

Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

Completed CTAP Community Planning Assessment Summary Report & Questionnaire



Prepared on Behalf of the Town of Bedford

By:

The Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission



SNHPC

Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community Planning Assessment Report

This report is a summary of the CTAP Community Planning Assessment which was completed using the gathered information from the Community Planning Assessment Questionnaire. This questionnaire is attached at the end of the Final Summary

History and Purpose:

The Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) is in the second year of a five-year process. The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) initiated CTAP to provide support to communities projected to experience growth as a result of the Interstate 93 Expansion Project which stretches from Salem to Concord. The goal of the first phase of the program is to conduct Community Planning Assessments of those municipalities designated by the NH DOT as most likely to be affected by the expected increase in population. There are 26 CTAP-designated communities along the I93 corridor and a Community Planning Assessment has been conducted for each town. Eleven of these municipalities are located within the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission Region and include Auburn, Bedford, Candia, Chester, Deerfield, Derry, Goffstown, Hooksett, Londonderry, Manchester, and Raymond. The primary purpose of the Community Planning Assessment is to identify the policies and regulations these municipalities currently have in place to effectively prepare and manage growth.

Process:

The Community Planning Assessment consists of more than 100 questions. The survey is centered around the following four major planning themes:

- Theme A. – Community Infrastructure and Regional Cooperation
- Theme B. – Environmental Protection, Land Use, and Open Space
- Theme C. – Downtowns, Village Centers, and Community Vitality
- Theme D. - The Local Economy

The CTAP Steering Committee determined that the questions developed from these themes should address most of the growth concerns of municipalities affected by the Interstate 93 Expansion Project. The attached Community Planning Assessment for the Town of Bedford, New Hampshire was completed through a review by Town officials, Planning Board members, and staff at the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission. The results are intended to provide community leaders and municipal officials with a basis to make decisions concerning the implementation of policies to address potential growth issues. These results are identified in this Executive Summary.

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Findings:

The major planning needs and weaknesses identified by the Community Planning Assessment prepared for the Town of Bedford, New Hampshire are listed as follows:

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- Limited use of Tax Increment Financing Districts (TIF) for infrastructure improvement and economic development;
- Lack of a Dark Sky Ordinance in the Town's Zoning or as part of the Planning Board's Site Plan Regulations;
- Lack of a Groundwater Protection Ordinance for the town;
- Limited inclusion of energy conservation practices in town government, building codes and zoning regulations;
- No minimum or maximum parking regulations in the town's zoning;
- Limited use and development of traffic calming techniques;
- Town's existing master plan is now out of date;
- No demolition delay ordinance;
- Limited brownfields redevelopment;
- No formally adopted open space plan;
- Out of date natural resources inventory and maps;
- No prime wetland regulations;
- No riparian buffer regulations for streams and tributaries;
- No mandatory use and limited open space requirements in the town's conservation development regulations;
- No infill development policy;
- No formally adopted economic development plan;
- No mandatory recycling for town residents;
- No Agricultural Commission or agricultural audit; and
- No Housing Commission.

Key Recommendations:

The Town of Bedford has achieved and performed extensive planning to manage growth and to prepare for the future. This Community Planning Assessment Report contains an analysis of the key findings and recommendations to continue to address a variety of existing and future growth related issues and policies in Bedford. Some of the key recommendations are identified below:

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- 1) Update the Town's Master Plan;
- 2) Develop and adopt a Town Open Space Plan;
- 3) Develop and adopt Groundwater/Aquifer Protection Ordinance;
- 4) Update Natural Resources Inventory and Maps;
- 5) Draft and implement Low Impact Development Practices and Regulations;
- 6) Establish and/or update Riparian Buffer requirements for 1st, 2nd and 3rd order streams;
- 7) Develop and adopt an Economic Development Plan;

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- 8) Draft and adopt an Infill Policy;
- 9) Establish Housing and Agricultural Commissions; and
- 10) Participate in Cities for Climate Protection, the Clean Air and Cool Planet, US EPA Energy Star, and other energy conservation programs.

CTAP COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Part I

Introduction

The Community Technical Assistance Project (CTAP) was implemented in an attempt to help member communities grapple with potential growth issues due to the expansion of Interstate 93. The first phase of the five-year process was to conduct Community Planning Assessments of those municipalities most likely to experience growth due to the expansion of I-93. The ultimate goal of the Community Planning Assessment process is to determine whether communities have policies and regulations in place to manage potential growth effectively.

The I-93 expansion is projected to last until 2012. In an effort to minimize the effects of potential growth, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) identified 26 municipalities stretched out along the I93 as areas most likely to be impacted.

Some of the potential growth impacts that the CTAP communities could experience include, increased population, traffic, and a greater demand for housing. Consequently, if growth does occur in some or all of these areas, increased demand in municipal services across the board will be expected. CTAP communities will have to plan accordingly.

More than 100 questions were developed by professional planners and municipal officials involved in the CTAP process in an effort to determine if CTAP communities have policies and regulations in place to adequately address potential growth issues. These assessment questions were answered by reviewing existing town web sites, ordinances, regulations and city policies. The assessment questions were also answered with assistance from the municipal planners and other officials in each community.

Many of the assessment questions provide insight as to the status of the community's growth policies and the vision of the CTAP community towards its future development. The questions deal with many different planning issues including land use and mixed-use policies, zoning, minimum-lot requirements, historical preservation, open space, environmental protection, housing, water quality, economic development, and

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transportation. Furthermore, the assessment is designed to gauge the level at which public participation is present in each of the communities.

Prior to the publication of this report, municipal officials and Planning Board members of the Town of Bedford were asked to review the preliminary findings of the community planning assessment and any possible growth issues that may have come to light as a result of the survey. This was accomplished at a regular scheduled meeting of the Bedford Planning Board. The assessment questions provided discussion venues where municipal officials and planning board members could voice concerns and ask questions.

In developing this report, the SNHPC considered the insights, concerns, and recommendations offered, as well as other communications provided throughout the process and has included these where appropriate. As a result, this report should be viewed as a starting point or as a guide for future planning activities and goals. A copy of the Community Planning Assessment prepared for Bedford is attached.

Part II

Theme A

Community Infrastructure and Regional Cooperation

The purpose of this theme is to determine how CTAP communities have planned for the future in terms of the provision and funding for municipal services. This may include new facilities and other infrastructure improvements to help meet these needs. In addition, Theme A considers how effective CTAP communities have been, and will be, regarding regional cooperation with other local municipalities in an effort to better serve constituents. Special attention is given to communication strategies and cooperation initiatives between communities within the region.

Theme A generated 42 questions dealing with the funding and delivery of municipal services, regional cooperation among local governments, housing, and transportation.

The Steering Committee identified a number of broad goals that CTAP-designated communities should strive to accomplish. These goals are outlined below:

Goals

- Promote the establishment of consistent funding approaches to help pay for improved and expanding public infrastructure and services. Local governments should make certain that their funding strategies are adequate to meet the new level of service provision to meet projected growth needs.
- Evaluate the need for regional cooperation between local governments. Regional approaches can often embellish the delivery of public services and

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environmental quality, avoid the possible duplication of services, and better allocate financial resources.

- Plan for an adequate supply of housing. The housing stock should reflect local needs and priorities and include housing for a range of income levels.
- Implement strategies to promote safe and efficient multi-modal transportation systems.

Findings:

- The Town of Bedford regularly participates in mutual aid, regional school, as well as wastewater and water service agreements with adjacent communities.
- The Town of Bedford has never utilized Tax Increment Financing Districts (TIFD) or the Community Reinvestment and Opportunity Program (CROP) zones to help fund or stimulate infrastructure improvement in specific areas of the community.
- The Town of Bedford has an outstanding Capital Improvement Program (CIP) which is updated annually.
- A procedure to determine whether a project qualifies as a “Development of Regional Impact” is regularly addressed at the beginning of each Planning Board meeting.
- The town has adopted impact fees for schools, recreational facilities, and the Kilton Road intersection improvement.
- The community has no outdoor dark skies lighting ordinance.
- Bedford has initiated extensive planning for future utilities and water supply needs and the town charges exactions for both on-site and off-site improvements.
- Utilities are required to be placed underground in new developments.
- The town provides a transfer station for residents, but recycling is not mandatory.
- The town has affordable housing requirements within its elderly housing and age-restricted housing regulations and accessory apartments are permitted in single-family homes by Special Exception from the ZBA.
- Bedford’s zoning regulations do not specifically encourage or require energy conservation standards in new development.

Recommendations:

The Town of Bedford could benefit in the future by considering TIFDs or CROP zones to help fund needed infrastructure improvements within specific areas of the community. This could include public utilities, road repairs, drainage and other improvements in association with new development. In addition, the town has no dark skies ordinance. Developing such an ordinance would be beneficial in helping to reduce overall light glare and improve star gazing within the community. The International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) and the Illuminating

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Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) is currently developing a Model Lighting Ordinance and Design Guide to address the need for strong, consistent outdoor lighting regulation. Bedford may wish to keep track of the release of this model ordinance and compare it to the town's current lighting requirements for improvements. Also the town may also wish to consider making recycling mandatory within the community which would help to increase recyclable volumes and revenues to the town. In the future, Bedford could experience additional benefits if the community employs single-stream recycling as these types of facilities become available within the Greater Manchester area. In addition, Bedford should consider participating in Cities for Climate Protection, the Clean Air and Cool Planet, US EPA Energy Star, and other energy conservation programs. The Town of Bedford could also benefit from the establishment of a Housing Commission to continue to stay on top of affordable housing issues and strategies.

Theme B

Environmental Protection, Land Use, and Open Space

The purpose of this theme is to determine how CTAP communities have planned for the protection of land in a way that is consistent and compatible with future growth trends. To achieve these goals communities must focus on future land use strategies and determine how these would help to promote the preservation of natural resources, open space, and environmental protection.

Theme B generated 38 questions dealing with natural resources, green infrastructure, parks and recreational opportunities, rural character, and the preservation of agricultural lands and forests.

The Steering Committee identified a number of broad goals that CTAP-designated communities should strive to accomplish. These goals are outlined below:

Goals

- Promote the preservation and protection of natural resources when addressing the economic needs of the community and region.
- Protect natural resources and the environment including ground water, aquifers, wildlife, and wildlife corridors.
- Establish and conserve an interconnected green infrastructure and ensure public access to open space, parks, and other recreational opportunities.
- Maintain rural character whenever possible especially forests and farms.

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Findings:

- **The Town's existing Master plan has not been updated within the past seven years and is scheduled for an update in 2008.**
- The Town's existing Zoning Ordinance is consistent with the recommendations of the Master Plan and provides for a range of lot sizes, increased densities where public water and sewer exist, and a variety of innovative land use techniques, including cluster/open space development, transfer of development rights (within clusters), performance zoning along Route 3, inclusionary zoning (elderly linked to affordable housing) and impact fees.
- Bedford's Zoning Ordinance (Commercial Zone and Rt. 3 Performance Zone) allows for a mix of residential and commercial uses and there are opportunities for brownfields redevelopment.
- Backlots are not allowed and nonresidential development is encouraged to be concentrated at intersections or in "village" nodes.
- The Planning Board has architectural and design guidelines in place to encourage traditional development and the development of new villages.
- Bedford has completed extensive inventories of its historic structures, but the Town has no demolition delay bylaw or ordinance in effect.
- The Town offers a property tax exemption for alternative energy installations and senior citizens.
- The community has actively pursued open space protection and has adopted a wetlands conservation ordinance. However, the town has no formal Open Space Plan and has not adopted an aquifer or groundwater protection ordinance, wellhead protection program, or prime wetland regulations.
- The Town's existing Master Plan references a Natural Resources Inventory, but this inventory is now out of date and needs to be updated.
- Bedford participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and has in place adequate floodplain, stormwater, and erosion control and sedimentation ordinances. However, these ordinances do not encourage or require Low Impact Development (LID) practices.
- Portions of the Merrimack River in Bedford are subject to the State Shoreland Protection Act, but there are no shoreland or riparian buffer requirements for the town's streams and tributaries.
- While the town allows cluster development, this development is not mandatory and the open space requirements in the ordinance are minimal.

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Recommendations:

Bedford's environmental protection, land use planning, and open space activities have been effective over the years, but the town's Master Plan is now out of date and needs to be updated. In addition, the Town of Bedford needs a formal Open

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Space Plan, as well as improved cluster development regulations, to balance its open space and land protection efforts. Bedford could also benefit from brownfields redevelopment and a demolition delay ordinance designed to help protect the town's historic resources. An updated version of the Natural Resources Inventory would also be a valuable project for the town. The last inventory was completed as part of the Master Plan in 2000. An updated inventory would identify new areas of importance and designate areas that would be a high priority for preservation. Taking steps to adopt an aquifer protection ordinance was also mentioned in the 2000 Master Plan, but has yet to be put into effect, making it another valuable priority for Bedford. Protecting prime wetlands and the town's overall groundwater supplies, including a wellhead protection program along with Low Impact Development (LID) standards, should also be important steps in Bedford as the town continues to grow **and could potentially create a future water supply.**

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Theme C

Downtown/Village Centers and Community Vitality

The purpose of this theme is to determine how the CTAP communities have planned for the development and preservation of vibrant community centers which would include an extensive array of cultural and recreational resources. The overall intent is to enhance public participation by establishing areas for community activities around the downtown or common community village center which would add rural character and promote a sense of vitality to the village center.

Theme C generated 16 questions dealing with the development of village center districts and the promotion of walkable downtown areas in an effort to maintain the small town New England community tradition. Special emphasis was given to the development of main streets, historic preservation, and landscaping.

The Steering Committee identified a number of broad goals that CTAP-designated communities should strive to accomplish. These goals are outlined below:

Goals

- Develop or enhance downtowns and village centers through the reuse of existing infrastructure and the rehabilitation of buildings with historic value.
- Promote the development of walkable downtown areas which are consistent with historic patterns.
- Enhance Main streets and promote a small, New England town atmosphere.

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Findings:

- **Bedford is currently working toward creating a Town Center on both sides of Route 101 to promote community connectivity. While there is currently no plan to accomplish this, the town’s current Master Plan identifies the Town Center as a future village center or “People Place”. The adoption of an ordinance would be required in order to implement this.**
- **While Bedford lacks a policy to encourage or locate new public buildings near the town’s community center, the town has been active in purchasing land to provide a large central green and a “Village Common” on Route 101/Bell Road.**
- **Currently, only elderly housing is allowed in the commercial zoning within the ‘Village Center’”. The town may wish to consider a mixed use or Village District zone in the future.**
- **Bedford Planning Board has adopted architectural guidelines; however, these guidelines are advisory only.**
- **The town has no requirements for the planting or preservation of street trees within the right of way of existing and proposed roadways, except as part of a landscape plan that must be submitted for parking lots. However, stonewalls are regulated under Bedford’s Road Construction Standards.**

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Recommendations:

Although sparse, the town is in need of a strong village center plan and village district zone to help give it proper form and function. A village center in Bedford would need regulations to guide architecture so that new development fits in with the rest of the town’s New England feel, as well as address possibilities for mixed use and infill policies. The town should evaluate its landscaping requirements and address the need to protect and replace street trees along existing and proposed roadways.

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Theme D

Local Economy

The purpose of this theme is to determine if the CTAP community has enacted policies that promote economic viability, foster a prosperous business environment, and support agricultural development. The development of a strong local economy should result in increased local employment opportunities and livable wages.

Theme D generated 15 questions dealing with the development of economic development strategies, commercial and agricultural development, and tax incentives to attract new business development.

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The Steering Committee identified a number of broad goals that CTAP-designated communities should strive to accomplish. These goals are outlined below:

Goals

- Support sustainable and balanced economic growth that reflects the current tax base.
- Strengthen local agriculture and forestry through the support of related infrastructure and economic systems.
- Support the development of new jobs and livable wages.

Findings:

- **The Town of Bedford does not have an Economic Development Plan nor does it participate in the Main Street program.**
- **Bedford's Zoning Ordinance does not encourage mixed use; however, some elderly housing exists within the town's commercial, office and industrial zones.**
- **There are currently no tax incentives for businesses to locate in the community center or other priority areas. Furthermore, the town has not identified anchors (such as a post office or municipal buildings) which can promote the town's Village Center.**
- **Bedford's Zoning Ordinance does not define agriculture and there are no references to the right to farm law.**
- **The Town does require HISS (High Intensity Soil Survey) mapping where on-site septic systems are required, however, mapping of prime soil for agricultural is not required in development proposals.**
- **Bedford has not conducted an Agriculture Inventory nor has it established an Agricultural Commission.**

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Recommendations:

Although Bedford has experienced strong economic growth in the past, the Town has no Economic Development Plan in place to address existing issues and future concerns. While participating in the Main Street program would be premature at this time, at some point it might prove helpful as the Town's Village Center develops and a Village plan and Village zoning are put into place. Bedford may also want to consider evaluating the feasibility of allowing mixed use in the town's zoning districts where appropriate and establishing an Agricultural Commission to help support and promote local agricultural business development. In addition, the

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Town should include a basic definition of agriculture in its zoning ordinance and include right to farm laws.

Summary

Overall Findings:

While the Town of Bedford has achieved and performed extensive planning to manage growth and to prepare for the future, it is clear based upon the responses to this community planning assessment that the Town of Bedford would greatly benefit from the following key recommendations:

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- 1) Update the Town's Master Plan;
- 2) Develop and adopt a Town Open Space Plan;
- 3) Develop and adopt Groundwater/Aquifer Protection Ordinance;
- 4) Update Natural Resources Inventory and Maps;
- 5) Draft and implement Low Impact Development Practices (LID) and Regulations;
- 6) Establish and/or update Riparian Buffer requirements for 1st, 2nd and 3rd order streams;
- 7) Develop and adopt an Economic Development Plan;
- 8) Draft and adopt an Infill Policy;
- 9) Establish Housing and Agricultural Commissions; and
- 10) Participate in Cities for Climate Protection, the Clean Air and Cool Planet, US EPA Energy Star, and other energy conservation programs.

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Town of Bedford
Community Planning Assessment Template

Theme A: Municipal Services/Facilities & Regional Cooperation
High quality municipal and educational services and facilities and effective regional cooperation and communication

A-1 Funding and Delivering Municipal Services and Regional Cooperation

Goals

- Assist local governments in establishing stable, consistent funding approaches for public infrastructure and services.
- Ensure continuation of strong municipal services and schools so that they continue to provide quality services and meet projected growth.
- Develop and support new methods of regional cooperation that enhance local government delivery of public services while ensuring environmental quality.
- Allocate financial resources on a regional basis.

Specific Assessment Questions:

Is your community a member of an RPC?

Yes. Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission.

Do you have appointed commissioners who regularly attend?

Yes. David. J. Danielson, Edward. P. Moran, Hal Newberry, Michael Izbicki.

Is your community a participant in any mutual aid agreements for police, fire, water and sewer, solid waste, etc?

Yes. Mutual aid for fire protection with neighboring municipalities. First response agreements for fire, police, and road maintenance with Town of Merrimack for many properties that straddle the shared municipal boundary. Mutual aid exists between Manchester Water Works, Pennichuck Water Works, and Merrimack Village Water District for emergency water supplies through interconnections in Bedford.

Does your community participate in any regional service agreements, including SAUs?

Yes. SAU # 25, serves the Bedford School District as well as Manchester School District for West High School.

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Does your community participate in other regional municipal cooperative efforts?

Yes. Bedford participates in the Manchester Wastewater Treatment plant and Manchester Water Works has a franchise for 1/4 of the Town of Bedford.

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Do you have an existing procedure for incorporating regional impact into the plan review process?

Yes. At beginning of each Planning Board meeting, the planning staff makes a recommendation to the Board on whether each agenda item may have the potential for regional impact. If the Board votes that a plan has regional impact, it is sent to the regional planning commission for review and comment.

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Does your community have an updated Capital Improvements Program in place and if so, when was the CIP last adopted?

Bedford adopted its first CIP in 1991 and it has updated the CIP each year since then. The CIP for 2007 was adopted by the Town Council in December, 2006.

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Does your community use Tax Increment Financing, community development funds, or Community Reinvestment and Opportunity Program (CROP) zones to provide infrastructure improvements in specific areas?

No.

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Does your community have impact fees and if so, for what type of facilities/services?

Yes, For Schools and Recreational Facilities and the Kilton Road Intersection improvement (Kilton Road impact fee was deleted in 2006).

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Does your community charge exactions (or off-site improvements) and if so, for what type of facilities/services?

On Site and Off Site improvements are required by the Planning Board as a result of subdivision or site plan review and, including but not limited to, extension of water and water and sewer mains or the construction of roads or other infrastructure, which would have to be completed by the developer regardless of the capital facilities fee provisions. If the Boards determines that the proposed development created the need for Off-Site Improvements, all or part of which are rationally related to or occasioned by the proposed development, or which will require an excessive expenditure of public funds in order to provide the same, the Planning Board may impose the requirement that the applicant must install or pay for all or part of such off-site improvements.

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Has your community planned for the provision of future utilities?

Yes. The town Land Use Control Regulations extensively mention the requirements for future utilities in town. Bedford completed its Long-Range Water Comprehensive Plan for future piped water service extensions in 2003 and Bedford is currently participating in the long-range sewer service master plan being prepared by the City of Manchester.

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Does your community require underground installation of utilities?

Section 255.2 of the Land Development Control Regulations states that all utilities for new developments shall be laid in underground conduits ready for connection to proposed structures. Section 326.3 of the Land Development Control Regulations states that all proposed on-site utilities shall be installed underground in accordance with specifications of the individual utility companies involved and in accordance with applicable local codes, unless otherwise permitted by the Planning Board.

Does your community have an outdoor dark skies lighting ordinance? If so, what ordinance is it a part of?

No. However, Bedford does require full cut-off luminaries in its lighting ordinance, Article 45-9-14 of the Bedford Zoning Ordinance.

Are streetlights required or encouraged in any areas?

Street Lights are not required; the implementation of street lights is up to the planning board's discretion. Section 241 of the Land Development and Control Regulations states that as a general provision, an applicant must file a performance guarantee in an amount sufficient to cover the cost of preparation of the streets, curbs, sidewalks, streetlights, street signs, etc.

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What long-range plans has your community made for meeting its future water supply needs?

Where public water supply is available, all proposed non-residential or multi-family residential sites shall be expected to connect. In areas where municipal water is not available, on site wells may be used to develop an appropriate water supply provided that said construction fully complies with all applicable requirements of the New Hampshire Code of Administrative Rules. Where the Planning Board is concerned that an adequate water supply can not be provided by an on site well, the Board may require the applicant to perform such studies as may be necessary to demonstrate that an adequate supply is available. Also, Bedford has franchises with 2 water companies regulated by the PUC – Manchester Water Works and Pennichuck Water Works. Bedford has also prepared a long-range Water Comprehensive Plan (2003) for meeting its future water needs.

What are your current arrangements for septage disposal—does your town have a specified site and corresponding contract?

Section 45-4-1 of the zoning ordinance references sewage disposal and states that: all waste water and sewage disposal systems shall be constructed and maintained in accordance with the standards set and enforced by the Water Supply and Pollution Control Division of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. Reference to septic disposal contracts in Bedford was not found in town documents. Sewer wastewater is treated at the Manchester Wastewater Treatment plant, where Bedford has a contract for processing of 1 million gallons.

Has your community planned for its solid waste and recycling needs?

Bedford no longer operates the town's 124 acre landfill that was used for solid waste disposal after the 1990 Master Plan was completed. In 1995, the Town began operating a transfer station from which, municipal waste is hauled to a private landfill. The transfer station is located at the closed landfill. Although the town does not have a public curbside trash pickup program, it does operate a voluntary recycling program. Residents bring their trash and recyclables to the transfer station or they can hire a private hauler to provide that service.

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A-2 Housing

Goal

- Ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing stock for a range of income levels that reflects regional and local needs and priorities.

Specific Assessment Questions:

How has your community planned for future housing needs?

The Town has provided for Cluster Residential Development which will reduce housing costs and help control development in order to make the most efficient use of land. Clusters also allow attached elderly units in the residential zones. The Bedford Zoning Ordinance also allows elderly housing in the commercial zone at a density of 28 units per acre with a requirement that 25% of the units must be sold or rented to persons earning 80% of the Manchester median income or less. Bedford also has over 500 existing rental apartment units. Accessory apartments are allowed in single-family homes by Special Exception from the ZBA.

Are the population and employment projections within your Master Plan consistent with regional and state projections?

Bedford's population projection for 2010 according to the Master Plan is slightly over 17,000 people. The Office of Energy and Planning estimated Bedford's 2010 population at 21,810 which is a fairly significant difference. The Master plan's 2020 population projection is about 21,000 and OEP estimates the 2020 population of Bedford to be almost 24,000, which is also a fairly significant difference from the Town's estimates.

On page 3-8 of the 2000 Master Plan, it is noted that the OEP and SNHPC population projections for 2010 seemed too low. Therefore, the Master Plan anticipated a population of 20,600 for 2010 based on building permit history.

Does the community's Master Plan reference and/or make use of the regional housing needs assessment in evaluating the housing needs within the community?

Yes, the 1995 Housing Needs Assessment is referenced and has helped the town to figure out the steps needed to plan for housing needs in the future.

Where within your community is new residential growth occurring?

New residential growth is occurring in northwest Bedford, along New Boston Road and its associated collector roads, such as Pulpit Road.

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Do the community's land use regulations provide for a wide range of housing types (single-family, duplexes, manufactured homes, apartments, etc.)?

Yes. The Town provides for Single Family detached, single-family attached, Elderly multi-family (regular multi-family was deleted), Manufactured housing, assisted living, and nursing homes.

Are accessory apartments permitted/allowed?

Yes.

Does the community's land use regulations allow multi-family (> or = 2 units per dwelling) residences?

Yes. Only elderly multi-family is now allowed. Regular multi-family was deleted from Performance Zone, and the other Apartment Residential districts are built-out.

Does your community have an age-restricted housing ordinance? If so, it is limited to 55+ or 62+?

Yes Bedford has an ordinance which allows any resident over the age of 55 to be eligible for inclusion in the development.

Does your community's regulations encourage energy conservation?

Not specifically, however cluster development does have some energy conservation qualities and the town is very active in cluster development. There is a town-subsidized bus route from Manchester Transit Authority along the Route 3 Corridor to reduce gas consumption. Other green building practices are currently not required by the town. Current building codes represent the minimum legal energy efficiency standards for structures. The town's land use ordinances have no provisions which require the use of passive solar design or energy-efficient appliances and equipment.

Does your community's regulations encourage housing that meets disabled and/or universal design standards?

Yes. Pedestrian access to all non-residential or multi-family structures shall be provided via paved walkways constructed in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In cases where non-residential or multi-family developments front on public streets with sidewalks, on site walks, also constructed in accordance with the requirements of the ADA, shall be constructed so as to provide safe and convenient pedestrian access to the development.

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Has your community taken any steps (such as tax relief programs) to help senior citizens remain within their own homes?

Yes. Article 72:39-a - Applications for exemptions must be filed by April 15 and not afterwards for current year. The application is permanent as long as you own your home or until your financial circumstances change. The Assessor(s) may review your application during subsequent tax years to determine continuation of eligibility. You must notify the assessing staff if you no longer qualify because of changes in income or assets. Exemption amounts =
65-74 years of age: 35,000; 75-79 years of age: 40,000; 80+ years of age: 120,000

Do your Master Plan or land use regulations define affordable and workforce housing? If yes, how are these terms defined?

Yes, Affordable housing. Affordable housing shall mean rental, lease, or ownership interests in housing which is subsidized for a minimum period of thirty years through either governmental, public, or private mechanisms, including tax credits, for persons with a household income limit not exceeding eighty percent of the area median income for households of various sizes established by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development for the metropolitan statistical area which includes the Town of Bedford.

Does your community have an inclusionary housing ordinance or provide bonuses for affordable and workforce housing?

Yes. Article 45-4-2 requires elderly housing to provide 25% of units to be "affordable" as defined above.

What steps has your community taken to provide and preserve affordable and workforce housing?

See elderly inclusionary ordinance above. Town also approved over 500 rental apartments between 1993 and 1997 to provide lower-cost housing opportunities.

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Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

A-3 Transportation

Goal

- Promote safe, efficient, accessible, and diverse multi-modal transportation solutions for services and goods.

Specific Assessment Questions:

Do the provisions of the master plan and zoning ordinance encourage a continuous street network? How is the connectivity of new streets ensured?

Yes. Section 232.1.6 of the Land Development Control Regulations state that to prevent the creation of land-locked tracts, the Planning Board shall provide for the arrangement of streets in a proposed subdivision for the continuation of existing streets in adjoining areas and for their proper projection when adjoining land is developed in the future. In addition, additional easement areas may be required in order to accommodate necessary future road construction.

Are cul-de sacs addressed (in the context of the street network of the town) in your regulations? If so, what aspects are regulated?

Yes. The length of Cul-De-Sac Streets may be no less than 300 feet nor greater than 1200 hundred feet as measured from edge of right-of-way of the intersected street to the radius point of the cul-de-sac. Waiver of maximum length will only be considered with the support of the fire department and access to a municipal water supply or water cistern.

Does the Planning Board permit design waivers for reduced pavement width and the installation of cape-cod curbs?

Bedford does allow waivers for certain situations where strict compliance with each and every one of the regulations is not applicable for a specific application. In the case of such a finding, the board may modify or waive one or more sections of these regulations provided that; The modification or waiver shall not have the effect of nullifying the intent and purpose of these regulations.

Are dead-end streets permitted and if so, what is the maximum street length allowed?

Dead End streets are not referenced in the town's regulations however the length of Cul-De-Sac streets may be no less than 300 feet nor greater than twelve hundred feet as measured from the edge of the Right-of Way of the intersected street to the radius point of the cul-de-sac.

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Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

Do the community's road standards reflect the character and topography of the existing area in terms of slope and sight distance?

Yes.

Do road standards vary depending on anticipated traffic volumes?

Yes.

What is the community's policy for issuing building permits on Class VI roads?

In conformance with RSA 674:41, the applicant must first get approval for issuance of a building permit from the Town Council, after review and comment by the Planning Board, and a document must be recorded in the Registry waiving any municipal liability. Very few (less than 10 such permits have been issued in the last decade).

Has the community considered bicycle or pedestrian transportation on a town-wide scale in the Master Plan or other planning documents?

The vision for the future of Bedford's town center states that there should be pedestrian/bike accessibility with pathway's linking to other parts of town. A pedestrian/bike master plan for Bedford was prepared as part of the SNHPC's long-range bike plan.

Do the land use regulations require sidewalks or bicycle paths or other pedestrian paths within new residential or commercial development?

Sidewalks are required for commercial development in the Route 3 Performance Zone. Sidewalks are not required in residential subdivisions and cannot be installed along public streets unless the Town Council gives approval (due to maintenance costs).

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Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

Are trails or other pedestrian connections required or considered between developments in the plan review process?

Land Development Control Regulations, Section 232.1.4 allows the Planning Board to require provision of pedestrian easements for trails and access to schools.

Do parking requirements in the community vary by use classification or zoning district? If so, what are they?

Yes. The parking requirements vary by use classification. In section 322.2.1 of Bedford's Land Use Control Regulations, there is a list of 26 land uses which all have their own parking requirements. These classification range from single family housing to hospital parking, restaurants, churches, funeral homes and many more.

Does the community permit/ encourage or require sub-compact parking spaces?
No.

Does the community's parking regulations include maximum as well as minimum parking requirements, i.e., setting a limit on the amount of parking allowed?

There is no mention of specific maximum or minimum parking requirements however there is specific regulation for construction of parking lots associated with new construction and specific facility type parking space requirements. There are parking space requirements for all facility types in town.

Do the community's regulations and transportation planning practices encourage the implementation of traffic calming techniques?

The municipal documents mention nothing about traffic calming techniques.

Do the community's land use regulations require the submission of traffic impact studies or analyses for new and enlarged developments? If so, when is a study required?

The town's land use regulations do not say that traffic impact studies are required, however they are encouraged and where they are required, they shall be prepared and sealed by a licensed professional engineer. The scope of the TIS shall be determined through a scoping meeting with the Town's traffic consulting engineer. The Planning Staff should be contacted prior to the commencement of any TIS.

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Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

Does your community encourage alternative transportation? If so, is this accomplished through the land use regulations or other means?

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The town doesn't encourage alternative transportation (actually, the Town of Bedford pays a yearly subsidy of \$42,000 to Manchester Transit to get that bus route to go into Bedford) but they do have access to some of Manchester Transit Authorities services through the one bus route which goes through Bedford. Also, the step-saver program which is mainly for the City of Manchester services the section of Bedford served by the Bedford mall Route # 13.

If transit or other transportation alternatives exist, does your community encourage or allow transit-oriented development?

No. Transit oriented development is not something Bedford, or many other towns are currently investing in.

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Does the community have access management standards? Are they restricted to a specified area in the community or to specified uses?

The Town does not specifically reference access management standards however, Article 45-4-3 of the Town Zoning Ordinance states that for the purpose of promoting a system of access management, incentive bonus standards have been created as a means for rewarding those who choose to develop their properties in a way that is most compatible with the stated goals of the route 101 corridor study, 2002. Bedford's 1984 Route 3 Corridor Study specifies access management standards that have been utilized since that time. A revised Rt. 3 Study is currently being prepared by VHB, Inc. Bedford's 2002 Route 101 Corridor Study prescribed access management standards. Article 45-4-3 and Article 45-9-7 show diagrams that describe access management techniques and bonuses for compliance.

Does the community have a memorandum of understanding with the DOT regarding driveway access on state highways?

Bedford has had a verbal commitment from the DOT on Route 3 since the early 1990's. As part of the updated Route 3 Corridor Study, the Town is preparing a written Memo of Understanding with DOT.

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Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

Theme B: Environmental Protection, Land Use, and Open Space *Strengthened protection and expanded access to natural resources and open space*

Environmental Protection, Land Use, and Open Space Protection

Goals

- Protect natural resources in harmony with meeting economic needs of the community and the region.
- Protect natural resources and environmental health, including ground water and aquifers, wildlife, and wildlife corridors.
- Establish and conserve an interconnected green infrastructure.
- Ensure convenient and nearby public access to open space, parks, and recreational opportunities.
- Maintain unique and diverse rural character of the community and region by protecting and preserving farm and forestlands.

Specific Assessment Questions: *Land Use*

Does your Master Plan have a vision chapter and a land use chapter?

Yes. The Master Plan has a General Statement Chapter which includes the Town Vision Statement for the year 2000, and Chapter 4 of the Master Plan is the Land Use Chapter.

Has your community updated your Master Plan within the last five years? If not, how old is your plan?

No. the latest version is 2000. There is an updated copy scheduled to be completed in 2008.

In what ways is your zoning ordinance consistent/or not consistent with the recommendations and projected land uses in the Master Plan?

Zoning Ordinance is based on recommendations from the Master Plan and is consistent.

Does your community's zoning ordinance allow innovative land use techniques as listed in RSA 674:21? If so, which ones?

Cluster Development is used to help implement the most efficient use of existing land and follows RSA 674:21, Innovative Land Use Techniques. The purpose being to facilitate the economical and efficient provision of public services; promote open space conservation; protect the natural and scenic attributes of the land; and to expand opportunities for the development of affordable housing in the Town of Bedford, all in

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Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

accordance with the goals and objectives of the adopted Master Plan. Also, (d) transfer of development rights (in clusters), (h) performance zoning (on Rt. 3), (k) inclusionary zoning (elderly linked to affordable housing); and (m) impact fees.

Do the community's land use plans and regulations establish minimum densities to promote efficient use of land?
Yes. See Table of Dimensional Standards in Article 45-4-3 and Article 45-9-7 of Zoning Ordinance.

Does the community have different land use plans for villages, town center districts, other neighborhoods, and open, less dense rural areas?
There are different lot and unit densities, building heights, number/placement of buildings, street designs, and landscaping for the Residential & Agricultural zone, the General Residential zone, the Apartment Residential zone, the Commercial zone, the Commercial zone with Historic District overlay (town center), the Performance Zone, the Neighborhood Commercial zone, the Highway Commercial zone, and the Service Industrial zone.

Do your community's regulations provide for a range of lot sizes? If so, what are they?
Yes. The minimum lot size for Residential and Agriculture District is 1.5 acres but the average house lot size is around 2.4 acres. In the General Residential Zone the variable minimum lot size is 0.5 acres to 1.5 acres and is dependent on the availability of municipal water and sewer. The Service industrial district has a minimum lot size of 3 acres, and the other non-residential zoning districts in Town have a minimum lot size of 1 acre.

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Does your Master Plan and land use regulations encourage higher density development where water, sewer, and other infrastructure currently exist?
The Master Plan and Land Use Regulations do not specifically mention higher density development in these areas, however the master plan states that in the future it will be important to maximize the type and intensity of development that occurs in non-residential zoning districts, while at the same time ensuring that adequate infrastructure exists to accommodate development. So where there is adequate

Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

infrastructure, higher intensity development will be implemented. In the General Residential zone, lots sizes decline from 1.5 acres to 0.5 acres where water and sewer are available. In the Performance Zone, lot sizes decline from 3 acres to 1 acre where water and sewer are available, per the Zoning Ordinance.

Does the community's Master Plan encourage, and the zoning ordinance provide, for at least one or more zoning districts that allow a mix of residential and commercial uses?
In general, Bedford has separated much of the land uses according to each Zoning District. Appendix 45-1 Table of Uses shows that for the most part, residential uses are restricted to the RA, AR, and GR Zones with the exception of some Elderly housing existing in the CO, OF, and SI Zones. The Commercial Zone (CO) allows for commercial uses and some Elderly housing. The Route 3 Performance Zone has allowed for a mix of multi-family residential, elderly housing and commercial and industrial uses. Now that most of the land is built-out, residential uses have been deleted.

Do the community's land use plans encourage traditional neighborhood development or the development of new villages?
The "Traditional Neighborhood Development" is referenced in the Town Zoning Ordinance in "Footnotes for Table of Uses" however this provision was deleted in 1996. The Master Plan states in the "Visions for Growth and Development" that the restriction of architectural appearance to traditional looking New England homes and businesses is wanted in the future.

Does your community's zoning ordinance allow backlots?
The Zoning Ordinance and Land Development Control Regulations mention nothing about Backlots. Back lots are NOT allowed.

Does your community's zoning and/or development patterns locate nonresidential uses along major roadways or are those uses concentrated at intersections of major roads in a "village" or node?
The development patterns for Bedford's non residential uses are mainly concentrated along the route 3 corridor in the performance zone and some on route 101 where concentrated retail, and service type industry has been implemented. The nonresidential development is not specifically concentrated at intersections or in the village center.

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Does your community have an historic resources inventory? Historic district(s)?
Demolition delay bylaw?

Yes. The most recent compilation of historic structures and sites in Bedford was presented in 1997 in the map entitles Bedford Historic Sites, which is on file in the Town offices. It locates and dates 82 buildings/sites throughout the Town based on information compiled by the local historic organizations. There is no demolition delay ordinance. Also, the 1990 Bedford Master Plan includes a historic resources inventory.

Are there any brownfields located in the community and does the community have any local plans to redevelop them?

According to SNHPC's Brownfield's Community-Wide Assessment Grant Application for Hazardous Substances and Petroleum Contaminated Sites, there are 62 potential Petroleum Contaminated sites and 5 potential Hazardous Substance sites in Town.

Does the community provide a property tax exemption for alternative energy installations per RSA 72:61-74?

Yes, Bedford offers exemptions for solar, wood-burning, and wind alternative energy installations.

Specific Assessment Questions: Natural Resources

What strategies and actions is the community taking to protect natural areas?

Bedford has had considerable success in implementing the recommendations from the 1990 Master Plan that relate to the preservation of natural resources and acquisition of open space. Approximately 140 acres have been acquired by the Town for conservation/recreation purposes since 1990. Various Parcels considered important natural areas have been made candidates for conservation action which will become more and more important in the future as the amount of open space in Bedford dwindles due to increased development. There have been a number of recommendations for the implementation of strategies for protecting the aquifers in Town, none of which have been acted on as of yet. A Wetlands Conservation ordinance has been adopted by Bedford to help protect the various types of wetlands existing in Town. In 1998, Bedford began the process of developing an open space plan as part of a statewide initiative which encouraged communities to establish priorities for the preservation of natural and cultural resources. Also, recommendations were made in the 1990 Master Plan to focus on wildlife habitat and wildlife preservation in order to support viable populations of species throughout the Town.

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Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

Does the community have a Natural Resources Inventory? If yes, when was the last inventory conducted?

The Town Master Plan mentions nothing in the body of the document however in the back there is a section called Natural Resource Inventory in which it states; When the 1990 Master Plan was completed, a detailed inventory of existing natural resources was compiled, as well as, an existing list of recommendations for promoting their protection. The town is still implementing many of these strategies today.

Are there any local boards or commissions active in environmental protection?

The Conservation Commission in Bedford is active in environmental protection. The Bedford Land Trust is a private non-profit organization that manages many of the conservation easements for the Town and also purchases and manages conservation land.

Does your community participate in the National Flood Insurance Program?

Yes. _____

Does the community's land use regulations prohibit development within the floodplain and if so, how?

Yes. The Bedford Zoning Ordinance contains the required model ordinance specified by FEMA. Article 45-12-6 (b) states that the Building Inspector's 100-year flood elevation determination will be used as criteria for requiring in Zones A and AE that: (1)(2) All new construction or substantial improvement of residential and nonresidential structures have the lowest floor (including basement) elevated to or above the hundred year flood elevation.

The Land Development Control Regulations, Section 110, requires that the 100-year flood elevation be shown on every subdivision plan OR that the plan specify that the property is not within a 100-year flood elevation. Where a water body exists that is outside the detailed study area on the Flood Maps, the engineer preparing the subdivision plan must conduct an engineering analysis to determine whether the property will be subject to 100-year flooding.

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Do the community's land use regulations require best management practices in its drainage, sedimentation and erosion control measures and if so, what examples are included?

Yes. In general all erosion and sedimentation control plans shall be developed in accordance with the recommendations contained in a publication entitles Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sedimentation Control Handbook for Urban and Developing Areas in New Hampshire; dated August, 1992; and published by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, in conjunction with the Rockingham County Conservation District and the USDA Soil Conservation Service.

Do the regulations require the submittal of drainage calculations and stormwater management plans? ***Yes. Drainage calculations from a licensed professional engineer are required for instances of new proposed drainage systems. Section 325 of Bedford's Subdivision regulations is dedicated to the Stormwater Management Requirements in Town.***

Does the community have regulations for erosion and sediment control during construction as well as post-construction?

Yes. Article 45-9-15 of the Zoning ordinance states that all disturbed areas, construction, and/or development activities shall incorporate design standards for erosion and sedimentation control which as a minimum, shall follow the recommendations of the publication stormwater management and erosion and sediment control handbook for urban and developing areas in New Hampshire. No portion of a steep slope area shall be subject to discharge from a stormwater management system. Applications to the Bedford Planning Board shall include a site plan, pre- and post development drainage calculations, a grading plan, a stormwater management and erosion/sedimentation plan prepared by a professional engineer certified by the State of New Hampshire. Section 218.1.15 of the Land Development Control Regulations states that subdivision plans shall include plans for controlling erosion and sedimentation. Acceptable method of erosion and sedimentation control include but are not limited to, those outlined in the "Erosion and Sediment Control Design Handbook for Development Areas of New Hampshire.

What storm interval(s) are required for drainage analysis calculations?

Section 235 of the Land development control regulations states that the storm drainage systems shall be designed using the 25-year storm return frequency.

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Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

Has the community adopted a stormwater management ordinance?

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Bedford has Stormwater Management regulations in its Land Development Control Regulations.

Article 45-9-15 states that all disturbed areas, construction, and/or development activities shall incorporate design standards for erosion and sedimentation control which, at a minimum, shall follow recommendations of the publication Stormwater management and Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook of Urban and Developing areas in New Hampshire. Section 325 of The Land Development Control Regulations goes into detail about the stormwater requirements for new development.

Does the community have regulations for gravel excavating operations?

Yes. Excavation operations shall only be permitted in the PZ zoning district that is located in the portion of Town bounded by the Merrimack River, the Town of Merrimack, the F.E. Everett Turnpike, and Route 101/I-293. Section 45-4-1 of the Zoning Ordinance states that no property owner shall permit any excavation of earth materials on their own premises without first obtaining Planning Board approval in accordance with the Town of Bedford's Site Plan Regulations for Excavations.

Has the community adopted a Wetlands Conservation District?

Yes. The Town has adopted a Wetlands Conservation Ordinance contained in the Zoning Ordinance which is meant to prevent the development of structures and land uses on wetland and areas adjacent to wetlands which will contribute to pollution of surface and groundwater by sewerage, toxic substances, and sedimentation.

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Does the community have wetland buffer or setback requirements and if so, what are they?

Article 45-5-5 of the Town Zoning Ordinance states that there is a 50 foot setback from Hydric A and B soils. No Septic tank or leach field may be constructed or enlarged closer than the approved distance set forth by the State of New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, Water Supply and Pollution Control Division. Any Setback or Buffer established in excess of the 45-5-5(a) requirement of fifty feet shall exempt those properties as specified in 45-5-3(a) of the Town Zoning Ordinance.

Have prime wetlands been inventoried and mapped within the community? Are there regulations in place protecting prime wetlands?

As of the 2000 Master Plan, recommendations to perform prime wetland mapping and the submittal of prime wetlands designations with the State of New Hampshire were made. There is a Wetland's Conservation Ordinance which has undergone a number of revisions since the 1990 Master Plan. This ordinance reflects current wetlands standards and provides adequate protection from a regulatory standpoint. In 2006, the

Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

Bedford voters rejected a new prime wetlands ordinance that was the result of a two-year study prepared by VHB, Inc. and the Bedford Conservation Commission.

Does the community have an Aquifer Protection Ordinance?

According to the 2000 Master Plan, Bedford has made recommendations to adopt an aquifer protection ordinance for high yield aquifers as defined by the U.S. Geological Survey's groundwater report for the region. However, no specific actions have been taken according to the 2000 Master Plan.

What mapping source is the basis of the district?

N/A

Has the community developed a Wellhead Protection Program and local regulations?

No There is no need to adopt a Wellhead Protection ordinance or regulations, since the town does not have municipal water and there is only 1 other community well, which is owned by Pennichuck and is surrounded by single-family homes.

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Does the community have land use regulations in place to protect surface water resources?

Yes.

Does the community have Shoreland or Riparian Buffer regulation in place?

Yes. Article 45-9-15 of the Zoning Ordinance references the Merrimack River Shoreland Protection Performance Standards which are pursuant to RSA 483-B. This section establishes standards for the subdivision, use, and development of shorelands within two hundred and fifty feet (250) of public waters, herein identified as the Merrimack River, for the purpose of minimizing degradation of shorelands and assuring retention of the benefits provided by such shorelands. These benefits include: Prevention or mitigation of water pollution; Protection of important fish, birds, and wildlife habitat; Reduction or elimination of flooding and accelerated erosion; Protection of wetlands; Maintenance of water quantity and related stream flows; Protection of shoreland cover as a means of maintaining water quality; and the conservation of natural scenic and recreational assets of the Town of Bedford and the State of New Hampshire.

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Does the community's land use regulations utilize LID¹ performance standards and/or encourage use of environmentally-friendly techniques and materials, such as porous pavement?

No.

Has the community adopted the recommendations found in the Land Conservation Plan for New Hampshire's Coastal Watersheds, the Wildlife Action Plan, or the Natural Services Network? If not, would the community like more information about these plans?

Have not adopted these plans.

Has the community adopted regulations to protect wildlife or wildlife habitat?

Yes. The Wetlands Conservation ordinance lists as one of its purposes: To protect fish and wildlife habitat, maintain ecological balances, and enhance ecological values such as those cited in RSA 483A-1B. In addition, the Planning Board obtains "non-disturbance" easement along all major stream corridors for wildlife migration.

What actions, if any, has the community taken in cooperation with neighboring communities to protect wildlife or wildlife habitat at the regional scale?

The Town documents reference conservation efforts associated with the Town, but not at a regional level.

Specific Assessment Questions: Open Space Preservation

Does the community have an Open Space Plan? When was the plan last updated?

Bedford has made significant progress in efforts to preserve open space and important natural habitat over the past decade. Also, Section 45-6-7 of the Town Zoning Ordinance states that where open space is deemed important to the Town of Bedford in accordance with the Town's officially adopted open space plans and policies, the

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¹ LID is "low-impact development", a series or network of stormwater techniques and performance standards that utilize the natural environment to reduce the impacts of development.

Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

Planning Board may allow the CRD to occur on two tracts. Although the Ordinance references an Open Space Plan for Bedford, no such plan is available at this point. Bedford has preserved 10% of its total acreage (approx. 220 acres) as permanent open space, through outright purchase, conservation easements, and cluster developments.

Does the community's Master Plan consider the protection and preservation of wildlife habitats?

Yes. It states that the town would like to establish linkages between existing and future open space, conservation, and recreational areas in the Town in order to encourage the movement of people and/or wildlife between these areas.

Do the community's zoning districts require a minimum amount of open space in each development?

According to the Zoning Ordinance, in a CRD, the development shall retain 25% of the minimum open space as required pursuant to article 45-6-3.

Do the community's land use regulations require developers to connect open spaces to existing greenways and other open space destinations within the community?

According to the 2000 Master Plan, it is the intention of the town to encourage connectivity regarding existing and potentially existing open spaces in Town. To address the issue of isolated open space, the town would like to establish a network of pathways and natural corridors, such as stream channels, that will link these open spaces and facilitate the movement of pedestrians and wildlife between them.

Do the community's land use regulations allow/require/or promote conservation subdivisions? Are conservation subdivisions mandatory in any zoning district within the community? If so, what is the acreage requirement? Is a density bonus offered?
No.

Does the community's land use regulations require new development to consider existing natural landscape features in the design of the site?
Yes.

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Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

What funding mechanisms has the community approved to acquire open space? (For example, bonds, the dedication of current use penalty taxes, capital reserve fund or conservation fund for land protection and acquisition, other mechanisms)?

According to the 2000 Master Plan, it is not practical to assume that Bedford will be able to purchase all of the land identified as priority open space areas. Therefore, the Town will need to employ numerous strategies for its land conservation efforts, and will also need to rely on assistance from other conservation groups as well as the development community. Bedford dedicates 70% of its current use penalties to a fund for purchase of open space. The Town also appropriates \$100,000/year in the Town Council fund for land purchase. Bedford recently paid off a bond of \$2.3 million that was used to purchase the Joppa Hill Farm for open space.

If your community dedicates current use penalties for land protection and acquisition, what is the percentage?

70% for conservation.

Does your community have an open space committee and/or an active local land trust?

Bedford has an active private land trust, called the Bedford Land Trust.

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Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

Theme C: Downtown/Village Centers and Community Vitality *Vital, diverse, safe, and participatory communities with rural character, vibrant community centers, and a wide range of cultural and recreational resources*

C-1 Downtowns and Village Centers

Goals

- Target and support new development and redevelopment of existing downtowns and village centers, reusing built infrastructure, and rehabilitating buildings of historic value.
- Promote walkable downtowns and villages consistent with historic patterns within the community and region.
- Maintain small community New England “feel” with vibrant community centers and main streets, and historic preservation of buildings and landscape.

Specific Assessment Questions:

Does your community have an established traditional compact center or village area? If so, how many are there and what are they commonly named?

According to the 2000 Master Plan, Bedford is in the process of planning a Town Center or “People place” to promote community connectivity and socialization of towns’ people. The proposed Town Center is to be located on both sides of Route 101.

Does your community’s zoning support these areas?

Yes. Ordinance amendments adopted in 2005 created specific dimensional standards and new uses for the so-called Village Center.

Does your community have in place a Village Master Plan or Village Plan Alternative Ordinance?

No. However there is a section in the master plan which describes Bedford’s vision of their future village center “People place” which upon implementation would most likely require such an ordinance.

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Does your community have a policy to locate new public buildings near the community center?

No.

Are there public places that encourage community gathering such as parks, central plains/greens, or community centers?

Yes. Town purchased the "Benedictine Land" on Wallace Road, which provide a large central green. The Town purchased the Joppa Hill Farm and leases back the farm buildings for an educational farm. There are also large open mowed fields for gathering and two multi-purpose recreational fields there. The town purchased land for a "Village Common" on Rt. 101/Bell Rd.

Does your community have an infill development policy² or ordinance in place?

Nothing regarding infill is present in Town documents.

Are residential uses and mixed uses encouraged or allowed within the central village or traditional downtowns area?

Elderly residential allowed in commercial zone in "village center" area.

Does your community have a sign ordinance? What are its dimensional/ and other key provisions?

Article 45-11-1 of Bedford Zoning Ordinance states that no advertising sign shall be located less than 50 feet from any side or rear property line nor less than 10 feet from the edge of any street right-of way. No freestanding advertising sign shall be located less than thirty feet from any side or rear property line nor less than 10 feet from the edge of any street right-of way. In all districts, directional signs which do not exceed 4 square feet and bear no advertising or site identifying information may be approved by the Planning Director. Portable signs shall not be allowed without proper exceptions. Permanent off premises signs shall not be allowed in any district. The provisions for the signage ordinance in town are extensive.

² Infill development is defined by EPA as "a strategy for accommodating growth and preventing sprawl through greater density and efficiency in land use development." Examples include rear lot development, redevelopment in existing developed areas, etc.

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Has your community designated scenic roads? If so, how many and what are they named?

Section 107 of the Town Land development Control regulation states that any development along or off of any Scenic Road, duly designated under RSA 231:157, shall be undertaken with the full compliance of the RSA. Required public hearings under this provision may take place simultaneously with the required public hearing for site plan or subdivision approval. However, no existing list of such roads in Bedford was found while researching Town Documents. Currently, there are no designated scenic roads.

Does your community have design guidelines for new commercial and residential development? If so, are these guidelines advisory or mandatory?

Architectural Guidelines were adopted by Planning Board in 2005. Guidelines are advisory; however, Land Development Control Regulations require colored elevations of every non-residential building to be provided to Planning Board as part of application. Planning Board reviews building elevations and comments on height, mass, color, and materials.

Is the maximum size and scale of new development as permitted in the community's zoning ordinance an appropriate scale for the community?

Yes. Size and scale vary depending on the zoning district. Performance zone allows 8-story height and "big box" stores. Rt. 101 allows 4 story height and 40,000 sq. ft. footprint. Village center allows 35-foot height and 20,000 sq. ft. footprint.

Does your community's ordinance require the installation of street trees and landscaping for new and enlarged developments, both along existing roads and on roads to be constructed?

Article 320 of the Land Development Control Regulations states that developments shall follow sound planning principles that lead to a project that: adheres to the best design standards; is integrated with the communities aesthetics; enhances circulation in the community; will not overwhelm the subject site; and provide adequate and appropriate landscaping. Section 322.1.8, states that a landscaping and lighting plan must be submitted for parking spaces. The Landscaping plan shall note the location, type, and size of proposed plantings. All plantings shall also be native to the area. Also, Article 45-9-8 prescribes full landscape requirements, including street trees.

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Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

Does your community's ordinance encourage the preservation of existing trees within the right-of-way of existing and proposed roadways?

No.

Does your community's ordinances preserve and enhance stone walls, both along the rights-of-way of roadways and across the landscape? If so, what ordinances are used to accomplish this?

The Bedford Road Construction Standards require preservation or movement and reconstruction of stone walls that are along road rights-of-way.

C-2 Vibrant Communities

Goals

- Support and encourage safe and diverse communities with a wide range of cultural and recreational resources.
- Foster an atmosphere wherein community members are actively involved and participate in civic life in their communities.

Specific Assessment Questions:

Are the citizens within your community active in community planning and growth initiatives?

It depends on the issue. Generally, citizens are not very involved in master plan sessions.

To what extent are community residents and business owners aware of your community's Master Plan? ***Good attendance at charettes and other master plan committee meetings and public hearings.***

How does your community encourage public involvement and recruit new board members?

New board members are recruited through newspaper advertisements and interviews by the Town Council.

Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

Theme D: Local Economy

Strengthened economic, business, and agricultural development that provides local employment and livable wages

D-1 Economic Vitality and Business Development

Goals

- Support sustainable and balanced economic growth and tax base.
- Support broad-based business development that provides local employment and livable wages.

Specific Assessment Questions:

Does your community have an economic development plan?

No.

Does your community participate in the Main Street program?

No.

Where does your Master Plan anticipate or specify new nonresidential development to take place?

Nonresidential development is zoned for the Rt. 3 performance zone and along Rt. 101 in the commercial zones.

Where is most of your community's new commercial or industrial growth occurring?

The vast majority of commercial and industrial development that has occurred in Bedford since 1990 has been attracted to the Route 3 Corridor due to the availability of municipal water and sewer, as well as quick access to the regional transportation network.

Is residential development permitted in retail or commercial areas?

According to chapter 4 of the Town Master Plan the existing zones in Bedford seem to separate Residential from Commercial and retail. However, according to Appendix 45-

Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

A of the Zoning Ordinance, there are some elderly housing that exists in the commercial, office, and industrial zones in town. Regular multi-family housing was removed from the Performance Zone after more than 500 units were constructed.

Does the community provide tax incentives for businesses to locate in the community center or other priority areas, e.g. RSA 79E tax relief for downtown improvements?

No. There has never been a need to provide tax incentives in Bedford. Between 1990-2000, there was 1 million square feet of new commercial/industrial construction. Between 2000-2005, there was another 1.2 million sq. ft. of commercial/industrial construction.

Does the community provide regulatory relief for businesses that locate in the community center?

No.

Has the community identified anchors (such as a post office or municipal building) which could be used to spur economic activity within the community center?

No need to spur economic activity.

D-2 Agriculture and Rural Working Landscapes

Goals

- Strengthen local agriculture and forestry by supporting related infrastructure and economic systems.

Specific Assessment Questions:

What strategies for protecting farmland are in your Master Plan?

The recommendations set forth in the 2000 Master Plan ask for the development of a Town Open Space Plan which would focus on identifying and implementing management strategies for the protection of important farmland, greenbelt corridors, and natural features/properties.

How does the community's Master Plan and zoning ordinance define agriculture?

Town of Bedford, New Hampshire

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| <p><i>The Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance do not define agriculture.</i></p> |
| <p>Does the zoning ordinance protect lands appropriate for agriculture and forestry with a substantial minimum lot size that discourages single-family tract housing and preserves large sites for forestry or agricultural uses? <i>No.</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| <p>Does the community map the location of farms and prime agricultural soils? <i>The existing Town Master Plan delineates where agricultural areas exist in the Town, however the mapping of prime soils is not included. There is no need for a prime agricultural soils map, because these maps are already available in the “Soils Survey of Hillsborough County, Eastern Part”, which is available in the Bedford Planning Dept.</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> |
| <p>Do the ordinances require HISS³ mapping or county soils where on-site septic systems are required? <i>Yes. Section 315 of Bedford Lands Development Control Regulations states that HISS mapping shall be performed by a certified soil scientist and shall be completed if the site will not be served by on site sewer and water facilities.</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| <p>Does your community have an Agricultural Inventory? <i>No.</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> |
| <p>Do your community’s ordinances require the mapping of prime soils for agricultural in development proposals? <i>No.</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> |
| <p>Does your community have any districts that are restricted for agricultural uses only? <i>No. However, 80% of Bedford’s land is zoned “Residential & Agricultural”, which allows farming by right.</i></p> |

³ HISS stands for high intensity soils mapping, a site-specific requirements for soils analysis.

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Does your community have an agriculture commission?

No.

Does your community reference the right-to-farm law in its zoning ordinance?

No. However, 80% of Bedford's land is zoned "Residential & Agricultural", which allows farming by right.

Deleted: _____

Other possible questions to ask the audience during the presentation of results—

How much do you know about CTAP? Would you like to know more?

Bedford has appointed CTAP representatives which keep the town informed of funding opportunities and possible projects.

What planning tools would be helpful to your community?

\$50,000 for a detailed New Boston Road Corridor Study in cooperation with the Town of New Boston.

What did you think of this survey, and how do you think the town could use this information?

It has been helpful as a way of taking a second look at our ordinances and regulations.