a dumpster and compactor for receiving non-recyclable solid waste which when filled is exchanged for an empty container and removed from the site by a solid waste management firm for disposal at a commercial landfill. The finished open porch area is lined with windows for receiving various authorized recyclable materials. During open hours the tank for receiving used motor oil and the bin to receive propane tanks are placed outside under this porch. Behind the porch inside the building is the large open area which houses two compactor/balers, the furnace, an office area, the forklift and storage space for the wheeled bins and compacted bales of recyclables. In the same building but accessed by a separate entrance is the swap shop for sharing reusable household items.

Other the facilities that are part of the transfer station include:

- White Goods/Electronics Reclamation Area surrounded on three sides by stockade fence, located opposite the dumpster. A fee is required to leave certain items.
- Glass Reclamation Area is a covered dumpster for receiving and storing recyclable glass.
- Clothing Reclamation Area (Salvation Army bin) is an open area for placement of storage containers for used clothing and other fabrics.
- Metal Reclamation Area is a pit enclosed by large concrete blocks for receiving and storing metal.
- Tire Reclamation Area is an open area for receiving and storing tires. A fee is required to leave tires.

- Compost Area is an open area for disposal of leaves, grass clippings and other vegetable matter for composting.
- Brush Pile is an open area for disposal of brush for composting.

Other town owned land

Nubanusit Lake Town Boat Landing

In 2016 the town repaved and upgraded the town owned boat ramp which provides the only public access to this 748-acre lake. The ramp allows residents and visitors to enjoy boating, kayaking or canoeing. Its crystal-clear water as deep as 97 feet is home to a pair of Bald Eagles as well as at least two pairs of loons. It is a superb lake for fishing by boat in the summer and through the ice in winter. Parking is limited requiring boaters to walk quite some distance after launching and in summer months an official is present to inspect all boats for invasive weeds before launching.

Highways and Public Works Departments

The Town Highway Department building at 79 Bennington Road was built in 1980. The Highway Department also includes the Transfer Station at 42 Bennington Road. Currently the department owns the following equipment: 2 six-wheel dump trucks, 1 one-ton truck, 1 pick-up truck, 1 van, 1 grader, 1 backhoe, 1 loader, 1 chipper, 1 trailer; 1 ten-wheel dump truck purchased in 2018. Staff consists of the Director, the Highway Foreman, 3 equipment operators, 1 Buildings and Grounds Supervisor/Transfer Station Supervisor, 1 seasonal Buildings and Grounds, and 2 part-time Solid Waste attendants. (E-mail communication from Director of Public Works, Mia M. Lee, 4/16/2018)

Water Supply

The town water system was originally built in 1907 by Caughey & Schofield Construction Company using Davis Brook as source of supply. Service was gradually extended to Depot Street and Peterborough Road (1912); Sand Hill Road (1937); School Street (1939); Norway Hill (replacement 1941); Stoddard Road (1954); and Bennington Road and additional service on Norway Hill (1965)

In 1954, Juggernaut Pond was added as a water source. Today, this source, fed by gravity, serves the village center and nearby housing units on roads leading to the center. The pond is fed by a 117-acre watershed that is completely forested and undeveloped. The pond itself is approximately 17 acres and has a calculated safe yield of 130,000 gal./day.

There are 200 residential and commercial connections to the water system plus 5 connections to town facilities. There are 30 hydrants located throughout the distribution system. About 30% of the residential population is served by the system. Daily use averages 60,000 gallons/day during winter months and can reach 100,000 gallons/day in summer. During 2017, the town of Hancock treated 22,519,600 gallons. (email from Jeff Wilder, summer 2019)

The water source, Juggernaut Pond, is the only open water supply in the state that does not require a water filtration system as the town maintains an avoidance waiver for filtration. Therefore, maintaining the integrity of our watershed is extremely critical.

The water system operates under the waiver for filtration avoidance set out in Env-Ws 380.04 of the Federal EPA. The waiver was granted in September 1992 by the Water Supply & Pollution Control Division of N.H. DES, subject to certain improvements in the system. All requested improvements were made and to date the system has met all testing requirements. The system currently is in compliance with all State and Federal regulations covering surface drinking water supplies. Expansion of new household hook ups is very limited and done on a case by case basis dependent on technical factors.

Cemeteries

The town owns and operates three cemeteries:

Pine Ridge: Agreed upon as a burial place by the town June 16, 1783 (p. 250, Hayward's) and is part of the Hosley Grant.

Norway Plain: At a hearing held 26 May 1874, the Town voted to establish a new public cemetery, containing 4 acres and 84 rods, taken primarily from the 39 Main Street lot. Damages were paid to David Hills (39 Main Street), \$350, and to Joseph Davis (37 Main Street), \$20. (p. 169-170, Hayward's)

Hillside: Bought by the town in 1948 for use as a cemetery, reserving one lot with perpetual care for the previous owner of the land (p. 143, *Second Hundred Years*). In 2001 Richard and Eleanor Amidon donated land to the town adjacent to Hillside Cemetery (Hancock Town Report). This addition has been cleared and is intended for cremation interments only.

Town owned Conservation Land

The town owns several blocks of conservation land under the management of the Conservation Commission, including land near Cobb Hill, Prospect Hill and a former farm owned by the Wolcott family. Two smaller lots, Camp Guild/Norway Pond Nature Preserve and Kepner Meadow - on the eastern and western sides of Norway Pond, respectively, are also in conservation.

Conservation Land serves an important recreational purpose. Walking trails have been developed at the Walcott Preserve and Prospect Hill/Moose Brook Watershed Project under the auspices of the Conservation Commission and additional trails lead from Jaquith Road to Cobb Hill in Harrisville.

Commercial Agriculture

Commercial farming activity in Hancock, as in much of New Hampshire, has tended to decrease over the years, but some still remains, and many residents feel this should be preserved and encouraged.

While there are very few commercial farms, a number of owners engage in quasi commercial activities such as CSA gardens, small scale breeding, animal training and rental of grassland for pasturage.

Commercial farming operations range from a few acres to about 80 acres used at the Valley Farm now under a conservation easement. Other activities include production of fruit, vegetables, Christmas trees and the raising of sheep. The four largest working farms comprise a total of about 174 acres

<i>Type</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Location</i>
Equine	Corona RE Holdings	Forest Road
Equine	Clear Brook Farm	Middle Road
Beef cattle	Valley Farm/ Stan Fry	Middle Road
Hay/Arable	Cernota	Elmwood Road
Sheep	Weston	Weston Road
Fruits/ vegetables/ eggs	Faber	Old Dublin Road
Christmas Trees	Brown	Norway Hill Road
Forest Products	Eva	Longview Road
Fruits and vegetables	Bryan	Antrim Road
Draft Horses	Phillips	Forest Road
Flower Bulbs	Davis Brook Farm	Bonds Corner Road
Eggs/ pork/	Meka Farms	Norway Hill Road
Sheep/ eggs	Brimstone Corner Farm	Middle Road
Christmas Trees/ nursery	Our Town Landscaping	Elmwood Road

Extraction

Prior Master Plans have referred to commercial sand and gravel extraction operations. So far as we are aware, there are currently no such operations in Hancock. The Highway Department has an exclusive arrangement with a landowner on Middle Road to take sand and gravel for its needs.

Many landowners, including the town, harvest timber.

Commercial Land

Land specifically used for commercial purposes is currently approximately 17 acres, as follows:

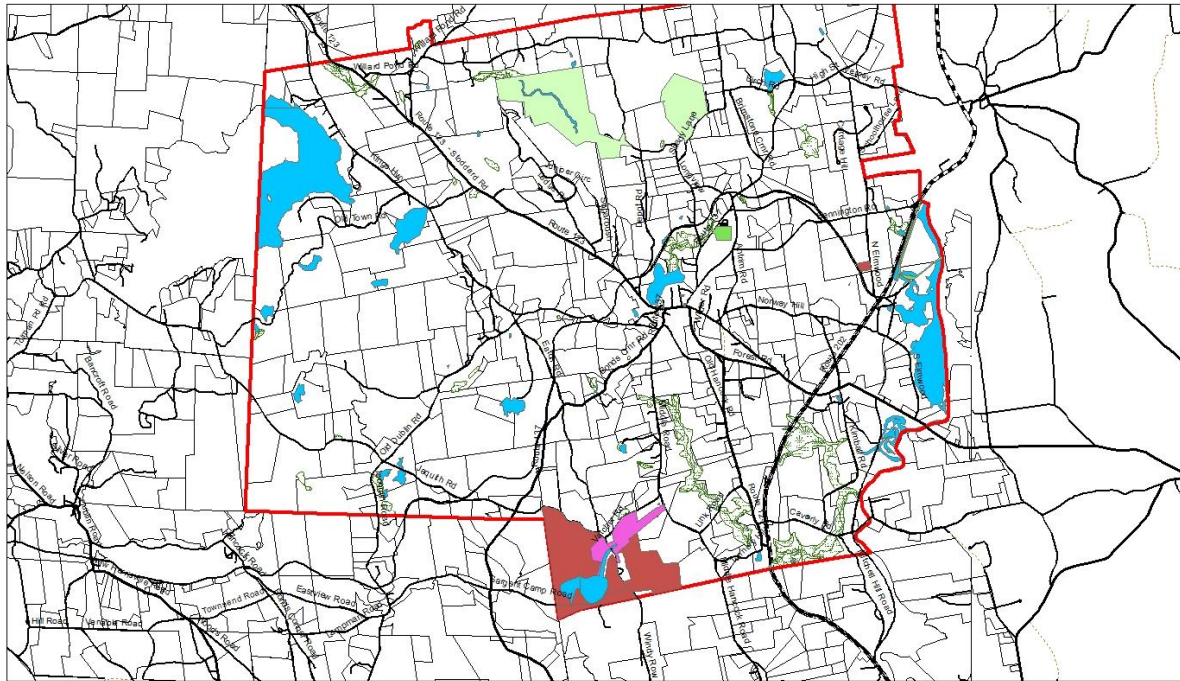
<i>Map</i>	<i>Lot</i>	<i>Business</i>	<i>Acres</i>
R8	54	Sarah's Hat Box	10.23
R8	76A	Mathewson Companies	3.00
U3	8	Professional Offices	0.23
U4	1	Hancock Inn	0.80
U4	7	Moller's Real Estate	0.05
U4	12	Telephone Exchange	0.30
U4	59	Haley's Service Center	0.80
U4	71	Fiddleheads Cafe	0.20
U4	72	Hancock Cash Market	0.20
U9	16	Main Street Cheese	1.239
U4	33	Yellow Magnolia Antiques	0.4

The fact that so little land is devoted predominantly to commercial uses should not disguise the fact that Hancock enjoys substantial economic activity largely through:

- Employment by educational institutions, notably Boston University/Sargent Center and the Harris Center for Conservation Education
- Employment by Mathewson Companies gravel yard, shop and office
- Home occupations and home-based businesses. These are encouraged by existing zoning regulations.

Additional Land

Entities other than the town also own and use about 900 acres of land as shown on the following map.



Other Land

exemptnontown	
Type	
■	Education
■	Fish & Game
■	NH DOT
■	Spillway

Details for individual parcels are listed in an appendix. A summary of uses follows:

Organization	Acres	Land Use
<i>Army Corp. of Engineers</i>	78.9	<i>Flood protection</i>
<i>State of NH DOT</i>	14.0	<i>Highway maintenance</i>
<i>NH State Fish & Game</i>	415.4	<i>Recreation</i>
<i>Sargent Center/ Boston U.</i>	388.0	<i>Education</i>

The *Flood Protection* land owned by the federal government – Army Corp of Engineers – protects a floodway in the vicinity of Half Moon Pond which acts as a safety valve for the McDowell Dam in Peterborough.

Recreation land owned by the state is principally recreational land located at Carpenter’s Marsh and Eva’s Marsh, two NH Fish & Game Wildlife Management Areas.

Highway Maintenance Depot NH Department of Transportation on Bennington Road adjacent to the town's highway facility owns a depot for the storage of equipment and material for road maintenance.

Sargent Center is a large educational facility, partly in Hancock and partly in Peterborough, owned by Boston University since 1930. Until recently, it was operated as an outdoor educational facility by BU with a transient clientele. At this time, it is leased by Nature's Classroom Adventure Camp an educational organization.

Future Land Uses

The statute (RSA 674 II 2(b)) requires the Master Plan to contain a section which addresses the “location, extent and intensity” of future land use.

Summary

Local residents have repeatedly made it clear that Hancock’s future should be predominantly residential and should preserve the existing rural character of the town. Preservation of large blocks of open space is central to that goal. Similarly, preservation of historic areas of town is a core objective.

Historically, and particularly during the existence of zoning regulations, Hancock has evolved through developments on a very small scale, usually one or two homes per project; although there is some history of major subdivisions of lots, there have been no tract developments. The result of this pattern has been a wide range of dwellings.

Commercial uses have been limited to those consistent with the foregoing; employment through home occupations and home-based businesses has been favored while large scale enterprises involving large numbers of employees, large scale buildings or substantial public infrastructure have been avoided.

Given a choice, the overwhelming majority of local residents would like to see more of the same, not significant change.

Open Spaces and Conservation Land

Preservation of Hancock's open space and of its rural atmosphere is one of the principal objectives of its residents. In 2003, the Conservation Commission adopted a Natural Resource Inventory and Open Space Plan which discusses, at length, the environmental characteristics of the town worthy of protection and several techniques by which this protection can be realized. These include:

- Direct public ownership of land for conservation purposes;
- Encouragement of conservation of privately-owned land through easements or other restrictions held by public bodies or land trusts
- Direct support of private conservation efforts
- Support for “current use” taxation
- Public education concerning the costs and benefits of open space land

Planners and other public officials should be mindful of the Open Space Plan in all planning decisions.

Historic District

In 1975 Hancock adopted an ordinance establishing the Historic District, located in the center of the Village. The District is an Overlay District in the Zoning Ordinance and names the Historic District Commission as the regulatory body charged with reviewing applications for construction, alteration, removal, or demolition within the District. Review of applications follows specific criteria focusing on the character and integrity of the District. In 1988, nearly all of the 18th and 19th century residences and public buildings in the District were listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The unique historical features of this area are highly valued within the community.

In 2002, a community forum identified improvements on Main Street as a central town objective. Following this forum, the Village Planning Committee was established. The group researched, worked closely with the community and developed a plan to improve parking, drainage, sidewalks and green space on Main Street. The project was completed in 2010. In 2009, the Hancock Improvement Association coordinated efforts to bury electrical wires around the Common. Preservation of the existing “feel” of the district was central to these efforts.

As with open spaces, planners and public officials should be mindful of preservation of this area in all planning decisions.

Residential Land

All of Hancock is zoned for residential use; this should continue as a central planning tenet. The existing Zoning Ordinance divides the town into three zoning districts; we believe that this provides a suitable framework for future land use and does not require further changes at this time.

Factors Influencing the Location of Future Development

Planners should anticipate that at least one residence could be built on each existing, undeveloped lot; as noted above, a substantial number of existing, undeveloped lots exist in all zoning districts. Further residential growth will be through subdivision; this process may be constrained by zoning and subdivision regulations but is also constrained by legal and physical constraints which are wholly or partially outside the control of town planners but will nevertheless have a dramatic effect on the “location, extent and intensity” of future development. These constraints include:

- Topography and soil conditions
 - In some areas steep slopes and bony soil make development difficult.
 - Hancock has extensive wetlands, shorelines and stream corridors in all areas of town where development is prohibited or restricted by state laws as well as local ordinances.

- Infrastructure
 - Roads – The pattern of state and town roads has been stable for many decades and is unlikely to change significantly. Under current planning practices, new developments involving a major subdivision (four or more lots) would be required to consider a private road, usually built to Class V standards, to serve new homes. In the past, this has proved a satisfactory means to finance the necessary infrastructure.

Guidance for the maintenance of gravel roads in Hancock were developed by the Road Committee and adopted by the Select Board in October 2019. The guidelines reflect the town's desire for the rural character of the town to be reflected in its roads, to assure roads are an important part of the historic preservation in town, and the knowledge that roads are used for recreational purposes as well as for vehicles, and must be maintained in a way consistent with the desires of the community. The report provides maintenance guidelines that are tied to average daily traffic counts. As new developments are proposed, the impact of increased traffic on road maintenance can be evaluated using this document.

The full report of the Road Committee can be found on the town website.

- Water – There are 200 residential and commercial connections to the water system plus 5 connections to town facilities. There are 30 hydrants located throughout the distribution system. About 30% of the residential population is served by the system. All other homes have a private water supply, usually from a well but sometimes from surface water sources.
- Sewer – Hancock has no public sewers. Waste disposal is handled privately, usually through septic systems. We see no pressing reason to develop a public waste disposal system.
- Existing and future conservation restrictions
 - As noted above, over 40% of the land area in the town is subject to conservation restrictions of some sort. In a few cases, the existing restrictions permit some additional development. These nevertheless impose a severe constraint on residential development, particularly in the western and northern areas of town.
- Class VI Road Ordinance
 - A town Ordinance prohibits subdivision of land served by Class VI Roads, thus constraining development in those areas. These restrictions are based, in major part, on safety considerations since Class VI Roads provide an unreliable means of access to emergency vehicles, especially in winter months.

Factors Influencing the Extent and Intensity of Residential Development

The New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning prepares periodic reports projecting population growth for NH communities.³ Over the past several years, it has made the following predictions based on their 2016 report which reduced prior projections:

Hancock population as projected by New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning:

2015 (estimated): 1,644
2020 (projected): 1,607
2025 (projected): 1,576
2030 (projected): 1,607
2035 (projected): 1,626

<https://www.nh.gov/osi/data-center/documents/2016-subcounty-projections-final-report.pdf>

Hancock annual housing requirements shown on the figures below indicate the number of dwellings which might be required in each five-year period, as follows:

2020-2025 - 3
2025-2030 - 3
2030-2035 - 4

These projections are based on data and methods used by The Southwest Regional Planning Commission and are relatively consistent with actual experience in recent years.

Conclusions Concerning the Location and Intensity of Future Development

For the reasons mentioned above, we expect that future residential development will:

1. Continue to take place in small units, mostly smaller than that contemplated by a major subdivision
2. Be spread, more or less evenly, throughout the town
3. Continue at or about the same pace as during the prior decade.

Other Considerations

Flexible Lot Size Subdivision

Under the current Zoning Ordinance, any major subdivision of a parcel of 16 acres or more is governed by provisions concerning Flexible Lot Size Subdivision. These provisions require an initial study of the parcel and a design which respects

³ This topic has been addressed extensively in annual reports of the Hancock Capital Improvements Program Committee on which this discussion is based. Those interested in detail and source materials could turn to those reports.

environmental and man-made features of the parcel. Density calculations are limited to useable land. The provisions also allow smaller individual lot sizes while maintaining standards of overall density. These provisions should generate projects which have a relatively favorable environmental impact and substantially reduce costs for road, utilities and other services.

Apartments and Condominiums

Hancock's present zoning ordinance allows single and two-family dwellings in all Districts. Buildings having more than two units are considered to be apartment houses. Apartment buildings of more than two units are now limited to the Commercial District and, in certain circumstances relating to Workforce Housing, to suitable locations in the Rural and Agricultural District; under a recent amendment, these buildings may contain as many as five units.

Apartments provide housing with a minimum demand on the occupants for outdoor maintenance, such as lawn care, landscaping and snow removal. They need not cause an overall increase in population density, if the regulations require a suitable lot size relative to the number of dwelling units. Provisions for more apartments in Hancock would meet a need for affordable housing.

Accessory Dwellings

In 2007 the Zoning Ordinance was amended to permit the rental of accessory dwellings by special exception upon approval and permit issued by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mobile Homes; Manufactured Homes

The current Zoning Ordinance permits manufactured housing and mobile homes on individual lots throughout the Rural and Agricultural District, subject to certain health and safety requirements.

Housing for the Elderly

The current Zoning Ordinance has provisions which allow three relatively small units in one structure to be used for elderly housing.

Affordable Housing; Workforce Housing

It is the intent that affordable housing in Hancock be realistically available to low- and moderate-income families within the community. The current Zoning Ordinance and Workforce Housing Regulations, together with other techniques, make substantial provision for this while seeking to preserve health, safety and general welfare. These provisions were adopted only in 2009 after substantial discussion; we believe that it is premature to recommend substantial changes.

Economic Activity

Commercial Activity

At the present, commercial activity, apart from farm stands is confined to the Commercial District, two small areas on Forest Road and Main Street near the town center. In 2006, the Town amended the boundaries of the Commercial District to include businesses on Main Street; in 2009, two additional lots were added. Residents overwhelmingly approve this level of activity and express a high degree of satisfaction with the services provided.

Home-Based Businesses and Home Occupations

By definition, these activities are conducted as accessory uses, subordinate to residential use of the same property. This is a largely successful blend. Although Hancock's model long pre-dated the internet, it continues to have application in an internet age; many families are now making their livings at home using modern communications to find customers and distribute products and services.

Other Business Activities

Hancock hosts two educational institutions, Boston University/Sargent Camp and the Harris Center for Conservation Education, both of which are significant employers and both of which have substantial landholdings used for educational purposes.

Agriculture and Forestry

Agriculture and forestry activities are permitted in all zoning districts.

Over the years, agricultural activity has declined but, as noted above, still manifests itself throughout the town.

Forestry remains more vibrant than agriculture.

Main Street and the Common

Both of these areas are part of the Historic District and have recently received substantial attention from the Hancock Improvement Association which has taken steps to enhance the attractiveness of these areas and their practical utility. While supporting those steps, we have no additional recommendations to make at this time.

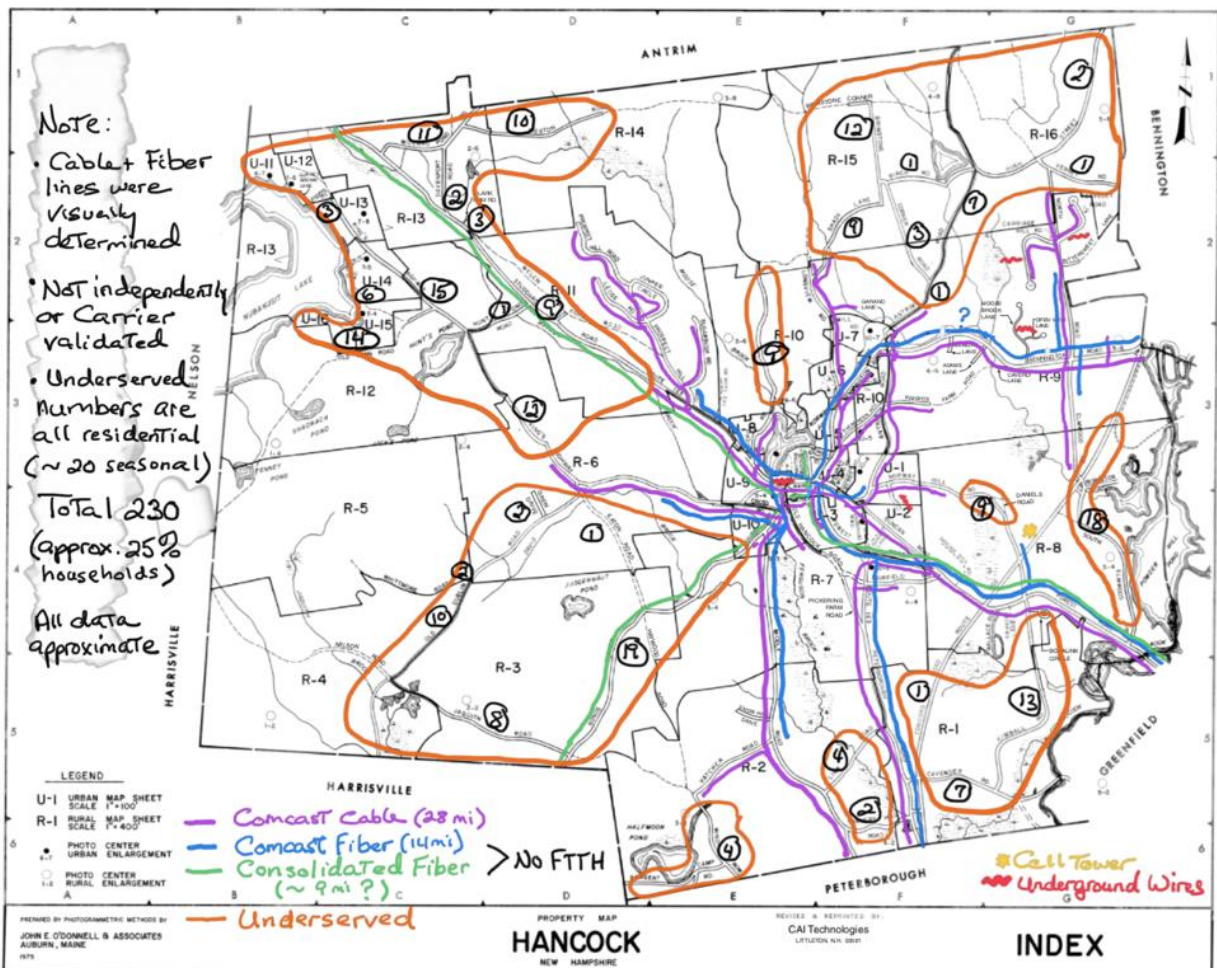
Renewable Energy

The Planning Board notes that residents have voiced support for appropriately scaled renewable energy. Hancock's Historic District Commission is currently studying the need for regulations on solar panel use in the village.

Telecommunications

Citizen responses collected at the December 2017 Planning Board led 'Vision 2030' meeting and survey indicates that expansion of broadband access and cell phone reception is a priority for the town. Expansion to all homes in Hancock will attract young families, allow for residents to work from home and potentially increase property values to those homes currently without broadband service. In 2018 the Select Board appointed a Telecommunications Committee. The vision statement for the committee is: "Hancock is a safe and tranquil community; committed to historical preservation, land protection & education, that provides its residents 21st century telecommunication opportunities making it a high-tech balance of global connection and rural living." As of October 2019, the committee is actively working to make this vision a reality.

Following is a map developed by the committee showing the underserved areas in town as of October 2019. A full Telecommunications report can be found on the town's website.



END