

2018

City of Franklin Master Plan



Adopted by:
Franklin Planning Board
3/28/2018

Prologue

The requirement for a community having a Master Plan is spelled out in State Statutes. RSA 674:2, outlines that the purpose of plan is to *“to set down as clearly and practically as possible the best and most appropriate future development of the area under the jurisdiction of the planning board, to aid the board in designing ordinances that result in preserving and enhancing the unique quality of life and culture of New Hampshire, and to guide the board in the performance of its other duties in a manner that achieves the principles of smart growth, sound planning, and wise resource protection”*.

A Master Plan needs to satisfy that purpose. But, it is just as important to recognize that the Master Plan:

- ❑ Is not a Capital Improvement Plan that details spending for future years;
- ❑ Is not a list of all of solutions and answers for the land use and development problems and questions for the whole City; and,
- ❑ Does not assign deadlines for when certain tasks must be accomplished

This Plan, which is adopted by the Planning Board, creates a platform for discussions that will help shape the future of land use development and change in the City for many years to come. The most important thing is how the Planning Board and the City respond to these future discussions.

As mentioned elsewhere in this Plan, some of the discussion points are outside of the Board’s jurisdiction. It is so easy for one issue to overlap with other issues. Few community goals or projects function in a vacuum; there are always many moving parts. Team work is an important part of how the City of Franklin functions. We hope that everyone who reads this Plan will become an active member of the Team!

Chapter I: Introduction

The Franklin Planning Board last adopted a Master Plan in December of 2005. The plan recognized that the vitality of the City, like many other New England communities, was largely defined by the mills that employed workers who lived and shopped in a walkable downtown center. When the mills closed, the economic vitality of the City largely dissipated, and Central Street was known more for vacant storefronts. In mid-2008, the City was buffeted by the general economic recession that impacted the nation and the recovery has been slow.

The work on this update to the 2005 Master Plan started in 2013. In 2014 a very productive public meeting was held on the Vision Statement, one of the two required sections of a Master Plan (the other being a Land Use section). The Planning Board adopted a draft Vision Statement that spring. A second public meeting was held in June of 2014 to discuss the broad topic of Public Infrastructure, Utilities, and Capital Projects. A third public meeting was held on October 11, 2017 to discuss the complete draft of the plan. This was also a productive meeting and many excellent comments were generated. Following that meeting the draft underwent some editing and some re-organization work to better highlight certain goals or projects. This final draft was presented to the Planning Board in early 2018 for adoption.


Concurrent with the Planning Board's 2014 work on a revised Master Plan, several outside projects (discussed in the Accomplishments section) were initiated. These projects have helped shape in a positive fashion the Master Plan update. Most importantly, they have been a tremendous starting point for the critical redevelopment efforts needed to revive the vibrancy that once permeated the City. These projects also help to create the public / private partnerships that are so important to economic development and general revitalization efforts.

Like other mill communities, Franklin faces many challenges. Fulfilling the goals of revitalizing the downtown, attracting new businesses and industries, and meeting the needs of our residents both young and old, will take a lot of work. Positive and transformative changes come in small doses but as incremental steps are taken, each new step gets a bit easier as momentum builds. There is a strong feeling that we are starting to build a new "Franklin for a Lifetime." The closing of the mills created a feeling of pessimism for the future of the City. The efforts of the past 2-3 years have created new optimism and accomplished positive forward movement, and that makes all the difference.

The closing of the mills impacted the City but it did not alter the true character of the City and its residents. The City of Franklin is lucky to have a very strong sense of community pride among its residents. There is a lot of heart in this City; people care deeply about the City and their neighbors. This level of commitment makes planning for the future that much easier.

Setting goals and planning for the future is always a work in progress. Hopefully, as you review our accomplishments, our vision statements, and our ideas for land use and economic development options, the framework for the future will become clear. Thank you for your interest in this great City.

Chapter II: Franklin at a Glance - 2017

	Population Statistics	
	Year	Population
	1990	8,340
	2000	8,414
	2010	8,477
	2015	8,454
	2020	8,408
	2025	8,432
27.7 square miles 28 miles to Concord & 38 miles to Manchester		Sources: 1990-2010, U.S. Census; 2015 to 2025 Estimates, NH Office of Strategic Initiatives

Schools	Paul Smith Elementary School	Franklin Middle	Franklin High School
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Assessed Value for Tax Rate Setting		Building Permits (New Single Family Homes)	
2011	\$564,121,750	2011	8
2012	\$565,034,850	2012	11
2013	\$514,177,200	2013	16
2014	\$518,253,005	2014	18
2015	\$523,767,711	2015	22
2016	\$537,482,395	2016	23

Key Community Assets	
Odell Park, Memorial Street	Webster Lake
Daniel Park, Liberty Avenue	Winnepesaukee River Trail (starting at Trestle View Park)
River Edge Park, East Bow Street	Great Gain Forest and Veterans Memorial Ski Area, Flag Hole Road
Trestle View Park, Central Street	Franklin Fall Historic District, downtown Central Street
Forest Hill Park, Forest Avenue	Northern Rail Trail, West Franklin
Stone Park, Stone Avenue	Franklin Falls Dam Recreation facilities, New Hampton Road

Major Employers and Number of Employees	
Webster Valve & Foundry: 340	SAU 18: 240
LRGHealthcare: 256	City of Franklin: 120
Franklin Savings Bank: 105	PCC Structural: 102
Hannaford Brothers: 98	Vitex Extrusion: 94
Source: Economic and Labor Market information Bureau; NH Employment Security (Summer, 2015)	

Population and Economic Conditions

	City of Franklin	Merrimack County	State of New Hampshire
Population:	8,450 ¹	147,994 ¹	1,330,608 ¹
Unemployment:	3.2% ³	2.2% ³	2.5% ³
Poverty Rate:	21.1% ²	8.3% ²	8.2% ²
Per Capita Income	\$22,318 ¹	\$32,020 ¹	\$34,362 ¹
Other: Median Household Income	\$43,237 ¹	\$65,983 ¹	\$66,779 ¹
Other: Persons Over Age 65	15.1% ¹	13.7% ¹	13.5% ¹
Other: Bachelor's Degree or Higher	18.1% ¹	34.4% ¹	34.9% ¹
1 – US Census Quickfacts (2015 data; 2010 for Persons over age 65) 2 – US Census Quickfacts (2015 data); rate of persons below poverty level 3 – Data reported as of 1/26/17 from NH Employment Security Office			

The overall lesson from the data is that the City has a poorer, slightly older population, and a smaller percentage of college trained persons (by approximately 48% when compared to the County and the State). This data supports the position that the creation of new economic opportunities through the redevelopment of the downtown and mill district area, and the creation of new job opportunities, will be a substantial benefit to the residents of the City.

Key Development Activity since 2005

- ❖ The renovation of the former Rowell School into the Bessie Rowell Community Center in 2013.
- ❖ Construction of a new foundry plant in 2013 at Webster Valve, Watts Water Technologies.
- ❖ Construction of a new CVS Drugstore on Central Street in 2009.
- ❖ Construction of a new machine shop in the Industrial Park in 2006.
- ❖ Construction of a new asphalt plant on Punch Brook Road in 2015.
- ❖ Redevelopment of the Riverbend Mill for residential apartments in 2017.
- ❖ Revitalization of the Franklin River Heights Apartment complex on South Main Street in 2012.
- ❖ The Clean-up of the Brownfield hazardous waste sites (using EPA and NH DES funding) at the City-owned properties at 601 South Main Street and 187 Chance Pond Road.
- ❖ The initiation of redevelopment activity at various properties in the core downtown area has been supported by grants and loans from the Community Development Finance Authority and the NH Business Finance Authority. This work was also aided by the Downtown Business Coordinator who is funded by grants from the US Department of Agriculture, Rural Development program.

Chapter III: Accomplishments since the 2005 Master Plan

Since the 2005 Master Plan was adopted, progress has been made towards addressing many of its goals. Of critical importance has been the work over the past 3 years. This is when the recognition of common interests and goals helped create a cooperative effort the likes of which

the City has not seen for many years. The participants in this public/private partnership are individuals with ideas and dreams of all sizes, property and business owners, investors, elected officials, City staff, civic organizations, and many others. All parties began to communicate better, plan smarter, and work towards the common goals of revitalizing the downtown and the City as a whole.

All of the successes so far have come about with a combination of hard work, team work, creative thinking, and a bit of good luck. Grants and other funding opportunities have helped move things forward. With our budget limitations, the ability to get so much accomplished since the adoption of the 2005 Master Plan is a testament to a strong community spirit and the stick-to-itiveness on the part of many individuals.

Below are summaries of the key items that have been carried out, both in the past 3 years, and since the 2005 Master Plan.

The initiatives over the last 3 years of special interest include the following:

- ❖ The City entered into a collaborative project with the UNH Cooperative Extension Service and the PlanNH organization on a project that evolved into “*Franklin for a Lifetime.*” Months of work went into the planning for a 3-day event in April of 2015. This project was funded and supported by the Citizens Institute for Rural Design, and focused on actions to help create a healthy and vibrant community. While the early stages of the planning centered on initiatives for the aging populations that Franklin and all NH communities are dealing with, it expanded to the broader themes of economic development, housing, & planning and design. This was a very successful event with overflow attendance every day. All of the local, state, and national speakers addressed ideas and opportunities which the City could integrate into the process of revitalizing the downtown and the City as a whole.
- ❖ Significant interest and activities related to the redevelopment of downtown Franklin began to percolate. Two key downtown buildings were purchased and plans laid for them to become cornerstones for a transformation of the City. Out of these efforts, a new non-profit, PermaCityLife, was established.
- ❖ The Concord Area Trust for Community Housing (CATCH) initiated work on the rehabilitation of the Riverbend Mill on Memorial Street, right behind City Hall, into 45 units of workforce and affordable housing. This project helped light a fire under other redevelopment initiatives adding a bright new face to the character of downtown. Construction began in the fall of 2016 and opened for occupancy in early 2018.
- ❖ The City’s participation in the “*Franklin for a Lifetime*” program led to the submission of a grant application to the USDA’s Rural Development Office for funding assistance in the overall revitalization efforts. The grant was approved and the City hired a Downtown Business Coordinator who has successfully brought in almost one million dollars of grants, loans, and tax credits which will all contribute to improving the downtown. Improvement projects (façade and building upgrades and increased energy efficiencies for example) have already been started. The City was awarded a second Rural

Development grant allowing the work of the Downtown Coordinator could continue into 2018.

- ❖ To help build more energy and excitement for what is taking place in the City, a “*Franklin for a Lifetime: One Year Later*” program was held in June of 2016. There was a mix of returning 2015 participants and many new people. Everyone was eager to see the progress made in one short year and to learn more about new ideas that would be “coming soon.”
- ❖ Planning, design, and engineering work is well underway for a project that truly meets the definition of “out of the box” thinking; the establishment of the “Mill City Park at Franklin Falls.” This is a mixed-use project with a whitewater kayaking/rafting park, community gardens, walking trails, an eco-village (off the grid seasonal camping), and mountain bike pump track. There are on-going discussions being held with several state agencies (environmental, tourism, economic development) all of whom have shown significant interest in this project. Fund raising for initial planning and design work for this exciting project has already been initiated and additional grants are being sought.
- ❖ A cooperative working relationship between PermaCityLife and Colby Sawyer College (in nearby New London, NH) has been established. Different classes have focused on issues (for example, parking design, environmental and sustainability factors, and marketing for the CATCH and whitewater park projects) that positively impacted the downtown revitalization efforts. Similar “experiential learning” relationships with The Tilton School have also been established.
- ❖ New businesses have been established in the downtown; The Franklin Studio Coffee Shop; Outdoor New England (kayaking and more); the Central Sweets candy and ice cream shop; Granite State Hedgehog, and the Take Root Co-Working Center are a few examples that can help draw people back into the downtown.

Other accomplishments since the 2005 Plan include:

- ❖ Grant funding from NH Department of Environmental Services for the preparation of the Webster / Highland Lakes Watershed Management Plan completed in 2006; for storm water and drainage upgrades to the parking area at Griffin Beach completed in 2010; and for wetland replication and storm water management improvements on Lake Shore Drive construction work occurring in 2012-2013.
- ❖ A cooperative agreement between the Planning, Assessing, and Municipal Services Departments to incorporate GIS mapping technologies into an upgrade of the tax maps and new utility maps; this 3-year project was completed in 2014.
- ❖ Participation by the Planning Board and the City in a 2006 PlanNH Design Charrette for revitalization efforts in the Franklin Falls Historic District.
- ❖ An amendment to the Zoning Ordinance by the Planning Board and City staff to establish a Downtown Revitalization Overlay District for new development options and flexibility for the core downtown area; this was adopted by the City Council in 2007.
- ❖ Tax Increment Financing Plans for the downtown (2005 and 2017) and the Business and Industrial Park (2013) all approved by the City Council.

- ❖ Establishment of an Economic Revitalization Zone (RSA 162-N) in the Industrial Park area on South Main Street. This zone created the opportunity for savings through Business Tax Credits when jobs are added by a firm.
- ❖ Development of the 2013 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies plan prepared with the cooperation of the Lakes Region Planning Commission.
- ❖ Secured a variety of state and federal grants in which all City departments put substantial effort to construct, upgrade, or otherwise improve City facilities or functions.
- ❖ Approved various amendments to the Franklin Zoning Ordinance by the Planning Board and the City Council that included greater flexibility for alterations to non-conforming structures, and clarification to eliminate confusion and to simplify permitting.
- ❖ Adoption of revised Subdivision and Site Plan Regulations that help protect the interests of the City and the abutters to a project.
- ❖ Receipt of funding from the U.S. Rural Development Program and the State’s Revolving Loan Fund for the construction of a new water quality treatment facility, the installation of new water utility lines in West Franklin, and the installation of new water tanks in West Franklin.
- ❖ Approval by the City Council for a new Solid Waste ordinance and the implementation of an automated collection service for recycling and waste products.
- ❖ Renovations to the former Bessie Rowell School to create a multi-functional community center that now houses the Franklin Recreation Departments, as well as several community based organizations.
- ❖ Multiple improvements to Odell Park; construction of a gazebo and a walking path around the perimeter of the park; installation of new playground equipment; removal of an outdated concession stand and construction of a new facility and general upgrades to help make the park more user friendly. Improvements and upgrades to the other City parks were also carried out.
- ❖ Continuing involvement by the City in programs and initiatives put forward by the Lakes Region Planning Commission helped facilitate the update to the 2013 Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- ❖ Receipt of a FEMA grant through the State Department of Safety for the replacement of the Haynes Brook culvert. This culvert runs under Central Street just west of the Tilton town line. Because Central Street is a critical transportation link in the Lakes Region, the replacement of an undersized, aging and deteriorating culvert was seen as an important transportation and hazard mitigation project. The project went out to bid in the fall of 2017, and awarded in early 2018.

Chapter IV: The Vision

As mentioned in the Introduction, the Master Plan statute RSA 674:2 outlines two required sections; a Vision section and a Land Use section. No matter how many other sections are or are not added to a community’s Plan, the Vision section is critical since it contains both the “statements which articulate the desires of the citizens” and the “guiding principles and

priorities to implement that vision.” The Vision chapter was referred to in the 2005 Master Plan as the “Big Picture”; in 2017 it continues to be an important picture for the City of Franklin.

Since the Vision statements reflect where the City is today and describe how to work in a positive fashion towards the future, it is appropriate to recognize two key discussion points raised at the April 9, 2014 public meeting for the Vision chapter.

First, as Franklin looks to the future, one potential bright spot on the funding horizon is the recent sale of the Stevens Mill to Chinburg Properties. This purchase will significantly enhance the downtown area by completely renovating the mill to provide mixed-use development (business and potential market-rate housing opportunities.) A second possible source of funding is the proposed Northern Pass project. Northern Pass is a regional electric transmission project intended to bring hydroelectric power from Canada through New Hampshire to the rest of New England and the northeast. Franklin has been designated as the location of a sizable conversion station which would result in significant new tax revenue for the City. These projected revenues, in the annual range of 3.2-7 million dollars, could allow the City to better invest in itself: roads, public buildings, and community facilities could be improved; new efforts for economic development and enhancement could be undertaken and additional funding for the school system could be provided. With this new tax revenue, the City could capture the vibrancy that was present during the boom days when the mills were running at full capacity, the downtown was alive, and the City was a shopping and cultural center for all of the smaller communities in the region.

It was also noted at the Vision meeting that the Northern Pass Project and its potential revenues would not necessarily act to set or modify the goals and priorities for the Planning Board and the City. With or without the revenues, the goals and priorities exist. New revenues would significantly assist in reaching these goals. The Summary of Accomplishments chapter demonstrates that being creative with limited resources is something that the City has done well for many years. Franklin is a community which has dedicated groups of residents who want the City to grow and thrive. It is the hope that this Master Plan, these Vision statements, and the efforts of many will help create that future.

It is hard to accurately define the potential benefits and impacts which Northern Pass or other industrial development may have on the City. As evidenced by the population statistics in the “Franklin at a Glance” chapter, the City has not seen any real upwards growth trends in the last few decades. The new tax revenues resulting from new city investments may well create the framework for changes to our census numbers. The potential for change is significant as land prices in communities to our south continue to rise and as individuals and families look for a good value in their housing. As the population grows, more residents look for different businesses, services, and restaurants to meet their needs. As more businesses and industries are incentivized to move to the City, new jobs will be created for these residents.

Second, as was mentioned several times throughout the meeting an important issue for the City is the need for a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP is prepared by city staff and a committee on a regular basis, usually every 2-3 years. The CIP details priorities: equipment to be replaced; roads to be repaired; buildings to be improved and upgraded; and other programs or projects that depend on higher levels of appropriations through the annual budget process. Adequate and appropriate funding is the key to a successful CIP program, without it the community falls behind in meeting its CIP goals.

With these new initiatives made possible by the potential of new tax revenue, the population of the City of Franklin may well grow at rates not seen for many years. New growth brings a mix of opportunities and challenges. The opportunities come in welcoming all of our new residents, asking them to become fully engaged and active members in the life of the community, and building upon the solid foundation of the City already in place. The challenges come in serving and meeting the needs of the residents, the business community, and all visitors.

Vision Statements are like the distillation process for maple syrup. The statements below are boiled down from the thoughts and recommendations from the 4/9/14 meeting, the results from the 2012 survey undertaken by the Franklin Business and Industrial Development Corporation, the still relevant statements from the 2005 Master Plan, and the issues that the elected leaders, appointed Board members and City staff reflect on most every day. These statements also reflect the “sense of the community” from the *Franklin for a Lifetime* program in the spring of 2015, and its “One Year Later” program in 2016. Not surprisingly, the comments and goals generated through these 2015 and 2016 programs echoed the ideas and concepts put forward at the 2014 public meeting.

- ✓ The Central downtown area of the City is, and will continue to be, a critical component of the economic engine for the City. The City should, in a variety of ways, encourage the retention and expansion of downtown businesses, and work to make the downtown a destination for a mixture of commercial, residential, and recreation-based activities.
- ✓ Work must proactively encourage the utilization of the best ideas from the different planning Charrettes (1996, 2000, 2006, and 2013) to build a revitalized and vibrant downtown. A strong public/private partnership is necessary, and the City can use that cooperative effort with downtown property owners, business managers, and interested developers to help create a new, fresh, and inviting look to the core downtown area. The impressions that residents and visitors have of downtown Franklin impacts how they look at the overall City.
- ✓ The Planning Board and City staff should continue to evaluate ways to encourage commercial development and expansion of the industrial zone property to grow the tax base for the City. This could involve modifications to existing land use ordinances.
- ✓ The growth and capacity of the Industrial and Business Park could be enhanced by a more direct connection to Route 93. This link has been part of the Transportation Plans created by the Lakes Region Planning Commission. Increased emphasis by state and federal agencies on economic development can help move this project forward.

- ✓ Work toward preserving and protecting the historical, architectural, and cultural assets in the downtown, and throughout the City must continue. We must take into account all life and fire safety codes, a balance between preservation and the utilization of older buildings for modern uses and activities.
- ✓ A funded Capital Improvement Plan for the City would encourage the establishment of new infrastructure, utilities, and public buildings or facilities, including recreation areas.
- ✓ Infrastructure improvements should address creating access to high-speed internet in order to attract a broader range of businesses.
- ✓ To spend funds effectively, support should be provided to the efforts of the Municipal Services Department and other applicable departments to utilize capital efficiency planning for projects relating to streets, water, and sewer utilities. The utilization of regional approaches for some departments or issues can be used as a mechanism to better use budget funds.
- ✓ The character and quality of existing neighborhoods need to be protected. Zoning provisions that address uses and densities should be reviewed to provide that protection. At the same time, ordinances that might allow for the creation of new neighborhoods, or encourage appropriate in-fill redevelopment activities, should be analyzed and used where appropriate.
- ✓ Efforts to protect Webster Lake must continue. Measures such as improved stormwater management and water quality enhancement efforts need to be considered.
- ✓ The City must also protect its many valuable natural resources and recreational assets such as the rivers, Odell Trestle View Park, the Veteran’s Memorial Ski Area, Webster Lake and its public beaches, the Great Gains Forest hiking and biking trails, along with the other recreational trails throughout the city, and the disc golf course at the Army Corps Franklin Fall Dam property. All provide tremendous value and benefit to our citizens. Through a cooperative effort, these resources can be better protected, enhanced, and promoted.
- ✓ A vibrant community must be created for multigenerational individuals to address all of the critical economic, social, cultural, educational, recreational, and natural resource-based needs throughout a lifetime. This work will need to occur on multiple levels including the arts, housing options, transportation, community design, a revitalized downtown that serves all age groups, and broader support services that help meets the needs of seniors.
- ✓ The City must recognize that a vibrant educational system can contribute to growth in the residential, business, and industrial sectors of the City.
- ✓ The City should seek out and support initiatives that create “added value” through the utilization of resources in new and creative ways. For example, the Winnepesaukee River that flows through the downtown, and was once a dumping ground for industrial waste, can be transformed into a recreational venue that would be the envy of any community.
- ✓ A review by the City regarding the use of vacant or underutilized City property should be undertaken to determine if, and how, it could help support broader economic growth through a public / private partnership.

Some of these vision statements work independently, but most work in cooperation with one or more areas of interest. The City of Franklin, like every community, is best served through thoughtful planning, cooperative approaches to problem solving, and keeping in mind that the needs, interests, and goals of the citizen must be part of the critical decision making process.

Growth, change, the development of new opportunities, and the re-development of existing buildings and neighborhoods are all part of the shifting land uses that exist in any community. This is especially true for Franklin, a community with deep roots, which played an important role in the historical growth of the region. While some of the Vision Statements go beyond what the Planning Board can impact or control, they are all linked to the character of the City; they deal with the look, the feel, and the impressions which the City creates.

The 2013 Charrette, which laid the foundation of PermaCityLife, talked about three important components of the efforts to revitalize the downtown: Community, Economy, and Ecology. These three principles work together in the downtown and throughout the entire City. As the Planning Board, City government, business owners, entrepreneurs, and dedicated residents work together over the next 5-10 years to revitalize and energize all facets of the community, it will be important to keep these principles in mind since they are part of our history and can help shape our future.

Chapter V: Land Use

The uses of land – where different activities are located and the density of those uses – help to define the character of any community. In the City of Franklin, which has a rich history of industrial buildings adjacent to our 3 rivers and dense housing nearby for the mill workers, growth and development patterns spread out from the center of town. The work of the Planning Board began in the late 1960s, and zoning came to the City in 1971.

Since that time, there have been a number of Master Plans, several “visioning” studies, and a handful of design charrettes. One singular message from all of these documents of the last 20 plus years is the reality that Franklin needs an injection of economic vitality. When industries moved and the mills closed, the heart and soul of the City were significantly impacted. The recovery from these events has taken a long time.

In this Land Use section, the Planning Board (hereinafter, “the Board”) will address some broad issues, along with more individualized needs and goals that can be considered in the next few years. One note about the listing of the “responsible parties”: Franklin is lucky to have a group of City employees and elected officials who cooperate, coordinate, and work together to solve problems efficiently, and who are always offering to help others. We are a community where teamwork helps to move things forward, so the input and ideas from all interested parties is always welcome.

Land Use and Zoning

Background: The Franklin Zoning Ordinance creates the framework for land uses in the City. The Ordinance has been amended multiple times since its adoption. Some amendments increased flexibility, clarified language, or worked to better protect abutting land uses; some came about in response to changes in State Statutes or decisions of the NH Supreme Court. All zoning amendments require a public hearing with the Board, and final approval by the City Council.

There are several important points to keep in mind: The population data cited earlier makes it clear that the population of the City has been relatively stagnant for more than 20 years. Almost certainly, with housing prices rising in communities to our south and new investments in the downtown, the City will see growth in its population figures. Additional investments in the City's school system can help bring in new young families as school ratings make a difference where a family decides to settle. No matter what factors drive up the census figures, the Planning Board should regularly evaluate the Zoning Ordinance to provide for sound growth and protection of the interests of the City and all of its residents.

An outline of the issues, goals, and possible regulatory amendments for the Board to consider includes the following:

- A. To insure the protection and enhancement of residential neighborhoods, the Board must perform regular evaluation of the Zoning Ordinance on issues such as:
 - i. Setbacks for the different zoning districts
 - ii. Lot area or impervious cover requirements (for instance in the lake protection district)
 - iii. The need or desirability of different (single or two-family, multi-family) housing density in different areas of the City
 - iv. Appropriate and timely review of the definition section to make changes such as deleting outdated language, adding new language for uses that were not identified in the past few years while ensuring that modern technologies are properly addressed
- B. Should Northern Pass project tax dollars begin to flow into the City, the Board, through staff time and participation in the Capital Improvement Plan Committee, can help shape the decisions on how these revenues can be used, for example, to improve roads and infrastructure, schools and community facilities, and assist in overall economic revitalization efforts.
- C. The City and Board must be in active coordination with the Municipal Services Department on growth issues that helps maintain the viability of the water and sewer systems. Creating new opportunities for growth of the customer base for these systems

can benefit the City. That growth could occur through the re-purposing of older commercial or mixed-use buildings or in-fill with the development of vacant or under-utilized parcels. The utilization of any city-owned parcels, through a sale to an abutter or as a stand-alone parcel for residential use, could be used to promote this type of infill development.

- D. A timely review of the Wireless Communication Facilities section and the agricultural regulations will insure that they are in compliance with state and federal laws and relevant court cases.
- E. The City and Board should evaluate, with the assistance of the Assessing Department, the residential zoning districts to see if some level of consolidation should occur since there are only minor difference between some districts. It would be best to perform this review concurrent with a cyclical City-wide appraisal.
- F. A review must also be done of the Site Plan and Subdivision Regulations; these were last updated about 10 years ago.
- G. The Board should monitor the development permitted by the Accessory Dwelling Unit amendment triggered by a 2015 State Statute change and understand how this required amendment impacts the City.

Responsible Parties: The items above will be accomplished through the efforts of the following: the Planning Board; the Zoning Board; the City Council and the Capital Improvements Committee; and the MSD and Assessing Departments.

Land Use and Economic / Business Development

Background: As mentioned above, the closing of the mills was an economic blow to the City. Therefore, creating new opportunities for, and encouraging revitalization efforts is an important goal for the Board and the City as a whole. Progress was made with the zoning amendment (approved by the City Council in 2007) to establish a Downtown Revitalization District (DRD) for this area. This DRD overlay has helped lay the groundwork for some new initiatives in the downtown. The Board is proud of the fact that this amendment was selected by the American Planning Association for inclusion in their 2010 Planning Advisory Service's Essential Info Packet that included articles about, and plans or ordinance information from, cities across the country.

The creation of two Tax Increment Financing Plan (TIF) plans (for the downtown and the Industrial Park) was another positive step forward. When the TIF plan and district were created by the City Council, the base line values for the properties in the district were established. Improvements to properties or new construction in the district create added value and higher tax revenues. The incremental new revenues are set aside in a dedicated TIF account to pay for

improvements (for example, parks, public parking spaces, and utilities upgrades) undertaken by the City. With the ongoing revitalization work in the downtown, there is real potential for accumulated TIF funds to be put to good use.

One additional way to approach business development is through the utilization of brownfield sites, which are vacant or under-utilized properties with some level of hazardous contamination. The City has worked cooperatively with the Lakes Region Planning Commission, using EPA grant funds on approximately 6 properties for site assessment or the preparation of cleanup plans. The City has also been able to leverage EPA grants for assessment or cleanup activities at two sites: an old mill that abuts the Winnepesaukee River and Odell Park, and an industrially zoned city property on South Main Street for which the City received a \$200,000 grant for the clean-up of the contaminants.

The end goal of all of the brownfield projects is to assess the problem and work toward clean-up and eventual re-use of the property. This approach is an excellent way to create the public / private partnerships that are so vital to bringing about significant economic redevelopment. These types of projects can be a challenge, but the City will continue its collaborative efforts with LRPC, and its work with private investors, on any brownfield site to find the highest and best uses for their future redevelopment.

The critical topics and goals for the City, the Board, and others to consider include the following:

1. **Public / Private Partnerships:** This type of partnership has proved invaluable in many other New Hampshire communities, and Franklin is developing a great track record already. Two organizations, PermaCityLife and Mill City Park (both of which have been granted non-profit status by the State), are leading the charge, respectively, on downtown business development and the creation of the whitewater park on the Winnepesaukee River. The City and the Franklin Business and Industrial Development Corporation are working cooperatively with both organizations. All of the redevelopment work is being supported by grants from the USDA Rural Development Office to include the funding a downtown business coordinator with 40 years' experience in economic redevelopment activities. Grants and loans have been awarded and there are bi-weekly meetings to review the status of all of the project components. Many people have said that this level of cooperation and City-engagement has not been seen for many years. Maintaining this approach will be of critical importance for all of the partners and the viability of these projects.
2. **TIF Projects:** The 2017 TIF Plan for the downtown can be, as mentioned above, an important tool for incentivizing private redevelopment dollars. The City Council approved the current plan in January of 2017. A TIF Committee has been appointed and ideas for projects will be evaluated and brought forward to the City Council. The use of TIF funds can often go hand-in-hand with municipal bonding, where the TIF revenues pay for the bond. This approach could be part of an important component for the establishment of the public / private partnerships.

3. **Parking:** With the improvements in the downtown that have occurred just in the last year, there is a need to better understand current and future parking needs. A class from Colby Sawyer College (which as noted earlier has established a presence in the City) collected initial data on parking in the downtown. That work can be a starting point for further analysis of parking needs. Parking capacity will be important as the City looks towards the redevelopment of the remaining mill buildings and the creation of the Whitewater Park. The Board can look at ideas such as: shared parking for mixed commercial / residential projects; better storm water management with newer parking concepts, or options for public transportation.
4. **Permitted Use Tables:** Businesses today are evolving into models (cooperative working spaces, pop-up businesses, and mixed use developments) different than what were common 10 or 15 years ago. All of these can help attract younger entrepreneurs. The Board recognizes the need to be flexible and to think out of the box when it comes to defining a list of permitted uses that will benefit the downtown area or the general commercial or industrial zones.
5. **Industrial Development:** Growth in the industrial sector creates jobs, attracts new families to the City, and helps to support all of the local businesses. Two bright spots for industrial activity since the 2005 Master Plan mentioned in the “*Franklin at a Glance*” Chapter (the foundry expansion by Watts Water Technology (Webster Valve) and the construction of an asphalt plant on Punch Brook Road) are both important reminders that industries like these are still alive and well and willing to put money into Franklin facilities. Creative ways to encourage new growth could possibly be achieved through modifications to the Zoning Ordinance or land use regulations, or the utilization of the Industrial Park TIF Plan. Additionally, the City should advocate for the inclusion of the Route 3 connector to Interstate 93 into the State 10-year Transportation Plan, as this would facilitate increased industrial growth.
6. **Codes and Economic Redevelopment:** Compliance with Fire and Life safety Codes is of critical importance for any redevelopment project, especially one that takes place in the urbanized portion of any community. That being said, it is recognized that these codes are complex, and sometimes there are multiple pathways to achieve the necessary goal of protecting public life, health and welfare. PermaCityLife plans to engage a design professional to create a generic plan to re-purpose the upper stories of downtown properties. This plan can be used by the City to evaluate any proposals for a specific building. The end goal must always be overall life and fire safety protections.
7. **Regional Economic Development Activities:** The City will continue its cooperation with the Lakes Region Planning Commission on a variety of initiatives, including brownfield projects, and the preparation of an update to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies plan.

Responsible Parties: The items above will be accomplished through the efforts of the following: City Council and Staff; Planning Board; Fire Department; Franklin Business and Industrial Development Corporation; and the TIF Advisory Committee.

Land Use and Historic Preservation

Background: The City Council established a Heritage Commission in 2005, and in 2006 it was granted the same RSA-based regulatory authority as a Historical Commission. The Commission oversees exterior improvements and modifications so as to protect the integrity of the downtown historic district. The City’s Planning Director performs the administrative work for the Commission and has contributed to the drafting of regulations and policies.

The intersection of the activity of the Commission and the Planning Board arises when Site Plan or Special (Conditional) Use Permits are required by the Board. While this does not occur that often, it is always helpful to make that dual permitting process as efficient as possible. The most recent example of this was the approval in 2015 of the renovation of the Riverbend Mill on Memorial St by the CATCH organization into 45 apartment units (see the reference in the Accomplishments Chapter). The joint meeting held by the Board and the Commission helped expedite the process for the developer.

Important goals for the Heritage Commission include:

- a) Continued work with all applicants on their proposed improvement projects
- b) Evaluation of the “Approved Color” chart to determine how it could be modified or otherwise improved to provide greater flexibility for applicants
- c) Modification of Commission Rules, Regulations, and Policies as appropriate to more clearly define types of appendages such as signs, banners, etc., that are allowed or restricted
- d) Ongoing efforts to stream-line the application process to insure ease of use and understanding of requirements while maintaining adequate protection of historic resources.

Responsible Parties: The items above will be accomplished through the efforts of the following: The Heritage Commission; City Staff.

Land Use and Energy & Telecommunication Systems

Background: Regarding energy issues, Franklin has seen two types of solar projects come forward; residential projects for roof-top mounted solar panels, and seven industrial-sized solar array “farms” proposed in the spring of 2015 and eventually approved by the Planning Board through the Site Plan process. Five of these were located on City land, and two were located on private property. One project is now under construction.

Regarding telecommunication systems, the City has not seen any new cell towers in the past few years although there have been applications for the installation of co-location equipment, which is now handled differently than what was allowed 10 years ago.

It is important to note that the technology systems for both renewable energy and telecommunications are changing rapidly. Therefore, it is important to keep abreast of changes in state and federal laws and court cases that can change how a community reacts to applications for new projects.

The goals and needs to stay current in these areas include:

- i. The review the current state statutes to determine what changes need to be made to the Zoning Ordinance. Attention should also be given to RSA 672:1 which spells out the foundational language for all other land use statutes. Under this statute, renewable energy systems are given protection against any unreasonable limitations, or interpretations, by a municipal zoning ordinance.
- ii. A review of the Site Plan Regulations to determine changes that need to be made to the permitting and application requirements.

Responsible Parties: The items above will be accomplished through the efforts of the following: Planning Board and the City Council

One final note: in order to make renewable systems more attractive to homeowners, the City has adopted tax relief exemptions on the added assessed property values arising from solar, wind, or wood-fired energy systems. This tax relief can make these systems more attractive, thus expanding the utilization of these alternative energy systems.

Land Use and Public Infrastructure and Facilities

Background: Managing and improving the City of Franklin's facilities and infrastructure is a significant task. The responsibilities range from: removing snow and ice from sidewalks and roads; managing miles of water and sewer pipes; repairing all of the city trucks; and, maintaining all of the City buildings and parks. The Municipal Services Department (MSD) is responsible for all of these duties.

The MSD performs work through seven (7) divisions: Roads and Bridges, Water, Sewer, Solid Waste and Recycling, Mechanical Equipment, Buildings and Grounds, and Administration, which provides management oversight for all of the other divisions. The full complement of the MSD divisions comprises the largest percentage of the annual budget for the City; the work goes on 24/7/365.

The Planning Board works closely with the Municipal Services Department when new development projects impact or expand roads, utilities, or drainage. This is critical to protecting abutters and nearby neighborhoods. Making sure the Subdivision and Site Plan Regulations adequately protect the interests of the City and the impacted neighborhoods is part of the overall application and review process for any project. Cooperative efforts in the

area of stormwater management, especially in the Webster Lake Watershed, could provide benefits toward enhanced water quality protection and increased property values.

Before going any further, it is important to note that most of the activities, goals, or needs of the MSD are outside of the jurisdiction of the Planning Board. That being said, the condition of the roads, how well the snow is cleaned-up, and the quality of the drinking water, all work together to create a snapshot of the character of the City, and how well it is doing to “keep up appearances.”

A quick overview of the MSD tells us:

- They maintain 62 miles of city roads (all with storm water drains and roadside ditches), 7 bridges, 7 traffic signals, 52 miles of water pipes, and 32 miles of sewer pipe, an additional 13 miles of state highways are maintained by NH DOT.
- They collect and manage the trash and recyclables from 2800 homes and businesses.
- They maintain approximately 25 buildings and all of the City parks.
- They perform the maintenance work on an aging fleet of 74 over-the-road cars and trucks.
- They are responsible for the City’s overall drinking water quality which has been highly praised by officials at DES. There are no foreseeable problems with future supplies. In fact the City right now has surplus supplies that could be marketed to abutting communities.
- As mentioned above they are responsible for the City’s roadway network and ensuring that there is available capacity to handle anticipated future traffic, however, keeping up with maintenance is a challenge.
- The department must ensure that the State’s waste water treatment facility has sufficient capacity to accommodate additional sewer flows from Franklin properties. Since a significant portion of the “urbanized” areas of the City have sewer availability, the added flows could come from future infill and redevelopment growth, such as the re-purposing of the older mill buildings.
- MSD has made upgrades to some portions of the water and sewer systems over the years while other portions are old and in need of repair or replacement. The challenge for these systems is that there is not a sufficient customer base to support significant improvements or expansions. The revenues collected can barely keep up with the necessary day-to-day maintenance work.
- Repairs and upgrades have been made in various City buildings, however the HVAC and electrical systems are always an item of special concern, especially in the older buildings such as City Hall.

The goals and needs of the MSD and the City to provide the proper maintenance of, and improvements to, the multi-layered infrastructure and utility systems, include:

- I. **Updating the Capital Improvement Program (CIP):** The City regularly updates the CIP Plan. This is a comprehensive document that outlines each project or asset (every road to fix, water or sewer line to be repaired or replaced, building to be

upgraded, or vehicle to be purchased) that needs to be accomplished or improved, the date, and the estimated cost. The CIP does not address normal maintenance work. The CIP is the guidebook for big-ticket expenditures by the City and the MSD. The big issue confronting the City and MSD is that the total costs of the project far exceed the City's funding capacity. Establishing a viable and funded CIP Plan is the only way for the City to gain any ground on the problems associated with an aging infrastructure system, older buildings, and equipment needing constant repairs. It is also important to note that having an active CIP increases our chances of obtaining grant and loan funds. The Planning Board should play an active role in the CIP Committee by providing input into road and utility issues that affect land use and future developments.

- II. Utilizing Capital Efficiency Planning:** The MSD has prepared a Capital Efficiency Plan (CEP) for the water system, and similar plans for other MSD divisions are proposed. A CEP looks at critical factors such as the age, location, current conditions of specific infrastructure components and considers the levels of use. This analysis helps to determine when major improvements should be scheduled and allows the coordination of the work with private utilities (i.e. gas and cable). The CEP works hand-in-hand with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to create a planning guide for the coordinated maintenance and/or replacement of all of these infrastructure components. The goal is to plan smart; you do not want to reconstruct a roadway in 2018 and then rip up the same road in 2019 to replace a water main. Performing repairs and replacement work in a systematic fashion saves money in the long term.
- III. Analyzing Critical Utility Systems:** One example of this goal is the work being carried out now by a consultant to investigate the problems from inflow and infiltration (called "I & I") to the sewer system. Inflow might come from an illegal sump pump connection to a sewer main. Infiltration comes from cracks in the pipes or the joints of the sewer mains. Both of these problems result in water being shipped to the treatment plant and cleaned before discharge back into the Merrimack River. Reducing I & I saves time and money for the City. Having this level of understanding helps to support the CEP and CIP programs for both water and sewer utilities.
- IV. Maintaining Regulatory Compliance:** Two important responsibilities of the MSD are the public drinking water and waste water systems. Both are impacted by state and federal regulations that address the protection of ground water supply sources and the discharges from the waste water treatment plant. Maintaining compliance with these evolving regulations directly impacts the MSD budget and the ability to carry out regular improvements to the overall infrastructure system. As mentioned above, these two utility systems are aging and there is a limited customer base to support many improvements and upgrades. Finding ways to expand the customer base would help provide needed financial support for the management of these systems.

- V. Pursuing Funding:** The City has millions of dollars invested in a variety of assets (buildings, trucks and mechanical equipment, roads & bridges, utility infrastructure components, etc.). The unfortunate bottom line is that proper maintenance has regularly been deferred due to lack of funds. This means that we fall farther and farther behind in our ability to provide for reliable, safe, and adequate delivery of services. It all boils down to funding, which supports the CIP, the CEP, and the work to maintain our state and federal regulatory compliance.

In simplified terms, the funding to maintain these assets does and can come from several different sources -- general tax revenues, regular state aid, grant/loan programs, bonding, TIF accounts, or the City's Municipal Transportation Improvement Fund (from vehicle registrations).

The City Council approves the annual appropriations budget. The increased ability of the City to fund asset management and improvement projects in the future may well benefit from the new revenues generated by the rehabilitation of Stevens Mill, TIF accounts and, if approved, Northern Pass funds. The Council and Staff will need to review existing Capital plans and evaluate projects to create an adjusted set of priorities. Of course, if some of these potential funds are not realized, the City's infrastructure and facilities priorities will still exist and steps to address realistic future goals and objectives will need to be taken.

Responsible Parties: The items above will be accomplished through the efforts of the following: Municipal Services Department, City Council, input from all appropriate City Departments, and the Planning Board.

Land Use and Recreation, Open Space, and Natural Resources

Background: The City of Franklin is blessed with a unique geographical location. The City's greatest physical assets are its rivers, Webster Lake, and our forests. Proper stewardship of the City's valuable natural resources and recreational opportunities will aid the revitalization of the community.

The rivers, once industrial dumping grounds, are now recognized as resources to be appreciated, enjoyed, and utilized for different activities. Downtown re-development projects are working to enhance the use and appreciation of the Winnepesaukee River. The white water park proposal creates a brand new type of recreational activity for an urban area in the State.

The depth of opportunities is not limited to just that one river:

- ✓ The Winnepesaukee River Trail starts in downtown Franklin and extends to Tilton, with plans to connect to trails leading to Laconia. This is a walking and biking trail that is easily accessible.

- ✓ The Northern Rail Trail extends from Lebanon to Concord and runs through the City by Webster Lake and adjacent to South Main Street. This trail is used for snowmobiling and skiing or snowshoeing in the winter months and for biking and walking the rest of the year.
- ✓ The extensive biking and hiking trail system at the Franklin Falls Flood Control Dam (operated by the US Army Corps) is used by riders from across the State and New England.
- ✓ The biking and hiking trails in the City's Great Gains Forest, and the areas adjacent to the Veterans Memorial Ski Area on Flaghole Road are also popular recreational assets.
- ✓ Two public boat ramps along the Pemigewasset and Winnepesaukee Rivers (off of Tannery Street and behind the High School) provide free river access.
- ✓ Over 1100 acres of city-owned and managed conservation properties are available to our city residents and visitors.
- ✓ The City's longstanding membership as a "Tree City USA" recognizes one of our greatest natural resources.
- ✓ And finally, Atlantic salmon fishing in the Pemigewasset River draws its own special crowd.

All of these collective recreational opportunities contribute to the creation of an "outdoor economy" for the City. The new connections between some of these areas will enhance the available outdoor experiences for residents and visitors.

The goals and objectives that can advance our recreational opportunities and help to utilize or protect all of our natural resources include the following:

- ✓ Rethinking the definitions for "outdoor recreation" to take advantage of the different resources that exist in or near the City.
- ✓ Establishing the appropriate permitting or review procedures for these land uses so that public interests are protected.
- ✓ Exploring the projects and assistance programs (the State 10-year Transportation Plan, TIGER grants, cooperative work with Lakes Region Planning Commission, the implementation of a "Complete Streets" or "Safe Route" project, or other grant or loan programs, either public or private) all of which can better facilitate walking and biking connections that will benefit residents and encourage a healthier life style.
- ✓ Exploring options and opportunities for improved stormwater management in the core downtown area. This can work to encourage recreational activities on the rivers and help improve water quality for our downstream neighbors.
- ✓ Continuing the efforts of the Recreation Department to upgrade and expand our many City parks and the recreational programs that are available to residents and neighboring communities.
- ✓ Continuing the work of the Conservation Commission to pursue sound best management practices in the Great Gains forest and three other forested conservation properties. At the same time landowners should be encouraged to consider preserving open space.

- ✓ Supporting the efforts of the groups such as the volunteer Outing Club as they add to the recreational opportunities at the Veteran’s Memorial Ski Area.
- ✓ Moving forward with the creation of parking on the City-owned former Macosko Foundry (and revitalized brownfields) property on Chance Pond Road to provide good public access (with a bridge over the brook) to the Northern Rail Trail. The Lakes Region Snowmobile Club could be a potential source of assistance for this work.
- ✓ Continuing the partnership with the Webster Lake Association on the vital work of protecting the Lake, an important and valuable resource of the City’s. Storm water runoff must be managed to prevent erosion and to protect overall water quality - a key task for the future.

Responsible Parties: The City Council; Recreation & Conservation Commissions, Volunteer civic organizations, and the Planning Board who will lead the implementation of these goals. The citizens of Franklin can also play an important role.

Land Use and Public Safety; and, Regional Planning Issues

Background: The City, largely through the efforts of the Office of the Fire Chief, is active in hazard mitigation and emergency operation planning work. Franklin is often aided by the staff at the Lakes Regional Planning Commission and the NH Homeland Security and emergency Management Department. In 2013 an update to the Hazard Mitigation Plan was completed; in 2014 the Emergency Operations Plan was updated. While the Planning Board is not directly involved in these efforts, the Planning Director does participate in the planning meetings leading up to the adoption of the plans. If there are any potential revisions to land use regulations that could help reduce impacts to property then the Director will bring those ideas forward to the Planning Board. Work will begin in early 2018 on the update to the Mitigation Plan.

The Franklin Fire and Police Departments exhibit a high degree of professionalism. Efforts such as maintaining Advanced Life Support level of care and the staffing of a fully certified EMT unit improved ISO ratings for fire suppression capacity (based on departmental skill levels, emergency communication capacity, available water supplies, and community risk reduction). A Neighborhood Watch program is active as well as on-going Fire Prevention programs. The Department participates in the Concord Regional Crime line program and is a partner to the Mayor’s Drug Task Force. These all work together to support and maintain a community where public safety is considered a top priority.

Due to rising equipment and personnel costs, municipal budgets are challenged more than ever. One possible solution, especially for fire and EMT related activities, would be some level of regionalization. Discussions between the Fire Chiefs of Franklin and surrounding communities have been underway for more than 2 years.

The key tasks and goals include:

- ✓ Continued work on the required updates to the Hazard Mitigation and Emergency Operations plans that are City specific but contain connections to our neighboring communities and the Lakes Region.
- ✓ Continued discussions with our neighbors on regional solutions to our life and fire safety concerns and issues.

Responsible Parties: The items above will be accomplished through the efforts of the following: The Franklin Fire and Police Chiefs and the City Council.

Chapter VI: Summary

This Master Plan covers a lot of ground. It recognizes the land use history of the City, provides descriptions of where things stand today, and it looks towards the future. The Plan also acknowledges that working on land use issues, economic development, and infrastructure is hard work. The crisis of the day, which occurs regularly, can interrupt the best laid plans, and it is easy to get moved off target. The Planning Board can spend a lot of time crafting new zoning ordinance language, and when you think it is just right, someone walks in the door with a proposal that makes you say, “I never thought of that.”

The Board recognizes that many factors, outside of its jurisdictional framework, effect land use decisions. Looking at this bigger picture, the Board knows that all of the exciting projects that are underway right now, the downtown revitalization efforts, the Whitewater Park, and the recently completed affordable housing project will benefit the City in many ways. But these benefits are only part of the solution. Franklin faces the same social-economic challenges that so many other New Hampshire communities are confronting: an aging population, fiscal constraints for both municipal and school needs, an older housing stock, a transient residential population, issues with absentee landlords, and the feeling that pride in our communities or schools is not as strong as it once was. And sadly, the effects of the opioid epidemic are common throughout the State. Solutions to these deeper challenges will come through continued strong leadership, community forums where problems and solutions are debated, and the commitment by elected official and residents alike to pursue positive changes in the years to come.

Not every problem can be solved, and priorities must always be re-established as time goes on. Businesses and economies change. The needs of residents, both young and old, shift over time. And local and state governments are always working to balance the budget.

The Vision Section, and especially the 15 identified statements, lay out broader goals for the Planning Board and, to some degree, the City as a whole. The Land Use Section contains some general ideas or goals, but also details what can or should happen to our ordinances and regulations to effect positive change that can help shape our community.

Over the past few years, a lot of positive work has occurred to help build new confidence in the City. While there is agreement that the cooperative efforts underway now are critical to our successful revitalization of the City, there is still important work to be done. The partnerships discussed in the Economic & Business Development section need to apply to economic efforts and the balance between the two sides of the City budget process – the City Council and the School Board. While there will always be debates over levels of funding, the most important issue is that both sides bring to any discussion a commitment to trust and a willingness to compromise - both are critical to the long-term interests of the City and its residents.

The hundreds of jobs that once existed in the downtown mills are gone forever. But the same mill buildings and the same rivers will forge the framework of a new Franklin. The tasks that lie ahead do not just focus on the downtown and the industrial park; they encompass all aspects of the City. There is a significant amount of positive energy in the City right now aimed at creating a fresh and revitalized image. The potential is limitless as long as we work together and think about the future.

Franklin is known as the “*Three Rivers City*” since the Winnepesaukee and Pemigewasset Rivers join to form the Merrimack. Like that important confluence of nature, the City is now seeing many individuals coming together to work cooperatively to grow the City for the benefit of young and old, life-long residents or new transplants, business owners, and tourists.

At a spring 2017 meeting of downtown business owners, one person summarized the important work ahead; for every new store or renovated façade there is a small improvement to the look and character of the City; every small step is a new building block which helps attract another new business and create more reasons for people to stop, get out of their car, and walk the downtown so they can see all of the good things happening here. The speaker was right on target. This is how a new downtown and new attitudes are forged.

We, the members of the 2018 Planning Board, hope that this Master Plan can contribute to these efforts. And we hope that all residents join these efforts and work cooperatively to reach our goals.