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## **i. AUTHORITY**

New Hampshire state law mandates planning boards to “*prepare and amend from time to time a master plan to guide the development of the municipality.*”<sup>1</sup> The sole purpose of the master plan is to aid the planning board in the performance of its duties. The duties of the planning board are varied, but the only duty specifically required<sup>2</sup> is the maintenance of the town’s master plan.

The statute goes on to say that the master plan may include consideration of any areas outside of the town which, in the judgment of the planning board, bear a relation to or have an impact on the planning of the town.

## **ii. INTRODUCTION**

### **What is a Master Plan?**

The master plan may be comprised of a collection of reports, statements, land use and development proposals, with accompanying maps, diagrams, charts and other descriptive matter that shows as fully as is possible and practical the planning board’s recommendations for the desirable development of the town. The master plan shall include, at a minimum, the following required sections<sup>3</sup>:

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

“A land use section upon which all other sections shall be based. This section shall translate the vision statements into physical terms. Based on a study of population, economic activity, and natural, historic, and cultural resources, it shall show existing conditions and the proposed location, extent, and intensity of future land use.”

The master plan may also include the following sections (RSA 674:2.III):

Transportation section	Utility and Public Service section
Community Facilities section	Cultural and Historic Resources section
Economic Development section	Regional Concern section
Natural Resources section	Neighborhood Plan section
Natural Hazards section	Community Design section
Recreation section	Housing section

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<sup>1</sup>RSA 674:1.

<sup>2</sup>Other planning board duties, such as subdivision and site plan review, etc., are actually allowed only if the voters at town meeting authorize the planning board to take on these responsibilities.

<sup>3</sup> RSA 674:2

## **An Update of Stoddard's Master Plan**

The Master Plan represents an effort to update the 1990 Town of Stoddard Master Plan in conformance with all elements of NH RSA 674, *Local Land Use Planning and Regulatory Powers*. The development of this Plan began in early 1999 with a Master Plan Update Survey and the "Stoddard Community Profile." The Profile, held in October of 1999 and involving nearly 100 participants, resulted in a report entitled, "Stoddard in the Next Century" prepared by Antioch New England Institute. The visions and recommendations of that Report laid the foundation for the development of this Master Plan. The Stoddard Planning Board encouraged community members to formally begin drafting recommendations for an updated Master Plan for the Town. To that end, a Master Planning Advisory Committee, involving community members and local officials, was created and for several years held public meetings to craft the plan.

### **iii. IMPLEMENTATION**

A Master Plan is the fundamental road map to help guide the administration regarding future growth of the Town of Stoddard. The Land Use Plan set forth in this document attempts to reconcile the wishes of Stoddard residents with legal requirements, restrictions and physical circumstances regarding future development in the town.

**Adoption** of this Master Plan on August 2, 2005 was accomplished in accordance with RSA 675:6, through certification by the Planning Board following a public hearing on July 26, 2005.

The term **administration** refers here to those activities that direct and manage the Town's municipal affairs. The Town Meeting is the legislative body. The Board of Selectmen is the governing body (town executives). In addition to the Selectmen, other local boards participate in municipal government, including the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Conservation Commission, and other elected and appointed entities. This form of government relies heavily on part-time and/or volunteer officials serving in a wide range of capacities. Some administrative functions relate directly to the goals and objectives of this Master Plan, others less so. Provisions of this Plan require amendments to the Community Planning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations and/or the Site Plan Review Regulations in order to be realized.

Means of **monitoring** on a regular basis both the effectiveness of, and compliance with, policies set forth in this Plan should be developed by the Planning Board in conjunction with the Board of Selectmen, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Conservation Commission, and other appropriate local boards, committees, and elected or appointed entities. Monitoring should be based on the collective experiences of these municipal officials as they relate to zoning administration, subdivision and site plan review, building permits, and other matters of town government. By 2010, the Planning Board and other local officials should have a plan to convene a Steering Committee to begin a review and update of the Master Plan.

## CERTIFICATION

The Stoddard Planning Board hereby certifies that the preceding document adopted on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of August, 2005, is the true Master Plan of the Town of Stoddard, New Hampshire and was prepared and adopted in accordance with the provisions of RSA 674:2-4, 675:6, and 675:7.

Casey Hayes, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_

Terrence McMahon

\_\_\_\_\_

Matt Cerbone

\_\_\_\_\_

Harry Power

\_\_\_\_\_

George Preston

\_\_\_\_\_

Dale Smith

\_\_\_\_\_

Chet Pratt, Ex-Officio

\_\_\_\_\_

Certified on \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2005

# **I. COMMUNITY VISION, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

## **VISION**

This Master Plan articulates the desire of the citizens of Stoddard to develop a path to guide the evolution of the town by balancing growth with the preservation of features that distinguish Stoddard, among them its open spaces, water bodies, forested landscape, and social fabric. This takes on added meaning when one considers data like the following: Stoddard has seen a 49% increase in population since 1990 (622 to 928); 93 building permits for single family homes were issued between 1990 and 2000 (approximately 9 per year) and yet 67 primary housing permits were issued between 2000 and 2004.

Coupled with the recent improvements to State Highways 9 and 123, these trends impact the character of the town. Change is inevitable, but a Master Plan should provide a road map to future land use with the goal of preserving and improving the desirable features of our Town.

### **Assumptions:**

- The Town of Stoddard is defined by its Rural, Residential and Recreational (aquatic and back-country experiences) Nature, which is valued by the majority of its residents and seasonal visitors.
- These features contribute toward making Stoddard unique:  
Over 26,000 acres (75%) of Stoddard's 34,496 acres are forests. Over 22,000 acres (64%) have conservation agreements or current use designation in place, thus preserving habitat for generations to come. Our lakes and ponds account for nearly 1,200 acres.

### **Principles:**

- Protecting the natural, historic and cultural resources.
- Providing opportunities for economic development and growth through appropriate planning and regulation.
- Facilitating a stronger civic life in Town.
- Improving the quality of life for residents of all ages.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Maintain Stoddard as a Rural, Residential and Recreational community.
- Increase community awareness and understanding of the value of our unique natural and cultural environment.
- Ensure that Stoddard's environment improves even as it grows, in the spirit of providing good stewardship of our lands and water bodies.
- Protect our natural, historic and cultural resources to increase the Town's overall desirability.
- Welcome and manage the expected growth of the Town as an opportunity to improve the quality of life for all of its residents.
- Ensure that the elderly have opportunities to remain active in the community.
- Increase awareness and understanding of the value of participating in community government.

## **POLICIES**

- Develop a Comprehensive Future Land Use Plan that expands on the future land use section of this Plan, and adopt the Comprehensive Plan as a component of the Master Plan.
- Implement appropriate growth management tools through the Community Planning Ordinances and Subdivision and Site Plan Review processes. Regularly review, revise and update these Ordinances and Regulations. Review and revise Town fiscal processes (to facilitate data tracking and multi-year comparisons such as building permits).

- Prepare, and update annually, a Capital Improvements Plan.

Specific Objectives, and the policies to achieve them, are listed below, grouped into the following categories:

II. Land Use	VII. Community Facilities
III. Housing	VIII. Recreation
IV. Economic Development	IX. Conservation and Preservation
V. Transportation	X. Construction Materials
VI. Utilities and Public Services	

The data and analyses that support these objectives are given in succeeding sections of this plan.

#### **LAND USE** (See section II):

##### **Objectives:**

- Facilitate a land use pattern that supports the rural/recreational and rural/residential character of the town.

##### **Policies:**

- Develop a Comprehensive Future Land Use Plan that expands on the future land use section of this Plan, and adopt the Comprehensive Plan as a component of the Master Plan.
- Consider new residential or mixed-use centers.
- Manage growth through limiting new home building permits.
- Evaluate current zoning to determine its fit with the land use objective.
- Maintain a diversity of lot sizes.
- Consider increasing lot size requirements for large, undeveloped, rural tracts of land.
- Consider mixed-use zoning as a means of conserving open space and strengthening civic life.
- Consider specific districts for future commercial/light industrial development with site and building specifications.
- Support monitoring the health of town lakes to sustain their recreational use and environmental quality.
- Expand the illumination requirements of the Community Planning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and Site Plan Review Regulations for public buildings and private commercial and industrial sites to prohibit outdoor lighting from being directed upward.
- Protect special viewsapes affected by commercial development, especially from Pitcher Mountain, Bacon Ledge, Morrison Hill and Dakin Hill, through the Community Planning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and Site Plan Review Regulations.
- Consider designating a compliance officer.
- Review and understand road networks of neighboring towns.

## **HOUSING** (See section III)

### **Objectives:**

- Develop a future land use plan that anticipates growth, identifies appropriate areas for growth, and directs growth to the most appropriate areas; such as will be identified in the Comprehensive Future Land Use Plan.
- Recognize that seasonal and second homes are significant elements of the Town's housing stock, and understand the implications of conversion to year-round use over the long term, with particular consideration of the impacts on local schools, roads, public safety, environmental quality and social services.
- Consider the environmental impacts of residential development around the lakes in Stoddard.
- Ensure that opportunities exist for the development of adequate, safe and affordable housing for all residents at all ages and income levels.

### **Policies:**

- Maintain an up-to-date inventory of the town's housing stock through the tax assessment database.
- Monitor development to preserve a range of housing types.
- Ensure that development of new homes and/or conversion of seasonal homes is consistent with the town regulations and state sanitary and environmental codes.
- Consider measures for financial relief for the elderly.
- Examine the building permit process to assist property owners to comply with the process.
- Enforce state standards for pollution control from septic systems.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** (See section IV)

### **Objectives:**

- Provide opportunities for economic development and growth that perpetuate the town's rural character and that protect the natural and cultural resources.
- Support local businesses and encourage new businesses that provide convenient goods and services for residents.
- Determine the economic value of town lakes.

### **Policies:**

- Consider a commercial/light industrial district at several locations and promote shared access for sites.
- Develop subdivision and site plan standards for the aesthetic features of commercial and industrial developments such as landscaping; building scale, materials and facades; and outdoor lighting, to ensure the development is appropriate with its surroundings.
- Consider developing "wooded buffer" requirements for future commercial/industrial developments.
- Review the Site Plan Review Regulations to ensure that requirements for commercial and industrial uses are clear and consistent.
- Develop Site Plan Review Regulations for small retail businesses.
- Review and evaluate existing provisions of the Community Planning Ordinance and Site Plan Review Regulations for selected, small scale, home-based activities in all districts, with particular consideration to employee limits, vehicles, parking, signage, and neighborhood conformance.
- Ensure that junkyards are operated in compliance with all applicable State laws.

## **TRANSPORTATION** (see section V)

### **Objectives:**

- Be aware of Stoddard's role in the state and regional highway system and ensure that local land use decisions are carefully considered in light of this system.
- Minimize construction of new roads and expansion of existing roads in order to maintain the present character of the town.
- Better understand the potential impact on the town of private roads becoming public roads.
- Support multi-use trail networks that provide safe passage to local businesses, historical, cultural, and recreational resources.

### **Policies:**

- Participate in the Southwest Region Planning Commission's Transportation Advisory Committee, in order to be fully involved in regional transportation decisions that will affect Stoddard, particularly in regard to Route 9 Corridor planning.
- Review and revise the Community Planning Ordinance to ensure that it promotes preservation of the Town's rural character through shared road access, shared parking and appropriate setbacks for commercial operations.
- Promote or require multi-use trail networks as part of planned development projects.
- Monitor the road design standards contained in the town's Subdivision and Site Plan Regulations to ensure that they allow safe and convenient access for property owners, provide sufficient access for emergency and maintenance services, and preserve community character.
- Promote shared access for residential uses where appropriate.
- Work with the NH Department of Transportation (DOT) to explore options for managing and improving traffic safety on Routes 9 and 123.
- Work with the NH DOT to establish a local "access management" policy and standards that include a memorandum of agreement with the NH DOT for mutual implementation of the access management policy and standards.
- Investigate "Scenic Highway" designation for Route 123 and use the Scenic Byways Program model to enhance and protect community character.
- Identify needs for public transportation.
- Support the development of transportation to and from Keene for the elderly, commuters, or school children participating in after-school activities.

## **UTILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES** (See section VI)

### **Objective:**

- Continue to provide residents with adequate utilities vital to the welfare of the community, in particular for meeting the health, safety, and security needs of the citizens, and in general for meeting their desires for comfort, entertainment, and quality of life.
- Support the community's goals for economic development through the availability of utilities and current technologies.

### **Policies:**

- Assess the availability and adequacy of utilities currently available.
- Identify and explore the feasibility of developing or attracting services and technologies that would support the community's economic development goals.

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES** (See section VII)

### **Objectives:**

- Ensure that residents of the town have access to reasonable local services and facilities.
- Develop a Capital Improvements Plan to provide guidance to local officials for planning and implementing community facility improvements.
- Identify and evaluate feasibility of approaches to preserving and expanding use of the library.
- Ensure efficient use of the Transfer Station.
- Encourage discussion and cooperation among town boards and civic organizations regarding use of community facilities.
- Maintain and improve all town owned properties in a manner consistent with community standards.
- Continue to seek a more appropriate location for the transfer station.

### **Policies:**

- Consider consolidating Town Offices and community services.
- Encourage more participation from seasonal residents in town government and civic life.
- Encourage the timely distribution of community-wide information as a means of building a sense of community among residents and visitors.
- Encourage the development of an “Exchange Corner” at the Town Transfer Station for unwanted items in good condition.
- Ensure that the Police and Fire Departments have the proper equipment needed to provide services.

## **RECREATION** (See section VIII)

### **Objectives:**

- Ensure that residents of the town have access to recreational facilities and activities to promote the health and well being of residents of all ages.
- Continue to support the Recreation Committee and the Community Events Organization in their efforts to offer community-based activities.

### **Policies:**

- Expand community-wide social opportunities, including educational and recreational opportunities for families, with special emphasis on senior and child activities.
- Support regular civic events and community activities that provide an opportunity for townspeople to get together, winter and summer.
- Provide extra-curricular activities for school children.
- Provide opportunities for residents to have access to recreational use of all water bodies in town.
- Maintain the existing multi-use trail network and encourage establishment of new trails.

## **CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION** (See section IX)

### **Objectives:**

- Provide for and/or encourage the preservation of those historic resources that define the town’s historic character.
- Provide for and/or encourage the preservation of those natural resources that give the town much of its character and provide a special physical environment.

- Continue to protect Stoddard's water resources including its numerous lakes and ponds.
- Encourage preservation of wildlife corridors.
- Protect drinking water supplies, stream corridors, wetlands and shorelands.
- Balance land protection with growth.
- Preserve scenic viewsheds.
- Identify historic sites and institute a system for placing local historic markers at sites.
- Promote public education and awareness of maintaining septic systems.

**Policies:**

- Review and expand the natural resource protection overlay districts for stream corridors, wetlands, and shorelands.
- Identify scenic viewscapes and develop provisions to protect these viewscapes through the Community Planning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and Site Plan Review Regulations.
- Identify all protected lands available for public access and the respective permitted use(s).
- Monitor development proposals to ensure that environmentally sensitive areas are being protected.
- Compile all natural resource data in GIS format for evaluation and mapping.
- Regulate public and commercial exterior lighting and encourage private landowners to limit such lighting to the minimum necessary, in order to preserve the dark skies of Stoddard.
- Establish a "Main Street" committee for the purpose of improving the Town's image.
- Encourage protection of the existing multi-use trail network and encourage establishment of new trails.
- Explore the possibility of establishing a Historic District that would encompass the Mill Village and Stoddard Center.
- The Town should explore the possibility of establishing a Historic District that would encompass Mill Village and Stoddard Center, which represent two distinct development patterns in Town, and are critical to Stoddard's identity. Other sites of possible special interest in the Town should be marked.
- The Historical Society building must be improved or replaced and its contents cared for by a knowledgeable conservator.
- A committee should be formed to seek planning assistance to improve the aesthetic appeal of our most densely populated areas and to make the Town more accessible for non-motorized travel.
- GIS mapping of existing septic systems would be useful to evaluate potential impact of further development on ground water pollution.

**CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS** (See section X)

**Objectives:**

- Identify existing or potential sources of construction materials within the town boundaries.

**Policies:**

- Identify the locations and estimated extent of excavations which have been granted permits under RSA 155-E.
- Review and follow-up on any reports filed pursuant to RSA 155-E:2, I(d) with respect to non-permitted excavations.

## II. LAND USE

The principle determinants of land use development patterns are local zoning and regulations, development capabilities (i.e. road frontage), and the physical landscape (soils, hydrology, and topography). In Stoddard, as with many other small towns, growth typically occurs in the form of the development of individual properties rather than large subdivisions, although Stoddard has experienced such proposals in the past and may again in the future. This section considers existing land uses and development patterns and identifies specific objectives for successfully implementing development policies identified in Section I.

### II. A. Land Use Categories

In general, land is classified according to the physical characteristics of the landscape and/or the present active use or uses that occur on the land. This analysis uses two basic land use classes: “**Developed**” and “**Undeveloped**.” Each of these can be divided into two or more specific land uses. The following descriptions identify the standard land use categories considered in the preparation of a Land Use Plan:

#### Developed

**Residential:** All land and/or structures used to provide housing for one or more households. These include site-built single family homes, manufactured homes (previously known as mobile homes), factory-built modular homes, duplexes, apartment buildings, condominiums, and seasonal residences.

**Public/semi-public:** Establishments and facilities supported by and/or used exclusively by the public or non-profit organizations, such as fraternal, religious, charitable, educational and governmental facilities.

**Commercial:** Lands and structures that supply goods and/or services to the general public. This includes such facilities as restaurants, lodging, service stations, grocery stores, furniture and appliance sales, sanitary services, and establishments that are primarily oriented to providing a professional and/or personal service to the public, such as health care, banks/financial institutions, personal care, etc.

**Industrial:** Land and/or facilities used for mining, construction, manufacturing, treatment, packaging, incidental storage, distribution, transportation, communication, electric, gas and wholesale trade.

**Road Network:** All public and private rights-of-way that are designated for carrying vehicular traffic. This includes Class VI roads that are no longer maintained by the town and do not carry public traffic.

#### Undeveloped

All lands that are not developed for any of the above uses, regardless of the reason - whether it be because the land is not usable due to environmental constraints, or there has been no demand to develop, is considered undeveloped land. There is a special class of undeveloped lands known as protected lands which have certain development restrictions by one of several means such as State Park designation, conservation or preservation easements, or deed restrictions.

**Protected Lands:** Included in this category are all State parks and forests; land protected under the State Land Conservation Investment Program (LCIP); land protected and/or owned by the town;

sensitive land and wildlife habitats protected by the NH Audubon Society; and, land held by the Society for the Protection of NH Forests, Historic Stoddard, Inc., The Nature Conservancy, The Monadnock Conservancy and other Trusts.

## **II. B. Development Patterns**

The historic and current land use patterns in Stoddard are dominated by single-family residential development, with significant seasonal, lakefront residential use. This general pattern is not expected to change, although the Planning Board is very concerned about the potential impact on the Town should these seasonal homes be converted to year-round use, as many have already been converted.

In general, Stoddard does have a sizable land area (over 34,000 acres), and much of this land is either exempt from development by virtue of easements and other preservation techniques, or it is considered not very suitable for development due to physical constraints, such as wetlands, steep slopes, shallow depth to bedrock, etc. Furthermore, there are still large areas in Town that are not accessible by public or private roads.

Although development of Stoddard's marginal and inaccessible land areas is unlikely in the near future due to the prohibitive costs, the potential for the development of additional roads that provide access to remote areas of the community certainly exists. As the region's growth increases, Stoddard should expect to assume a proportional rate of growth. If and when such development occurs, the impacts on the community would be significant.

Stoddard's land use pattern is, in effect, defined by its Community Planning Ordinance, as well as the Town's Subdivision and Site Plan Review Regulations. Appendix IV, the *Existing Land Use and Development Potential Analysis*, prepared by the Southwest Region Planning Commission, provides valuable insight on the correlation between existing land use regulations and development patterns the Town should expect if existing zoning and regulations remain unchanged. A critical analysis of the *Development Potential Analysis* is crucial to the discussions of the Planning Board and municipal officials in the development of a Comprehensive Future Land Use Plan for the Town of Stoddard. Once prepared, such a plan should be adopted as a component of the Master Plan.

The following summary reflects the current zoning and land use regulations driving development patterns in Stoddard:

The land use pattern in effect at the time of this writing includes four types of districts:

1. Two Residential Districts commonly known as Stoddard Center/Mill Village and South Stoddard, requiring lot sizes of at least one acre.
2. Lakeside Districts surrounding Highland Lake, Granite Lake and Island Pond, also with a one acre lot requirement for development or subdivision.
3. The Rural District, consisting of all other land with the minimum lot size requirement of two acres.
4. Wetlands Conservation District as defined on the wetlands map and superimposed over other zoning districts. Development in wetlands is regulated by the NH Department of Environmental Services and local regulations.

**Residential Use** is permitted in all districts, subject to setback and frontage requirements and both Town and State standards for shoreland protection. An existing single-family dwelling may be converted to include one apartment that meets specific conditions. Duplex dwellings are permitted in all districts

provided the lot size is doubled. Multi-family dwellings are also permitted in all districts with the maximum number of units allowed determined by a formula for developable area that results in a per unit area that meets or exceeds the minimum acreage for that district. Mobile homes are subject to the same requirements as single-family dwellings. Mobile home parks are not permitted.

**Commercial and Industrial Use** is permitted in the rural district by special exception from the Zoning Board of Adjustment that considers parking and nuisance factors.

**Home Occupations** meeting the definition outlined in the Community Planning Ordinance are allowed in all districts.

**Wireless Communication Facilities** may be placed in any district. Though limited by FCC regulations, the Stoddard Planning Board does have considerable control of their specific location and appearance factors through implementation of the Wireless Communication Facilities provisions in the Community Planning Ordinance.

**Non-Conforming Uses** lawfully existing before 1986 (the year of Stoddard's first Community Planning Ordinance) may continue, but may not be expanded or changed to another non-conforming use. Non-conforming uses may not be re-established after a discontinuance of one year.

**Table #1  
Existing Land Use Regulations in Stoddard**

<b>Lakeside District:</b>		
<b>Permitted:</b>	<b>Not Permitted:</b>	<b>Special Exception:</b>
Dwelling, Single-Family Dwelling, Duplex Dwelling, Multi-Family Conversion Apartments Planned Residential Development Home Occupations	Manufactured Housing Parks  Commercial / Industrial	

  

<b>Residential Districts (Stoddard Center-Mill Village, &amp; South Stoddard):</b>		
<b>Permitted:</b>	<b>Not Permitted:</b>	<b>Special Exception:</b>
Dwelling, Single-Family Dwelling, Duplex Dwelling, Multi-Family Conversion Apartments Home Occupations Planned Residential Developments	Manufactured Housing Parks  Commercial/ Industrial	

**Table #1**  
**Existing Land Use Regulations in Stoddard, cont.**

<b>Rural District: Table of Uses*</b>		
<b>Permitted:</b>	<b>Not Permitted:</b>	<b>Special Exception:</b>
Dwelling, Single-Family Dwelling, Duplex Dwelling, Multi-Family Conversion Apartments Planned Residential Development Home Occupations	Manufactured Housing Parks	Commercial Uses Industrial Uses

Source: Stoddard Planning Ordinance (2003)

\*Consult Zoning regulations for area, frontage, setback, duplex, multi-family, and other standards in each district.

The “Zoning” map at the end of this section reflects the above information.

## **II. C. Existing Land Use**

Since the type and intensity of existing land uses have a strong influence on future development patterns, it is important to understand how land and other resources are used within a given area before recommendations can be developed relative to future land uses.

The Existing Land Use Section classifies land use by type: residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, government, recreational, sand & gravel extraction, and roads. The information in this Section is from the NH GRANIT LandSat TM land cover data, and was compiled here by Stoddard residents. The land cover data was developed from satellite imagery.

A different land use analysis prepared by the Southwest Region Planning Commission appears in Appendix III, *Existing Land Use and Development Potential Analysis*. The land use data used for the development potential analysis was obtained from the Stoddard Tax Assessor’s database.

The total area of the Town of Stoddard is approximately 34,496 acres, of which 3.3% - or 1,152 acres - constitutes surface water. The following table compares the estimates of land use between 1990 and 2000. Attempting to calculate exact acreages for land uses - particularly residential usage, is difficult and time-consuming. Therefore, a commonly-used methodology (and the one used to develop Table #2) is to simply assume one acre per each dwelling unit. This takes into account that multi-family units will typically occupy much less than an acre, and most single family homes much more than an acre - but the average amount of land that comprises the dwelling, accessory structures and active yard area is usually about one acre. The land area taken up by roads and highways is calculated by assuming a 50-foot right-of-way, multiplied by the number of miles of road; the remaining land use categories denote - as closely as possible - the actual acreage utilized for the activity. For uses other than residential, the acreage noted on tax assessment cards is used, since it is more common for more of the lot to be taken up by a non-residential use than is generally observed for residential use. A “Conservation and Current Use Lands” map is included at the end of this section.

**Table #2:  
Existing Land Use in Stoddard, 2000**

<u>LAND USE</u>	<u>TOTAL ACRES</u>	<u>% OF ACRES IN USE</u>	<u>% OF TOTAL LAND</u>
<b>DEVELOPED</b>			
Residential	652	68.1	1.89
Commercial	7	0.7	0.02
Industrial	3	0.3	0.01
Governmental	6	0.6	0.02
Institutional	14	1.5	0.04
Recreational	5	0.5	0.01
Sand/Gravel Extraction	22	2.3	0.06
Roads	<u>249</u>	<u>26.0</u>	<u>0.72</u>
<b>TOTAL DEVELOPED</b>	<b>958</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2.77</b>
<b>UNDEVELOPED:</b>			
Agricultural	141	0.4	0.41
Current Use/including Conservation Lands	22,006		
Vacant or Wooded	<u>10,238</u>		
<b>TOTAL UNDEVELOPED</b>	<b>32,385</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>93.88</b>
<b>TOTAL LAND AREA</b>	<b>33,344</b>		<b>96.66</b>
<b>WATER AREA</b>	<b>1,152</b>		<b>3.34</b>
<b>TOTAL AREA</b>	<b>34,496</b>	<b>(30,246)</b>	

Source: NH GRANIT LandSat TM Land Cover Data

### **Limits to Development**

A "Development Constraints" Map, included at the end of this section, has been created for this planning effort using Geographic Information System technology. This map identifies the five constraints to development that are related to the ability of the soil to accommodate septic systems, road or building construction. Reference to the map illustrates that one or more of these development constraints exists virtually throughout town, in no particular pattern. There are, in fact, only a few areas on the map that appear to have no limitations at all, and the areas shown as having the greatest constraints have not been developed.

### **II. D. Future Land Use**

The proposed Land Use Objectives identified under Section I. *Community Vision, Policies, and Objectives* of this Plan, allow for new growth and development while protecting and preserving the essential rural/recreational character of the town. These objectives form the basis of land use regulations, which are effected through zoning ordinances, subdivision and site plan review regulations. In Stoddard, as with many other small towns, growth typically occurs in the form of the development of individual properties rather than large subdivisions, although Stoddard has experienced such proposals in the past and may again in the future. Thus, it is both appropriate and expeditious to base future land use decisions on development policies aimed at specific objectives. This plan sets policies and establishes objectives that will guide future growth in a manner that accommodates both protection and development and does so on the basis of the issues raised during the Community Profile, as well as from the Master Plan Community Survey (Appendix I).

The proportion of currently unprotected, undeveloped land with minimum road frontage and the quantity of land considered marginal for development due to its steep slopes, wetlands and other physical features greatly limits the potential for development in Stoddard. Yet as the region grows, the potential for the development of new roads that provide access to remote areas of Stoddard is real. While the policies outlined in Section I. recognize the need to develop a Comprehensive Future Land Use Plan to be adopted as a component of the Master Plan, the following issues have been identified as significant to the Town's future development until such time as a Comprehensive Plan is prepared:

**The Need for Centralized Town Offices**

Stoddard has a large land area with a dispersed residential pattern, and no one central gathering place. The way in which the Town has developed over the years has created a number of separate communities with individual identities. Many town offices are located in the homes of incumbent office-holders and are relocated as new officers are elected.

**The Need for a Comprehensive Development Plan**

Many residents have expressed concern regarding the potential impact of unbridled development of both residential dwellings and new commercial/industrial development on the Town as a whole and the village centers.

**Conversion of Seasonal Dwellings**

As noted in the Population & Housing section, 57% of Stoddard's housing stock is seasonal. The implications for the Town are huge, if these dwellings were to become converted to year-round use. This would have the potential to greatly impact the Town in terms of population density and affects on sewage disposal, sensitive shorelands, school capacity, and demand for police, fire, highway, and other municipal services.

**Explore Feasibility of Hiring a Compliance Officer**

To avoid violations of building permits on a continuing basis, and in order to ensure that agreements made with the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Zoning Board of Adjustment are complied with; this Plan recommends that the feasibility of creating a position for "Compliance Officer" be considered. In absence of consistent and objective enforcement, state and local Land Use Regulations and provisions of this Master Plan are rendered less effective.

### III. HOUSING

The primary function of the Housing Section of this Master Plan is to respond to the statutory recommendation in RSA 674:2.III.1, that suggests local master plans address current and future housing needs of residents at all ages and income levels.

#### III. A. Housing Analysis

The first step in addressing housing needs is understanding current local housing conditions as defined by the Town's zoning and regulations. The following is a summary of the Stoddard Community Planning Ordinance as it relates to the provision of housing:

- The Town of Stoddard has three zoning districts: Residential, Lakeside, and Rural (Wetlands Conservation Districts are also within each of these zoning districts). Single family housing is permitted in all districts; the Rural District has a 2-acre minimum lot size, and the other two districts have a one-acre minimum.
- Manufactured housing/mobile homes are permitted in all districts on individual lots; mobile home parks are not permitted.
- An existing single family dwelling may be renovated to create a separate apartment within that dwelling subject to certain conditions.
- Duplex dwellings are permitted in all districts.
- Multi-family dwellings are permitted in all districts.
- Provisions exist for the creation of Planned Residential Development (Cluster Housing), which allows for the grouping of dwellings balanced by preservation of open space.

A review of the Community Planning Ordinance indicates that there appear to be provisions for the development of a variety of housing types to meet a range of income levels and needs, including special needs of the elderly.

#### III. B. Housing Inventory

Stoddard had an estimated 993 housing units as of 2003, of which over 568 are considered seasonal dwellings. This number represents just less than 10% growth in the housing stock since 1990. A review of the building permits issued in Town over the last eight years indicate that most new construction has been for additions to existing homes, garages and sheds. However, in the absence of a Compliance Officer, it is uncertain how many of these were simply cosmetic changes and how many involved conversions of seasonal dwellings into year round homes. Between 1990 and 1999, 93 permits for new homes were issued. The last several years show a steady increase in the number of permits issued annually<sup>4</sup>:

**Table #3  
New Home Permits – Stoddard & Surrounding Towns**

<b>Town</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Yearly Average</b>
<b>Marlow</b>	2	2	2	4	6	16	3.20
<b>Gilsum</b>				1	1	2	1.00
<b>Nelson</b>	5	7	6	8	6	32	6.40
<b>Sullivan</b>	5	0	3	2	3	13	2.60
<b>Stoddard</b>	10	8	13	18	23	72	14.40

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<sup>4</sup> Source: NH Office of Energy & Planning

Stoddard has issued more new home permits in the five-year period – 2000 through 2004 – than the total of the four surrounding towns combined. Point of interest: in 2003 – 2004, a short 24 months, there were 41 new home permits issued in Stoddard. We have not felt the full, financial impact of these 41 new home permits, as yet.

Census data on the housing stock for Stoddard have been compiled for the years 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000 as shown in Table #4 and Table #5 below.

**Table #4:**  
**Housing Units, Year-Round vs. Seasonal, Stoddard, 1970–2000**

	<b>1970</b>		<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Year-Round	94	15.8%	223	33.9%	273	30.4%	400	42.6%
Seasonal	501	84.2%	434	66.1%	626	69.6%	539	57.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>595</b>		<b>657</b>		<b>899</b>		<b>939</b>	

Source: US Census

Stoddard has consistently had a very high percentage of seasonal housing, even though this percentage dropped from 84% in 1970 to 57% in 2000. Of course, this may also reflect variations in reporting. According to preliminary Census data, the rate of seasonal housing dropped from around 70% in 1990 to just 57% in 2000. Part of this represents seasonal units being converted to year-round dwellings - which would, in part, explain the extremely high population increase observed between 1990 and 2000.

**Table #5:**  
**Housing Stock By Type, Stoddard, 1970–2003**

	<b>1970</b>		<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>		<b>2003</b>	
	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Single- Family	98	16.5%	845	96.5%	845	94.0%	906	96.5%	938	94.5%
Multi- Family	3	.5%	9	1.4%	12	1.3%	15	1.6%	28	2.8%
Mobile or Mfg. Home	3	.5%	14	2.1%	42	4.7%	18	1.9%	27	2.7%
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>595*</b>		<b>657</b>		<b>939</b>		<b>939</b>		<b>993</b>	

Source: US Census

\*The 1970 data reflects only year-round occupied units; therefore the individual housing types do not sum to the total housing units for that year.

Total housing stock broken down by housing type in Table #6 reveals that single family housing is the most predominant type - consistent with most of the towns in the region.

**Table #6:**  
**Housing Units by Type, Stoddard, 1991–2003**

	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Single Family	871	873	889	894	899	914	906	909	921	938
Multi Family	12	12	12	12	12	12	15	28	28	28
Mobile or mfg. home	45	48	48	50	50	52	18	24	24	27
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>928</b>	<b>933</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>956</b>	<b>961</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>939</b>	<b>961</b>	<b>973</b>	<b>993</b>

Source: US Census

Stoddard's housing stock went from the smallest in the area in 1970 to very nearly the largest in the year 2000 (Table #7). In 1970 it had only 42% of the average number of houses for the area. By 2000, its stock had reached 170% of the average. By contrast, its population had grown from only 39% of the average to 85%, and it had more housing units than permanent residents. The permanent occupancy rate in 2000 was only 49% of the average.

**Table # 7**  
**Increase in Housing Units 1970-2000**  
 Stoddard Compared With Nearby Towns of Similar Size

	Total Units 1970	Resident Population 1970	Resident Population to Housing Ratio 1970	Total Units 1980	% Increase 1970-1980	Resident Population 1980	Resident Population To Housing Ratio, 1980	Total Units 1990
STODDARD	103	242	2.35	260	152%	482	1.85	890
HARRISVILLE	281	584	2.08	325	16%	860	2.65	588
HANCOCK	399	909	2.28	495	24%	1193	2.41	723
NELSON	151	304	2.01	171	13%	442	2.58	379
GILSUM	190	570	3.00	237	25%	652	2.75	320
SULLIVAN	117	376	3.21	201	72%	585	2.91	283
MARLOW	184	390	2.12	234	27%	542	2.32	364
ALSTEAD	412	1185	2.88	568	38%	1451	2.55	843
Stoddard vs. other town averages	42%	39%	94%	82%	495%	59%	71%	178%

**Increase in Housing Units 1970-2000, cont.**  
 Stoddard Compared With Nearby Towns of Similar Size

	% Increase 1980-1990	Resident Population 1990	Resident Population to Housing ratio, 1990	Total Units 2000	% Increase 1990-2000	Resident Population 2000	Resident Population to Housing Ratio, 2000
STODDARD	242%	622	.70	939	6%	928	0.99
HARRISVILLE	78%	981	1.67	698	19%	1075	1.57
HANCOCK	46%	1604	2.22	814	13%	1739	2.14
NELSON	122%	535	1.41	400	6%	634	1.71
GILSUM	35%	745	2.33	343	7%	777	2.27
SULLIVAN	41%	706	2.49	299	7%	746	2.49
MARLOW	56%	650	1.79	396	9%	747	1.89
ALSTEAD	48%	1711	2.03	941	12%	1944	2.07
Stoddard vs. Other town averages	398%	63%	35%	170%	58%	85%	49%

Source: US Census

A surge in the building of vacation homes reversed Stoddard's population decline in the 1970s. Stoddard increased its housing stock in the 1970s at five times the rate of the other towns; and in the 1980s, when growth in all towns was at its peak, Stoddard grew at four times the average rate. In the 1990s housing stock growth in all the towns fell to about one-quarter of the peak rate. Stoddard's fell even lower, its growth then being only 58% of the average rate. The ratio of residents to housing units, which fell from 2.35 in 1970 to 0.70 in 1990, rose again to 0.99 in the year 2000, but is still only 49% of the average. This shows that the population of the town could double without expanding the existing housing stock.

### III. C. Population Analysis

The population in Stoddard has experienced dramatic ups and downs. In 1770, the Town had a resident population only 215 people; by 1800, however, the population had jumped to 1,148. The population peaked in 1820 at 1,203. The population decreased sharply during the next century until 1960 when it began to rise again. The decade of the 1970s saw a nearly doubling of population; the 1980s experienced a mere 29% increase, and throughout the 1990s there was, again, substantial population growth.

A comparison of population growth in Stoddard and neighboring towns from 1770 to 2002 is shown in Table #8. Antrim is not included since its population and development is too characteristically different to be comparable to Stoddard and its other neighboring communities. Windsor is too small to be comparable.

**Table #8:**

**Population 1770 - 2002, Stoddard and Neighboring Towns**

	<b>Stoddard</b>	<b>Marlow</b>	<b>Nelson</b>	<b>Gilsum</b>	<b>Sullivan</b>
<b>1770</b>	215	156	117	135	
<b>1780</b>	453	281	511		
<b>1790</b>	701	313	721	298	220
<b>1800</b>	1148	543	977	484	488
<b>1810</b>	1132	566	1076	513	516
<b>1820</b>	1203	597	907	601	582
<b>1830</b>	1159	645	875	642	555
<b>1840</b>	1006	626	835	656	496
<b>1850</b>	1105	708	750	668	468
<b>1860</b>	944	813	699	676	376
<b>1870</b>	667	716	744	590	347
<b>1880</b>	553	701	438	668	382
<b>1890</b>	400	584	332	643	337
<b>1900</b>	367	488	295	590	287
<b>1910</b>	257	425	231	470	266
<b>1920</b>	213	401	171	439	206
<b>1930</b>	113	330	162	506	192
<b>1940</b>	218	288	282	491	255
<b>1950</b>	200	330	231	578	272
<b>1960</b>	146	350	222	528	261
<b>1970</b>	242	390	304	570	376
<b>1980</b>	482	542	442	652	585
<b>1990</b>	622	650	535	745	706
<b>2000</b>	928	747	634	777	746
<b>2001</b>	944	762	647	788	760
<b>2002</b>	952	773	647	811	792

Source: US Census

All five towns experienced dramatic increases and decreases in population from the early 1800s to the early 1900s. In 1790 - the first year for which consistent statistics were available, Nelson had the largest population (721), followed by Stoddard (701); both of these having more than double the populations of the other three towns. By 2000, Stoddard was the largest of the five and Nelson the smallest. Average

*annual* population change from 1990 to 2000 has been stable and relatively low (0.5% to 1.5%) for neighboring towns, with a Stoddard having a growth rate of nearly 5%.

According to the 2000 Census, Stoddard's population of year round residents was 928, which made Stoddard the 10th smallest town in the Southwest Region where populations (excluding the City of Keene) range from 201 in Windsor (Hillsborough County), to 6,800 in Swanzey. A population increase of 306 persons, a 49% increase, in one decade (see Table #7) is startling.

Housing permit data for the last ten years indicates 93 building permits for single family homes were issued between 1990-2000. Assuming an average of 2.33 persons per owner-occupied dwelling unit as was reported in the 2000 Census, the addition of these new dwelling units would have contributed more than 215 people to Stoddard's population.

Population density, or persons per square mile, changed significantly between 1970 and 2000. All five towns experienced increased densities, with Stoddard nearly tripling its density during that period, a rate nearly three times that of Nelson which had the second greatest overall increase in density. Gilsum had the lowest overall rate of increase density. These trends were relatively consistent during the period between 1990 and 2000, when Stoddard's overall change in density was nearly triple that of its neighboring towns.

**Table #9:  
Population Per Square Mile, 1970 – 2000  
Stoddard and Neighboring Towns**

<b>Population</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
Stoddard	4.6	9.1	11.7	17.5
Marlow	14.8	20.5	24.6	28.3
Nelson	13	19	23	27.2
Gilsum	31.1	39.0	44.6	46.6
Sullivan	20.1	31.3	37.8	39.9

Source: US Census

### **III. D. Population Characteristics**

#### **Age of Residents:**

Age data provided in the US Census from 1970 to 2000 is shown in the table below. During that time, the 0-17 and 18-64 age categories remained relatively steady while the 65+ age category fluctuated, having a 19% decrease between 1980-1990 and increasing by 100% between 1990-2000.

**Table #10:  
Population by Age, 1970 - 2000**

<b>Age</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
0 - 17	66	100	141	187
18 – 64	148	296	411	601
65+ years	28	86	70	140
<b>Total</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>622</b>	<b>928</b>
<b>Population</b>				

Source: US Census

**Migration:**

Migration patterns have also affected population growth in Stoddard. In an effort to gauge the mobility of people in the country, the US Census asks respondents where they lived five years prior to that particular census count. When that question was asked of Stoddard residents in 1970, 80% of the respondents lived in the same house as they had in 1965. By 2000, only an approximate 64% of respondents lived in the same house as five years earlier.

**Income:**

Income data provided in the US Census reveals that all measures of income increased in Stoddard between 1980 and 2000. This is not, however, a unique phenomenon - virtually all towns in the region and the state experienced similar increases, due in part, to levels of inflation during the 1980s. Median family incomes are the highest for each census year examined.

**Table #11:**  
**Stoddard Income Levels, 1980 – 2000**

<b>Income</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>% Change 1980- 1990</b>	<b>% Change 1990 – 2000</b>
Per Capita	\$6,294	\$12,369	\$19,617	96.5%	58.6%
Median Family	\$15,000	\$34,306	\$48,125	128.7%	40.3%
Median Household	\$13,417	\$31,083	\$37,639	131.7%	21.1%

Source: US Census

Stoddard has consistently had a much lower tax rate and a much larger tax base than nearby towns. As shown in Table #12 below, the median household tax bill is only one-half the average of neighboring towns. Even though Stoddard's median household income is only 80% that of the other towns, the percent of household income that goes for the property tax is less than two-thirds that of the taxpayers in the other towns.

**Table #12:  
Property Tax Burden  
Stoddard and Neighboring Towns of Similar Size**

TOWN	EQUALIZED TAX RATE	EQUALIZED TAX RATE	GROSS LAND VALUATION	MEDIAN HOME VALUE	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD TAX BILL**	MEIDAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	TAX AS PERCENT OF INCOME***
	Year 2003*	Year 2000*	Year 2000	Year 2000	Year 2000	Year 2000	Year 2000
STODDARD	\$12.40	\$11.92	\$122,497,000	\$115,900	\$1,382	\$37,639	3.67
HARRISVILLE	\$15.10	\$20.79	\$ 82,278,000	\$124,600	\$2,590	\$48,625	5.33
HANCOCK	\$20.31	\$23.65	\$119,450,000	\$154,900	\$3,663	\$55,000	6.66
NELSON	\$14.51	\$22.31	\$ 53,059,000	\$106,600	\$2,378	\$41,250	5.77
GILSUM	\$25.25	\$25.07	\$ 27,630,000	\$ 89,100	\$2,234	\$43,359	5.15
SULLIVAN	\$23.19	\$31.17	\$ 22,570,000	\$ 91,700	\$3,133	\$51,058	6.14
MARLOW	\$30.91	\$33.01	\$ 31,679,000	\$ 88,100	\$2,908	\$45,000	6.46
ALSTEAD	\$25.26	\$26.14	\$ 76,062,000	\$ 87,900	\$2,298	\$43,191	5.32
Stoddard vs. Other Towns	0.56	.46	2.08	1.09	0.50	0.80	0.63

Source: NH Dept. of Revenue Administration

\* Note           Year 2000 and 2003 EQUALIZED TAX RATES are the published rate adjusted for a 100% full value tax rate.  
\*\* Note        MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD TAX BILL is calculated as the TAX RATE multiplied by the MEDIAN HOME VALUE.  
\*\*\*Note       TAX AS PERCENT OF THE INCOME is calculated as the MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD TAX BILL divided by the MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME.

**Education:**

For the three categories examined below, average level of education in Stoddard in 1970 was about 14 years (completion of the second year of college). By 1980, it had dropped by one-half year and has remained stable since that time. The percentage of those continuing their education beyond high school dropped from 59% in 1970 to 53% in the year 2000. And while in 1970 45% of those who had completed high school also completed four years of college, in the year 2000 only 22% had done so.

**Table #13:**  
**Level of Education, Stoddard Residents 25 Years and Over**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	1970	1980	1990	2000
High School Diploma/GED	41	143	154	199	41%	56%	44%	47%
1-3 yrs College	13	53	125	133	13%	21%	35%	31%
4+yrs College	45	59	74	92	45%	23%	21%	22%

Source: US Census

## IV. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### IV. A. Economic Environment

#### Local Economy

Stoddard is like many small towns in New Hampshire in that it has a limited amount of commercial or industrial development. Most goods and services for residents are purchased elsewhere. Keene, Hillsborough and Peterborough are the main economic centers in the Southwest Region that provide employment, a wide range of retail and wholesale goods, and personal and professional services.

Most of the businesses in Town are of a home-based nature. The Mill Village has a general store that has gas pumps, limited grocery items, and houses the Post Office. On Route 9, outside of the village area, are a convenience store with gas pumps, a lumber mill, two automobile repair facilities, land contractors, Champney Meat-Cutting, and a hardware store.

#### Labor Force

US Census data indicates that Stoddard contributes about 500 persons to the labor force. The data in Table #14 indicate a quantum rise in the managerial/professional category of residents over the last decade, with twice as many people as any other category. Farming and forestry make up the smallest category of worker in town, less than two percent, continuing a decline that began long ago. The service industry has seen a steady increase in labor force participants from Stoddard.

**Table #14:**  
**Stoddard Labor Force by Occupation Type, 1970 – 2000**

	<b>Labor Force (16yrs+)</b>				<b>% of Total Labor Force</b>			
	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
Man./Prof.	27	52	64	182	21%	21%	19%	36%
Tech./ Sales/Admin.	23	60	100	95	18%	24%	29%	19%
Service	6	21	40	52	5%	8%	12%	10%
Farming/Forestry	17	10	6	11	13%	4%	2%	2%
Precision/Prod/Repairs	16	36	50	86	12%	14%	15%	17%
Operators/Laborers	41	75	80	81	31%	29%	23%	16%

Source: US Census

**Table #15:**  
**Work-Commute Patterns, Stoddard Residents, 2000**

To Keene	187
To Peterborough	28
To Rindge	14
To Other	207
Commute-Out Total	436 ( <i>Avg. Commute Time 34 Min</i> )
Working in Stoddard	<u>71</u>
<b>Working Total</b>	<b>507</b>
 <b>Commute-In Total (Non-residents)</b>	 <b>63</b>

More than 85% of Stoddard workers commute to work out-of-town, with the most commuters going to Keene. No other Town contributes much to the commuting patterns of Stoddard residents at this time. Sixty-three non-residents commute to Stoddard from other communities for work.

#### **IV. B. Business Owner Interviews.**

Stoddard's zoning ordinance permits commercial or industrial use only by special exception and only in the Rural District. Most of its working residents commute out of town. Others are engaged in home occupations or home-based businesses. The Community Profile and the Master Plan survey findings indicate that a strong impetus does not exist in Town to change this situation, although there is some feeling that it would be good if some retail/ commercial operations existed in Town to serve the local populace<sup>5</sup>.

As part of the Master Plan process, the Planning Advisory Committee interviewed all business owners and proprietors of home occupations in Town. There were a total of 21 interviews conducted. The results of these interviews are summarized below, and the full text is attached to this document in Appendix II. The interviews were based on the following questions:

What one thing could the Town do to make the atmosphere more friendly to your business?  
What has been your major problem dealing with the Town?  
How do you see your business developing?

The first question received 19 different answers, and one answer given by three people, which was that the Town had no role to play in changing the atmosphere for the business. Otherwise, the answers ranged from a concern that laws were not being applied equally, to the strictness of Site Plan Review for small businesses, and that the limitation on number of employees for home occupations is a real hardship. The need for improved Internet access was also raised, as was the need for wider, better-maintained roads to allow tractor-trailer access. There was also a suggestion that the application process needs to be expedited, and that landowners in Town need to be educated on the current rules and regulations.

Responses to the second question indicated that 10 respondents have had no problems dealing with the Town. Others felt, again, that there has been an uneven application of the rules, that un-permitted businesses are being allowed to continue, and that the Planning Board is not adequately prepared to review complex materials required under the Site Plan Review Regulations.

On the third question, dealing with future plans, 11 people indicated that they have no plans to expand their businesses - some of them because of problems associated with hiring new employees.

#### **IV. C. Future Economic Development**

This Plan continues to recognize the importance of home occupations and home-based businesses, and supports the continuation of relevant provisions for such uses in the Stoddard Community Planning Ordinance. In addition, all reasonable efforts to support existing businesses and attract new business are encouraged.

The Town's practice of rezoning upon request by property owners for development in rural or residential districts challenges the Town's ability to implement a comprehensive plan for Stoddard's land use. The Route 9 corridor is a major transportation route and land in Stoddard is very attractive for haphazard development. Thoughtful, long-term planning is needed to respond to the inevitable development

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix I

pressures the Town will face. Maintaining Stoddard as a rural/residential community requires that our ordinances be reviewed regularly to ensure that they provide strict, enforceable requirements, including the size (scale, height, etc.), offsite noise, light, odors, effect on traffic, parking, etc. for all foreseeable types of development.

## V. TRANSPORTATION

The public and private concern with transportation in community planning is fundamentally about providing safe, convenient mobility and access, and addressing the obvious fact that the availability of access or lack of access supports or inhibits development. “Mobility” here is about allowing for the movement of people and goods into, out of, within and through a community. “Access” refers to access of people to homes, jobs, goods and services, socializing, and recreation. Mobility and access are typically analyzed in terms of the system’s capacity to convey travelers, be that by automobile, train or bicycle, safely and conveniently. The location and quality of transportation infrastructure and services are basic determinants of development patterns, along with individual landowners’ choices, municipal land use regulations, development potential of the land, and the state of the prevailing economy.

There are a number of criteria recommended for decisions about the maintenance and development of a transportation system: safety, mobility and access, previous investment, lifecycle costs, environmental quality, and community character. The criteria here that involve public spending, environmental quality and community character segue the discussion to an important relationship between the demand for mobility and access and land use patterns: individual land uses “generate” traffic – individual land uses create the demand for mobility and access. Accordingly, coordinating the planning and development of the transportation system and land use patterns is essential to effective community planning. The information and analyses here are provided to inform decision making about transportation system management and coordinate the development of land use patterns and the transportation system.

### V.A. Transportation System

The transportation system in Stoddard is almost exclusively public roads and highways, and private roads. There are no publicly maintained sidewalks or bike paths, rail service, public transportation, or public air service in Stoddard. Pedestrians and cyclists move by way of roads and highways with motor vehicles. Stoddard is unusual among the Southwest Region towns regarding the many thousands of acres of roadless land and for the low road mileage of public roads that provide through access. There are many miles of historic “carriage roads” and trails throughout the forested backcountry of Stoddard that are used primarily for recreation by foot, horseback, snowmobiles and bicycles.

### Roads and Highways

There are 36.1 miles of public roads maintained by the State and the Town of Stoddard. As of January 1, 2005, the NH DOT Roadway Inventory reports that the Town of Stoddard has 16.5 miles of Class V road and 3.2 miles of Class VI road. There are 31.5 miles of private roads maintained by individual landowners or groups of landowners to access remote properties and the many lake front properties.

**Table #16**  
**STODDARD ROAD NETWORK**

State-owned, State-maintained	Class I, NH 9	6.8 miles
State-owned, State-maintained	Class II, NH 123	9.6 miles
Town-owned, Town-maintained	Class V paved	8.2 miles
Town-owned, Town-maintained	Class V unpaved	8.3 miles
Town-owned, NOT maintained	Class VI unpaved	3.2 miles
<b>Total Public Road Miles</b>		<b>36.1 miles *</b>
Private Roads		31.5 miles
<b>Total Road Miles</b>		<b>67.6 miles</b>

\* Source: NH Department of Transportation, RDFI04, January 2005.

## **State Highways**

NH Route 9 is officially designated as a “Major Arterial” and is a principle highway for east-west travel through southern New Hampshire. NH 9 is a Class I highway in the State’s legislative classification system which is designed to reflect ownership, eligibility for federal and state funds, and maintenance responsibilities of roads and highways. NH 9 connects I-89 and I-93 in the east with I-91 in the west. In addition, Route 9 was designated in 1995 as part of the National Highway System, along with NH 101, and NH 12 south of Keene in the Monadnock Region. Arterial highways are managed to convey traffic through the Region while providing access to smaller roads along the way, and through the State and New England. The “Hillsborough By-pass” was completed in 2002, before that the “Granite Lake Bypass” and, more recently, a major resurfacing of the highway from Hillsborough to Stoddard was completed in 2003. Traffic volume and vehicular speed has increased since completion of these projects.

The current condition of NH 9 in Stoddard regarding lane and shoulder widths, and number of driveways and other intersections, is generally considered suitable for the safe conveyance of up to 20,000 vehicles per day. Approximately 1,000 feet of NH 9 from the town line with Nelson to the intersection of old Route 9 in Stoddard is designated as “limited access” (which allows no new intersections or driveways). From old Route 9 eastward to about 0.6 miles east of the intersection with Route 123 north, NH 9 is “controlled access” (allowing new roads and driveways only at pre-designated locations determined through legal transactions between the State and landowners at the time the highway was improved). The remaining 1.7 miles of NH 9 eastward to the Antrim town line has no access restrictions. With current traffic volumes on NH 9 through Stoddard ranging generally from 4,500 to 6,000 vehicles per day (varying with day of the week and location on NH 9), the expected lifespan of the current highway is several decades.

There has been much discussion during this public planning process regarding the impact that traffic on Route 9 has and could have on the Town. Considering the importance of the highway to the regional and state transportation system, concern has been expressed by many residents as to the potential for “strip mall” or “sprawl” development to occur along Route 9, particularly at the intersection with Route 123. Many possibilities exist for Stoddard to determine the way development of Route 9 proceeds, including “clustering” commercial development in particular areas and the use of common driveways, wooded buffers, and other appropriate regulations as alternatives to the present practice of piecemeal rezoning of the rural land along the highway.

NH Route 123 is a “Major Collector” for north-south transportation connecting the Peterborough area in the south with Walpole and Bellows Falls in the north. Collectors are managed to convey regional and local traffic between properties, town centers, employment, shopping, services and socializing, and to arterial highways. Less than 0.6 mile of NH 123 north of NH 9 is designated as “controlled access” highway. The surface was refinished from Hancock to Marlow in the summer of 2003. Anecdotal evidence is that traffic has increased somewhat, particularly commercial traffic. Hard data about traffic flow rates on both highways may be available from the State Department of Transportation, which should be pursued for planning purposes.

## **Municipal Roads**

The Town of Stoddard owns about 19.7 miles of public right-of-way. Twelve miles of the Class V right-of-way is maintained in summer and winter for year-round travel, and more than 8 miles of these Class V roads are paved, the remainder are gravel. Stoddard does not have a municipal highway department or associated equipment, but rather engages a private contractor for maintenance and construction of town-owned, town-maintained roads and bridges.

There are 3.2 miles of town-owned right-of-way that are not maintained in any way by the Town. These Class VI roads are typically remote and may never have been improved from pre-automotive days or the town meeting may have voted to discontinue maintenance due to a lack of homes or for municipal cost savings.

### **Private Roads**

Most seasonal/lakefront homes and camps in Stoddard are served by private roads. Landowners belong to homeowners associations that manage and maintain these roads. Under New Hampshire law, the landowners on these roads could petition the Selectmen or the voters at Town Meeting to have the roads transferred from private to public ownership. Even though there is an opportunity for the Selectmen to levy betterment assessments to cover the costs of road improvements (for example, bringing the private roads up to town road standards), annual maintenance would become the responsibility of all tax payers in Town. The chances of such a petition being brought to the Town would be likely to increase as seasonal homes become converted to year-round homes. This is yet another reason to carefully monitor and regulate such conversions.

## **V.B. Transportation Planning and Management**

The U.S. Department of Transportation and NH Department of Transportation categorize roads based on the function served by roads and highways in a regional network. Functional Classification is used to guide long-term management of the highway system. The Functional Classes are:

### **Major and Minor Arterials**

These roads carry the largest amount of traffic through a region. They may have limited or controlled driveway access, for the purpose of providing unimpeded traffic flow. These roads typically carry high volumes of traffic for medium to long distances and at medium speeds.

### **Major and Minor Collectors**

Collectors convey regional and local traffic between properties, town centers, employment, shopping, services and socializing, and to arterial highways. Collectors usually carry medium volumes of traffic at low to medium speeds for relatively short distances.

### **Local Streets and Roads**

Municipal streets and roads laid out and maintained to provide access to individual properties and land uses within communities.

A related component of functional classification is level of access control. Access control manages the frequency of curb cuts along a highway. Curb cut densities are a principal determinant of safety and mobility on highways - preservation of functional classification relies on managing frequency of curb cuts. NH DOT has the authority to control access to and from state routes; there are three levels of access control:

**Driveway Permits** - all other access to state highways is managed through the State driveway permitting process – principal criterion for permitting driveways is safety as a function of visibility, posted speed and functional classification with conventional distances of 400 feet on rural roads and 200 feet on urban roads. Determinations for permitting are carried out by NH DOT Maintenance District personnel following application to NHDOT by property owners or developers.

**Controlled Access** - the points of access are predetermined and negotiated between the DOT and the landowners. DOT purchases the frontage for the remainder of the property and delimits the access points. Very large properties may only be permitted one or two access points and be required to provide internal circulation.

**Limited Access** - the most restrictive, it is designed for through traffic, and abutters or other persons have only a limited right to access.

### **State Improvements**

Under state and federal law, the State of New Hampshire's ten-year schedule of transportation projects is developed through the State's nine regional planning commissions. This is accomplished under the guidance of a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), with members nominated by local selectmen and appointed to the committee by the Chairman of the Planning Commission Board of Directors.

Since the enactment of the federal legislation that led to the enhanced role of regional planning commissions in transportation planning, a system has been instituted for identifying projects for inclusion in the state's ten-year highway plan. In short, no project will be considered for the statewide plan unless it appears in the regional plan. This plan is updated every two years, and the TIP is revised based on public input. All towns are solicited for their input into the plan. This is the opportunity for towns to request improvements on state roads in their towns. Road improvement projects identified in the 1990 Master Plan have been completed. Only routine maintenance and resurfacing are planned in the next 5 years. It is within this State planning process that Stoddard should give consideration for future road improvements. It has been suggested that one such project would be a bypass for Route 123 around the Historic District and Mill Village sections of Stoddard.

### **Transportation Planning Strategies**

An important element in transportation planning is the connection between land use and highway systems. Roads provide access to land, which facilitates development of the land; the developed land, in turn, generates traffic. There are a number of strategies available to the Planning Board and the Town to address transportation issues, both locally and regionally. Following are several approaches intended to provide guidance in overall transportation planning.

#### **Focus Development in Residential Zones**

Provide for mixed uses and higher densities than in the outlying areas of Town. This approach can alleviate heavy traffic - residential and/or commercial - on roads that may not be suitable for such traffic, by encouraging pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

#### **Set Development Boundaries Along a Corridor**

Use the Master Plan process to; (1) ensure that any adjacent sensitive natural resources along a corridor would not be threatened by development; and (2) identify areas along the highway that can serve as "centers" for commercial development, with access provided by an interior road, rather than from the highway.

#### **Plan for Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections**

Whenever new subdivision roads are being proposed, or DOT is planning any improvements on state-maintained roads in Stoddard, the Town has an opportunity to request bike paths along the roadsides. In addition, off-road connections can be identified and mapped, and efforts undertaken to secure easements for public use.

**Develop and Adopt a Road Policy**

The Planning Board, in conjunction with the Selectmen, can develop a road policy to guide development in town based on the status of existing roads and future plans for roads. This can go far to ameliorate potential questions and problems when applications are submitted for the upgrading of a road, or for a building permit on a substandard Class V or Class VI road.

**Identify Appropriate Land Uses**

Existing land uses can be monitored and the Zoning Ordinance reviewed to ensure that development is compatible with the road system. Applications for development should always be reviewed with the scale of the proposal relative to the road network and abutting land uses in mind.

**Develop and Maintain a Capital Improvements Program**

Under RSA 674: 5, the local legislative body may authorize the Planning Board to develop a program that sets forth the planned capital expenditures over a six-year period. In conjunction with a Road Policy, the CIP can set the schedule, as well as the degree and type, of road improvements to be anticipated.

**Regulatory Strategies****Driveway Standards**

The Planning Board is allowed by state statute to adopt and administer regulations for the construction and permitting of driveways. The NH DOT regulates curb cuts on state roads; a local driveway regulation, however, can cover all aspects of driveway construction for the entire length of the driveway, not just the point of access from the road. Driveway standards can facilitate safe and efficient transportation corridor management.

**Scenic Roads**

Towns may designate any town road as a Scenic Road. The benefit of a Scenic Road designation is in the heightened awareness around the cutting of trees and removal and/or damage to stone walls. A town may adopt specific regulations pertaining to Scenic Roads above and beyond the regulations contained in the state statutes.

**Development of Back lots**

Back lot development is a zoning technique that allows the subdivision and/or development of lots that do not meet the frontage requirement for the district. The regulation might require or allow for shared access, thus reducing the number of curb cuts on a road, and the Planning Board can also set standards for the construction and layout of the driveway that serves the back lot. Another benefit to this approach is that agricultural land can be preserved by setting aside fields along the roadway.

**Subdivision and Site Plan Considerations****Viewing the Whole Parcel**

It is important to step back from an individual plan and look at it in relation to the neighboring properties and land uses. If the lot fronts on more than one road, decisions can be made about which roads would better serve as access, how the parking should be laid out, etc.

**Lot Layout**

Shared driveways or an interior street should be considered in a multi-lot subdivision, with lots fronting off of the interior road rather than the main frontage road.

**Parking Lot Location and Design**

Some recommendations for commercial parking lots are: (1) locate the building(s) close to the road and put the parking on the side or in the rear of the parcel; (2) require shared parking, when feasible, or plan for future shared parking; (3) prohibit parking and loading that requires backing out onto the street; and (4) the use of vegetative buffers between parking lots and roads.

**Driveway Location and Design**

A number of driveway issues have already been raised in the discussion about driveway standards. Consideration of location and the design of driveways are important for the development of a safe and efficient transportation network, especially in a town like Stoddard that has a significant amount of land with steep slopes. Issues such as safe sight distance, visibility on sharp corners, and water runoff from the driveway become even more critical when land is steep.

## **VI. UTILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICE**

Presence and availability of adequate utilities is vital to the welfare of the community, in particular for meeting the health, safety, and security needs of the citizens, and in general for meeting their desires for comfort, entertainment, and quality of life. Further, the availability of certain utilities can support the community's goals for economic development.

To meet these needs, utilities presently being provided in the Town of Stoddard include water and sewer, electricity and 3-phase power; telecommunications infrastructure (cable television, telephone/wireless communications, internet service); and, solid waste service. Because of their diverse nature, each of these, as well as private service not currently provided such as gas, is considered separately in the following sections. It will be seen that, due to the rural nature of the Town, not all utilities are available throughout the community, such as 3-phase power and cable. However, electricity and certain telecommunications services being somewhat easier to distribute, are available virtually everywhere in the Town. Electrical and telecommunications infrastructure are provided by private business entities.

### **VI.A. Water and Sewer**

The community does not currently provide public sewer and water, and there are no plans to develop such infrastructure systems in the next five to ten years. Residents and businesses are served by private water and sewer systems.

The Stoddard Zoning Ordinance currently requires septic systems to conform to sewage load requirements as specified by the NH Water Supply and Pollution Control Division<sup>6</sup>.

### **VI.B. Electric Infrastructure**

#### **Electricity**

Public Service of New Hampshire (PSNH) is the main electricity supplier for the Town of Stoddard. PSNH is the State's largest electric utility, providing service to more than 447,000 homes and businesses. PSNH is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Northeast Utilities, a utility holding company based in Connecticut. With three fossil-fuel fired generating plants and nine hydroelectric facilities, PSNH has over 1,110 megawatts of generating capacity.

In Stoddard, PSNH provides service to approximately 935 customers, or "accounts," which include residences, businesses, and streetlights. Distribution and transmission lines, which are placed along roadways, carry power throughout the Town to individual customers. The voltage from these lines is stepped down to the voltage that is used by the specific customer by way of transformers.

Electricity in Stoddard is distributed through two substations, one in Keene and another in Hillsborough. Each substation carries one circuit. The circuit from Keene is a 7,200 volt single phase that serves customers from Granite Lake to Route 123. The circuit from Hillsborough is currently being constructed and expected to be in service by the middle of May. This circuit will carry 34,500 volts up to Route 123, and 12,470 volts from the junction of Routes 9 and 123 to Shedd Hill. The Highland Lake, Kings Highway, Center Pond, and Shedd Hill area will be 7,200 volt single phase.

PSNH anticipates being able to provide an adequate supply of electricity to Stoddard at full build-out, extending distribution lines only where and when necessary. With the construction of the Hillsborough

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<sup>6</sup> Stoddard Community Planning Ordinance, 2003

substation nearing completion, there are no foreseeable plans to add another substation or any new circuits given the availability of the current stations to supply the necessary power to the customers in Stoddard.

The Stoddard Community Planning Ordinance does not currently regulate the location of utilities for new development.

### **3-Phase Power**

Public Service of New Hampshire has indicated that three phase service, required for manufacturing operations, is available only in selected areas of the Town. Currently, 3-phase power is available from the Junction of Routes 9 and 123 to Shedd Hill. PSNH indicates that they have had some discussion with Carlisle Lumber to bring 34,500 volts down to their plant, but it is unclear whether or not that will occur in the near future. While there are 2-phase circuits from Shedd Hill to the Marlow/Stoddard line, PSNH indicates that they prefer not to allow open delta services to get 3-phase circuits.

While there are no immediate plans to expand this service, PSNH indicates that it is possible for service to be expanded, within reason, if new customers request the service. The cost for such projects would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. PSNH indicates that the projected revenue from a new customer requiring three phase service would be reviewed and may be used to reduce customer contribution for the upgrade.

According to the Community Survey, there is a demand from local businesses for 3-phase power in certain sections of town, including along Route 9.

## **VI.C. Telecommunication Infrastructure**

### **Understanding Broadband (a.k.a. High-Speed Internet) Technology**

#### *What is Broadband?*

Broadband is the common term for a high bandwidth internet connection that can send or download information many times faster than with a standard telephone and modem. You can do everything you want to do online more quickly and more easily with broadband including logging-on, working from home through network connections, downloading files and music, and more.

#### *Who Provides Broadband?*

There are different ways of delivering broadband services over telephone lines, cable connections, via one or two way satellite systems and even by radio and there are many companies who offer these services. High speed or Broadband Internet connectivity, when locally available, is provided through either a Local Exchange Carrier (LEC), typically a phone carrier or an Internet Service Provider (ISP).

#### *Is Broadband Available in Stoddard?*

The capability of existing infrastructure in the Town of Stoddard to provide broadband service such as DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) through telephone and cable service, satellite cable, and wireless to individual homes and businesses is described in the sections below.

### **Telephone and Wireless Communications**

Landline phone service is provided for new and existing residences and businesses in Stoddard by Verizon. Long distance calling service through landline phones is available through a number of service providers. A list of Authorized Toll Providers is available from the NH Public Utilities Commission at

<http://www.puc.state.nh.us/Telecom/telecom.htm>. In addition, Verizon and various other telecommunications companies provide cellular and personal wireless service to the area.

Based on the 2004 US FCC Towers database distributed by the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning, there is currently one wireless facility in Stoddard (see Utilities and Public Service Map). The Town's Wireless Communication Facilities Ordinance establishes guidelines for the siting of towers and antennas. Currently, wireless communications facilities may be permitted in Rural Districts by special exception subject to site plan review.

**Table #17**

**Telecommunications Towers**

<b>Tower/Location</b>	<b>Responsible Entity</b>
Pitcher Mountain	NH State Police

Source: NH OEP Cell Tower Database (Nov. 2004)

**Internet Systems**

While 56k dialup connections over telephone lines are universally available, Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) high-speed computer internet service is the most widely available high-speed telephone connection type in the region. DSL phone service may be available to individual residential and business customers in Stoddard through local phone service providers. Availability will depend on the residential or business location in proximity to a central office or substation of the service provider (DSL broadband has a limited service area of 18,000 feet from the central office or substation providing service).

High speed or Broadband Internet connectivity, when locally available, is provided through either a Local Exchange Carrier (LEC), typically a phone carrier or an Internet Service Provider (ISP). LECs typically provide bandwidth and contract with ISPs to market and sell connectivity. ISPs also typically offer value added products including web-hosting space, web design assistance, email and access to news groups and other services. For competitive reasons, LECs and ISPs offering services in Stoddard change frequently. An up-to-date list is provided by the NH Public Utilities Commission at:

<http://www.puc.state.nh.us/Telecom/internetbroadband.htm>.

Fixed wireless broadband is a mesh network in which every station is fixed. It is ideal for distributing data between buildings (ie. for multi-site companies). It is not a practical technology for the home or workplace as devices and actions can block or interfere with the radio paths.

There is considerable interest for high-speed internet connectivity at Town Hall, the Library, Faulkner School, Public Safety Facilities and private residences.

**Cable Television**

Pine Tree Cablevision, an area-wide company headquartered in Pembroke, Maine, provides service to Stoddard and neighboring communities. Analog cable is available in most areas of Stoddard, providing 40-45 channels with options for receiving HBO, Showtime, and the Movie Channel at an additional cost. Digital television and High-Definition Television (HDTV, an improved image-processing method that lends itself particularly to large-screen displays) are not currently available in the Town of Stoddard, and Pine Tree Cable does not anticipate expansion of these services to the Town in the coming years.

The cable distribution system serving the Town of Stoddard is presently comprised of coaxial wire from the master station to neighborhoods and into individual homes or other customer sites served by Pine Tree Cable.

Satellite cable television is available to individual residences and businesses throughout the community, provided a southeasterly exposure is available, and is an alternative cable service for those areas not served with advanced cable options by Pine Tree Cable. There are a number of satellite cable providers and installers serving the area. One Satellite TV service offers asymmetrical connectivity in Stoddard.

#### **VI.D. Gas**

Natural gas is a private, for-profit utility that does not currently service the Town of Stoddard. NH Gas Corporation, based in Keene, provides limited service of a propane/air mix to approximately 1,000 customers within the City of Keene. Expansion of such service for private utility providers is costly. NH Gas Corporation does not anticipate the expansion of its service area to include the Town of Stoddard in the coming years. An up-to-date list of providers is maintained by the NH Public Utilities Commission at <http://www.puc.state.nh.us/Gas-Steam/gas-steam.htm>.

Propane gas is also a private, for-profit utility used for cook stoves and hot water, and to a limited extent, home heating. Several private companies provide service to residents of Stoddard and other communities in the region.

#### **VI.E. Solid Waste**

Stoddard supports a Recycling and Transfer Station, which is located on a one-acre lot on Route 123 North between Mill Village Store and the Town Hall. Further discussion of Stoddard's solid waste facility is included in Section VII. Community Facilities.

## VII. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This Section of the Master Plan identifies public and semi-public facilities that serve the residents and property owners of Stoddard. RSA 674:2:III.c recommends including a community facilities section which *“identifies facilities to support the future land use pattern..., meets the projected needs of the community, and coordinates with other local governments’ special districts and school districts, as well as with state and federal agencies that have multi-jurisdictional impacts.”*

An important function of town government is to provide residents and property owners with a level of service commensurate with taxes and fees paid that meets the current needs of the populace. In Stoddard's case, these include town government operations (Town Hall), schools, library, post office public safety (police, fire, and ambulance), and solid waste disposal (Recycling Center).

The degree to which these facilities are developed has a significant impact on the quality of life and general character of a community. This Section of the Master Plan presents an inventory of such facilities and services, an assessment of the adequacy of the current level of service, and any plans or recommendations to expand, improve, or add to an existing facility or service.

### **Stoddard's Historic Development**

Stoddard's historic development centered on the Stoddard Center and Mill Village, which are roughly in the geographic center of Town. The facilities that were established to serve the clustered population were, therefore, primarily located in or very near to this center. Currently, there are two commercial businesses in this area, Eaton Real Estate and the Mill Village Store, the latter being a convenience store with some fresh groceries, gasoline pumps and bottled propane. The remainder of this area consists of residential housing on relatively small lots and abutting wetlands and shorelands. The area is essentially “built out”.

In the mid-nineteenth century Stoddard was a flourishing New England village with a number of small industries (glass and furniture manufacturing), a population of about 1100 and numerous small and large farms with cattle and sheep. With the railroads opening the west, the population receded and the cleared land, once abandoned, quickly grew back into forest by the early part of the 20th century. With its hills and lakes, it became a vacation spot before auto travel, with inns and hotels. Today about 3000 summer residents come to Highland Lake, Granite Lake and Island Pond. In 1960 there were about 200 year-round residents, now the number is near 1000. While the population now approaches the earlier heyday, growth is scattered throughout the Town and commerce, industry and agriculture play a much smaller role.

### **Town Hall**

The Town Hall is located on Route 123 in Stoddard Center. The 1 1/2 story wood-frame building was constructed in the 1800s. The Town Hall has remained the same in both character and purpose since the first Master Plan was devised. It houses the Selectmen's Office and a multi-function room, kitchen and bathroom. It has undergone various maintenance upgrades and additions, including a handicapped access ramp, paving of the parking lot, a new well and heating system, clean-out and reinforcing of the bell tower. There is iron in the water, but tests reveal that it poses no health hazard.

The idea has been raised periodically of having as many government functions as possible combined under one roof. Presently the Town Clerk and Tax Collector work out of their own homes; however, the town cannot count on people who may hold these positions in the future wanting to work out of their homes. The Town Hall has been mentioned as a logical site to consolidate such activities, however, the interior would have to be dramatically redesigned, and that would change the character of the historic

building in ways that would possibly not be desirable to a large percentage of Stoddard residents. It would also do away with a convenient mid-size space for various town functions.

It is recommended that a new Town Hall be constructed, which would house offices for Selectmen, Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Treasurer, Police Department, and possibly other government functions such as social services (i.e. visiting nurse). Also needed, is space for town records, files, computers, copier, and a small meeting room (the Faulkner School can continue to provide space for large meetings). An extension could house the presently inadequate Davis Library.

The social scientist, Robert Putnam, in his book “Bowling Alone” associates the well being of a community, titled “Social Capital” with the day to day interactions of its citizens, particularly neighbors. Towns with centralized offices and nearby commercial activities, where people see each other frequently fare much better than towns full of strangers, simply put. Community facilities could include town offices but also, retail shops (i.e. sandwich/coffee shop, crafts, gallery), sidewalks, parking, outdoor benches and tables, a small playground for toddlers, and open space. Also one or more of these commercial spaces could share the maintenance costs, thus diminishing the individual cost and need for public funding. Passage of Article 28 at the May 20, 2003 Town Meeting authorized the Selectmen to accept a gift of 8.8+/- acres of land in Stoddard Center on Route 123. A Capital Reserve fund should be created for the purpose of building the Community Facility. The present Town Hall could be maintained for any number of purposes: small meetings, exercise groups, day care, etc.

## Education

Stoddard supports an elementary school located in Stoddard Center that teaches pupils from Kindergarten through Grade 5. Middle and senior high school students are sent to the Keene schools. As of October 1, 2004, 46 students were enrolled in the Elementary School; as of March 31, 2005, 68 Stoddard students were enrolled in the Keene School District (SAU 29). Since the 2000-2001 school year, Stoddard has had an increasing number of private and home school children. The following Table illustrates the varying school enrollment since 1990.

**Table #18**  
**Student Enrollment 1990-2003**

School Year	Elementary	Middle	High	Private & Home School	Total
1990-91	32	16	20	--	68
1991-92	43	10	22	--	75
1992-93	47	15	19	--	81
1993-94	43	17	23	--	83
1994-95	51	15	22	--	88
1995-96	51	15	20	--	86
1996-97	48	18	21	--	87
1997-98	57	21	24	--	102
1998-99	58	21	25	--	104
1999-2000	48	21	25	--	94
2000-01	46	22	34	6	108
2001-02	40	27	24	8	99
2002-03	45	28	36	15	124
2003-04	42	26	37	15	120
2004-05	46*	26**	42**	15	129

Source: NH Dept. of Education; School Administrative Unit 29

\* As of October 1, 2004

\*\* As of March 31, 2005

Adult and Continuing Education experiences enrich the lives of individual residents and contribute to improving the quality of life for the entire Town. While such experiences may be limited in Stoddard, there are many such experiences available throughout the region and the state. In addition, retired persons with diverse backgrounds could volunteer to share their knowledge with fledglings interested in acquiring new skills. The Town should pursue public/private partnerships and other efforts to encourage such activities.

### **Library**

The Davis Public Library is located near the Town Hall in Stoddard Center. The library was built in 1954, is of wood frame construction, and houses two rooms: a children's reading room, and the stack room. The library is administered by a board of trustees; staff consists of a part-time librarian and an assistant. Resources of the library consist of printed volumes, magazines, videotapes and audio books. Resources are replaced regularly, as resources allow, to ensure that resources remain up-to-date. Equipment includes two computers available for public; one has internet access and the other can be used for word processing or games.

Currently the library is open Tuesdays 7:00p.m. – 9:00p.m. and Saturdays 9:30a.m. – 11:30a.m. during the winter and Tuesdays 3:00p.m. – 5:00p.m., Wednesdays 7:00p.m. – 9:00p.m., and Saturdays 9:30a.m. – 11:30a.m. during the summer.

Space is limited, and there is no bathroom. If community facilities are gathered together at one location, the Library could become a vital focal point for community activities: expanding the number of volumes in its collection of books; providing for multi-media and digitally-based information; providing a point of access for public access to the Internet; offering meeting space; and more.

Anticipated needs in the next five to ten years include continued funding for regular updating of resources, painting the inside of the library, installing a bathroom, and increasing hours so more people can use the library.

### **Post Office**

There are more than 200 postal boxes located in Village Store, most of which are currently rented though some are still available for rent. There is also a rural postal route that serves 291 boxes, of which 55 are in the Munsonville area of Stoddard.

The Post Office operates as a contracted unit under the authority of the Marlow Post Office. Postal service at the Village Store is provided by two part-time employees. The Post Office is open 5½ hours per day, Monday – Saturday.

### **Police Department**

Stoddard has at this time a part-time Police Chief and 2 of part-time Officers. The Police Department is housed in a building on Old Forest Road, which accommodates an answering machine, fax machine and computer.

The bulk of patrol hours are spent on Route 123 and roads within the town proper. Stoddard Police Department is a member of the Cheshire County Sheriff's Department Dispatch Center in Keene and active Officers can be reached either by radio, telephone, or pager. Due to the increased number of calls from residents, the number of patrol hours has been increased from 20 to 25 hours per week. The problem of winter break-ins to cottages and homes is increasing. This may have to be addressed by increasing patrol hours and concentrating on lakefront properties that are left vacant during winter months.

Training is ongoing. With Officer safety as a major issue, it is imperative that classes and schools, when made available to the Department, are attended. Criminal complaints, such as domestic violence issues, burglary, criminal trespass and criminal mischief, just to name a few, are on the upswing in the community. It is imperative that members of the Department update their training continuously to provide maximum service to those in need of these services. Proper training not only insures Officer safety, it also maximizes the safety to the people involved, including the offender.

Equipment maintained by the Department includes one fully-equipped 2002 Ford Expedition police cruiser. A grant from the NH Dept. of Safety recently provided the Department with new radios including one digital mobile for the cruiser and one digital portable. The Police Chief indicates that there is a need for two more digital portables. He is not aware of any grant opportunities for additional radios at the present time.

The existing building used for the Department needs to be enlarged for purposes of providing additional space for the routine business as well as a training area. This recommendation strengthens the need for a new Town Center facility where more space, modern facilities and better infrastructure can be shared among municipal departments.

### **Fire & Rescue Services**

The Town of Stoddard maintains a fire station at the vicinity of Route 123 and Shedd Hill Road, with a volunteer staff of 18-20, of which 10-15 are active members who regularly participate in the regular meetings and training sessions. All members serve on an on-call basis, and receive a nominal hourly fee. The Fire Chief, who also serves on an on-call basis, receives a nominal salary.

The station house is of concrete block construction with wooden clapboards and houses a meeting room, radio room, four bays, and a 16 x 36 attached building that houses the rescue boat. The building has running water which is not of drinking quality, and no septic system.

Equipment maintained by the Department includes:

- 1976 750-GPM Pumper
- 1986 Ford 350 four-wheel drive Forestry Truck
- 1991 2,000-gallon Tanker Truck
- 1993 four-wheel drive Walk-In Rescue Truck
- 1995/1,000-GPM Pumper, 4wd
- 24-foot Pontoon Rescue Boat and Trailer
- 8,000 watt Emergency Generator
- Polaris 4-wheeler with trailer

The equipment and facility are well maintained and in good working order.

In FY ending June 30, 2004 the Fire and Rescue Department responded to 143 calls: 33 fire calls, 40 medical calls, 50 radio calls, 20 motor vehicle accidents, 12 business meetings, and 20 training meetings. Stoddard is a member of the Southwestern New Hampshire Fire Mutual Aid System, headquartered in Keene. Stoddard is also part of the Enhanced 911 System. All calls to 911 are routed to Mutual Aid Dispatch in Keene, then Stoddard is toned. Based on discussion with the Dispatch Center, an average response time for all of the towns in the region is about 2-3 minutes. This is defined as the time elapsed between the sounding of the alarm in the particular town and the moment when the trucks drive out of the station house. The time needed to get to the fire will vary depending on the distance, road conditions, etc. Response time during the day could also be somewhat longer, as many volunteers work out of town. But the consensus is that overall; the Town's response is good.

In addition, Mutual Aid is tied into the NH Fish and Game Department and the Cheshire County Sheriff's Department communications bands, and can dispatch these services as well. The Mutual Aid Center is under the direction of a Chief Coordinator, providing round-the-clock coverage with full-time dispatchers, two of whom are on duty with a back-up at all times. When a call is received at the Center for Stoddard, the alarm is activated at the Stoddard Fire Station, as well as over the monitors kept by all of the volunteers.

The Fire Department utilizes the ambulance services of Antrim and Marlow, with Antrim being the primary ambulance service. They are used most of the time because of response time and availability.

In 2004, the Fire and Rescue Department proposed an operating budget of \$31,265, and requested an appropriation of \$8,000.00 for Antrim ambulance service for the ensuing year. The main concern of the Department at this time is lack of volunteers. State mandates on training qualifications, as well as family demands are taxing our volunteer resources and availability. The Department is currently engaged in a recruitment drive.

### **Recycling Center**

Stoddard supports a Recycling and Transfer Station, which is located on a one-acre lot on Route 123 North between Mill Village Store and the Town Hall. According to the New Hampshire Recycling Database (2001), Stoddard has a Recycling Ordinance and pursues "Active Recycling". The transfer work is leased to Waste Management of NH Inc. who, for a fee, maintains and removes the waste containers to the Keene Recycling Center when full. It is overseen by a waste manager out of a small (8x8') cabin on the premises. Hours of operation are 9:00a.m. – 4:00p.m., Saturdays and Sundays and 12:00p.m. – 4:00p.m. on Wednesdays between Memorial Day and Labor Day. The town recently upgraded the waste receptacle with a compactor. In addition, there are bins to collect "scrap" metal, construction materials, flattened corrugated cardboard, newspapers, and a combination of plastic and glass bottles and cans. There is another small building in the left rear corner of the lot being used for fire department training.

There is general agreement that Stoddard's recycling efforts could be improved. Annual Sanitation Budgets, including all costs, have been steadily rising:

1999	\$58,955	2002	\$77,620
2000	\$65,959	2003	\$83,603
2001	\$74,222	2004	\$85,944 (requested appropriation)

Consideration should be given to revisiting certain policies of the Town regarding fees for construction debris and large appliances. It is understood that certain repercussions may result from this change, e.g. illegal dumping, but most agree that there would be a long-term cost-benefit to Town residents. Further, there has been interest expressed by townspeople in having a sheltered exchange corner where people could leave unwanted items in good condition that others in town might like to pick up. There is also a possibility of being a more self-sustainable recycling center (on the idea of the Harrisville program) where townspeople may be employed to separate recyclables, which are picked up and paid for by various recycling concerns. Consideration should be given to reinstating fees for disposal of various larger items including home appliances.

## VIII. RECREATION

The findings of the Community Survey suggest that residents generally are satisfied with the outdoor recreation opportunities in Stoddard; many respondents identified the availability of such opportunities as a primary reason for living in Stoddard. Yet there is concern that recreational opportunities for grade school age children and senior citizens of Stoddard may be limited. The following is a summary of municipal and state facilities as well as private facilities available in Stoddard:

### **Community Facilities:**

The Stoddard Recreation Commission, which formed several years ago to support the development of a baseball field, is currently overseeing the completion site. The ball field, located next to the elementary school, was constructed and equipped through municipal appropriations and a fundraiser. Stoddard, Nelson, and Sullivan youth participate in the local league. The field is open to the public.

Basketball courts located on the school grounds are also available for public use. The Town does not have any designated public beaches.

Stoddard's Community Events Organization assumes responsibility for arranging a variety of special events throughout the year, including Old Home Day and a Town Christmas Party.

### **State Facilities**

The State of New Hampshire owns over 17,000 acres of land in the Southwest Region. The majority of land is administered by the Department of Resources and Economic Development. In Stoddard, the State owns 5 acres of forest on Pitcher Mountain.

The NH Department of Transportation maintains two roads in Stoddard that serve as access points to fishable waters; they are located at the Stone Arch Bridge and at Cold Spring/Abbott Pond.

Boat access areas are located at Island Pond, Highland Lake (2), and Center Pond.

### **Private Facilities and Conservation Tracts**

- Monadnock-Sunapee Hiking Trail - Connects Mt. Monadnock in Jaffrey with Mt. Sunapee, traversing Dublin, Harrisville, Nelson, Stoddard and Washington
- Highland Lake Marina - water sports; boating
- Andorra Forest - natural area
- Charles L. Pierce Wildlife & Forest Reservation - natural area
- Thurston Williams Family Forest - natural area

In addition to the public and private opportunities identified above, a number of **recreation associations, clubs, and organization** exist in the town and the region. These various groups provide Stoddard residents with information and resources about local recreation opportunities including trails for hiking and snowmobiling, lake access and monitoring, youth activities, and community events. While additional associations, clubs, or organizations may exist in the town or region, the list below identifies some of these local resources. Additional information about many these groups, including contact information, is available on the Town's website, [www.stoddardnh.org](http://www.stoddardnh.org) and links to some of these organizations are included below.

### **Snowmobile Clubs**

Stoddard Rock Hoppers Snowmobile Club – [www.stoddardrockhoppers.org](http://www.stoddardrockhoppers.org)

**Trail Associations**

Monadnock-Sunapee Greenway Trail Club – [www.msgtc.org](http://www.msgtc.org)

**Lake Associations**

Highland Lake Unified Association

Highland Lake Association

Island Pond Association

Granite Lake Association

Hidden Lake Association

**Youth Organizations and Activities**

Cub Scouts

Pathways Program

Stockade

Four-H

**Community Organizations and Activities**

Stoddard Historical Society

Stoddard Women's Fellowship

Community Events Organization

Quilting Club

Stoddard in the Next Century

Stoddard Garden Club

Pitcher Mountain Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

In order to meet the desires of Stoddard's residents as expressed in the Community Survey and the subsequent recreation objectives and policies identified in the Master Plan, the Town could consider expanding both participation in and goals of the Recreation Commission. Members of the Recreation Commission have indicated that as the baseball field nears completion, now may be an opportune time for the Commission to identify new projects and new members for the coming years. Specifically, the Commission could identify ways to provide additional recreational activities for all residents, but especially for elementary age children and seniors, and explore the feasibility of creating one or more public beaches, as recommended by residents in the Survey.

## **IX. CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION**

### **IX. A. Natural, Cultural and Historic Resources**

#### **Natural Resources**

The Community Profile indicated that protecting and preserving Stoddard's natural, cultural and historic resources is important to residents. Protecting the many lakes and preserving the cultural and historic features and sites in Town is vital to maintaining not only the environmental health of Stoddard, but also the recreational opportunities that are so closely connected to the Town. This plan recommends continued support of the land conservation activity of the Conservation Commission and of the many individuals who have placed easements on their land, including those property owners who consider themselves to be good stewards of the land. A "Conservation and Current Use Lands" map is included in the Land Use Chapter of this Plan.

Upwards of 22,000 acres (66% of Stoddard) is already protected in some fashion, either through public or private conservation efforts, or deed restrictions. It is important to note that much of Stoddard's protected land abuts other protected lands in neighboring towns. The backcountry of Stoddard is part of a vast forest area extending north and south from Nelson to Mount Sunapee, and east and west from Acworth to Antrim. Some of Stoddard's conservation land is included in the "Super Sanctuary" to the east and south that comprises thousands of acres in several towns, providing a regionally significant wildlife sanctuary. And as they are our most valuable economic resource, every effort must be made to protect our lakes that comprise nearly 3.5% of Stoddard's surface area, from unrestrained development, pollution and invasive species (fungi, plants and animals).

The 1990 Master Plan contains a very detailed analysis of topography, soils, slopes and water resources, which is herein included by reference. This Plan does not review the data from the 1990 Plan, but does include an Aquifer Map that was not a part of the earlier Plan, although there is a discussion on aquifers. The source information for the aquifers is different now than it was then, so a brief discussion on that follows:

#### **Aquifers**

Aquifers are geologic formations (either fractured bedrock or sand and gravel) that, by virtue of their physical structure and location on the landscape, can provide water through drilled wells in sufficient quantities to support human uses. Characteristics of high-value aquifers include being situated down stream in a watershed, being in a watershed with a preponderance of natural forested land cover, and having a physical structure that is highly permeable, i.e. with open spaces between particles of sand and gravel or open fissures and interconnected networks of cracks in bedrock - to both store and transmit water. Aquifers are re-supplied primarily by water falling as precipitation. Rain and snow melt move downward through soil, sand and gravel, and/or cracks in bedrock to a saturated zone where the spaces between particles and cracks in rock are filled with water.

Aquifers of medium to high potential occur in southwestern New Hampshire as unconsolidated deposits of sand and gravel, or in bedrock fractures. The unconsolidated deposits in this region are principally stratified drift deposits (sand and gravel sorted and deposited by running water from the melting glaciers) that are usually in valley floors or on adjacent hill slopes. These materials have abundant pore space to store water, and pore space may amount to more than 30 percent of the total volume of the deposit. Consequently, stratified deposits at the bottom of watersheds are good aquifers.

Fractured bedrock can be highly-productive aquifers, especially when overlaid by a layer of sand or gravel, which allows the recharge to occur directly from above. Most domestic water wells in Stoddard are drilled into bedrock – and while many have low yields, bedrock fractures can be staggeringly water rich – and sometimes transmit great volumes of water over many miles.

In contrast, a till aquifer will typically have a lower-yielding well life due to its mixture of clay, silt, gravel and boulders that tend to compact. The transmission and storage of water is greatly decreased in this type of aquifer. The water table (the top of the saturated zone) can fluctuate, depending on the volume recharge to aquifer material.

The US Geological Survey provides aquifer delineation maps for the entire state. The map is essentially a surgical geology map, showing the distribution of unconsolidated (not bedrock) geologic material on the land surface. Bedrock aquifers do exist, but these were not part of this particular study. This study identifies areas of sand and gravel and measures the rate of transmissivity - that is, the speed with which water passes through the materials, in increments of 1,000 feet squared per day.

Groundwater in saturated soils is generally vulnerable to pollution because surface contamination can infiltrate directly into it. It is possible, however, to trace the source of pollution by finding the watershed boundary. Once a pollutant enters an aquifer, it may remain in place for an indeterminate period of time. While pollutants can enter an aquifer easily because sand and gravel are porous and transmit water rapidly, once in the aquifer their movement is then governed by groundwater flow, which moves very slowly through the tiny pore spaces of the glacial till.

Sources of aquifer pollution are frequently located on the ground surface directly above or contiguous to the aquifer: septic tank effluent, landfill refuse, leakage from sewer lines or ruptured fuel tanks, agricultural fertilizers and pesticides are among the many possible sources of pollution for an aquifer. In addition to these potential contaminants are the materials such as fuels, lubricants or other toxic materials associated with earth excavation, an activity that is, of course, directly associated with sand and gravel aquifers.

The maps appended to this report show only the boundaries of stratified drift deposits with transmissivity greater than 1,000 ft-sq/day. These data were generated by the US Geologic Survey. More detailed information on ground water flow, depth of deposits, volume of sediment, etc is available. The four major aquifer areas in Stoddard identified by these maps are as follows:

- The largest concentration of groundwater is located just to the east of Route 9 and north of the intersection with Route 123, with Island Pond to the north and Robb Reservoir to the south;
- The second largest concentration is located in the far southeastern corner of town, under Route 123 and Bailey Road
- On the west side of Route 9 just north of the intersection with the Old Route 9;
- The smallest area lies just to the east of Center Pond.

### **Steep Slopes**

Also included in this Section is a Steep Slopes Map, which illustrates only those slopes that are over 25% grade; the Slopes Map in the 1990 Plan presents slope information in three categories: 0 - 8%; 9 - 15%; and over 16% slope. The new map indicates that the majority of the land in Stoddard is over 25% steep. However, as the 1990 Master Plan noted, many areas contain soils that are suitable for development, despite the steepness. The areas of land that are less than 25% grade are scattered all about Town, some with road frontage and some without. Therefore, development in steep areas is of great concern for the

Town; issues such as soil erosion, septic system and well location, and road construction are all important variable in evaluating development proposals.

### **Cultural and Historic Resources**

The Planning Advisory Committee identified cultural and historic resources that are considered significant in Stoddard and should be given due consideration for preservation in any Land Use Plan. This listing (as of October 2003) is a compilation from several sources including the SWRPC map “Community Facilities & Cultural/Historic Features”:

General:	Historic woods roads, cellar holes and stonewalls (many laid out along the original lot and range lines)
Cemeteries:	Original town cemetery (Dow Hill) with adjacent (“New, new”) Cemetery in current use, fronted by original Old Town Center on School Road; “New” cemetery on Mt. Stoddard Road; Smaller cemeteries (Jefts, Joslin, Stevens, Robb and other lesser burial sites); Millen Burial site; and, the Unknown Civil War Soldier grave in the Robb Cemetery.
Bridges:	Stone arch bridge on Route 9
Factory Sites:	Cherry Valley/Stoddard Lumber Joseph Foster’s 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Glass Factories Granite Glass Works New Granite Glass Works South Stoddard Glass Manufacturing
Private Properties:	Abbott Mill, Burnett Lodge, Davis Homestead, Pitcher Mountain Farm and Parker-Butterfield House (Stoddard’s oldest), Sargent/Richardson Farm, Shinbone Shack, Lodge and Mill, Taylor/Swett House, Daniel Upton Place, Wilson Homestead, Wilson Tavern Site
Natural Resources:	Stoddard Rocks Monadnock-Sunapee Trail Andorra Forest and Fire Tower Over 26,000 of the total 34,396 eased forested land 1,152 acres of lakes and ponds Community-supported Agriculture (CSA) farm
Community Facilities:	Town Hall and Selectman’s Office Davis Library Faulkner School, “Lucy Hill” Auditorium and adjacent play lot and playing field Town beaches and boat facilities on Center and Island Ponds, Highland and Granite Lakes Park areas (Gazebo and Clothespin) in “Historic Area”
Historic Facilities:	Town Pound Congregational Church with Historic Johnson Organ and Civil War monument Historical Society and Hearse House

## **Forest Fragmentation - Regional Analyses**

There are four recently completed or ongoing regional conservation-planning projects that include Stoddard: The Nature Conservancy's "A Land Conservation Plan for the Ashuelot River Watershed"; the "Quabbin to Cardigan Land Conservation Planning Project"; the NH Fish & Game Department's first-ever "Statewide Wildlife Conservation Plan"; and the Planning Commission's "Southwest Region Natural Resources Inventory, First Edition, 2003."

The common element among these projects is the acknowledgement that landscape fragmentation by development is a fundamental problem to be addressed by conservation efforts, whether by land conservation or zoning practices. Another commonality among these research and planning projects is the finding that the many thousands of acres of unfragmented, protected back country of which Stoddard is part are collectively an exceptional resource regarding plant and animal habitat and recreation.

- The Nature Conservancy's "A Land Conservation Plan for the Ashuelot River Watershed" identifies land areas within the watershed that offer the highest potential for supporting natural forest, wetland and aquatic communities. The project is intended for use by private land trusts and municipalities. The Plan includes most of Stoddard's land area despite the fact that less than half of the town is in the Ashuelot River Watershed (approximately the western third of Stoddard, westerly from Pitcher Mountain, Center Pond and Granite Lake) due to the analytical process using a substantial buffer surrounding the watershed. The project report is available from The Nature Conservancy.
- The Quabbin to Cardigan Land Conservation Planning Project is a collaborative research and planning effort among land trusts in New Hampshire and north central Massachusetts to identify areas with potential to 1) add to large unbroken groupings of protected properties (e.g. Andorra Forest and The 'Super Sanctuary' in Stoddard) and 2) areas where new land protection efforts can create large unbroken groupings of protected properties. The project is intended for use by private land trusts.
- New Hampshire's first "Statewide Wildlife Conservation Plan" will be completed in Fall 2005. This project of the New Hampshire Fish & Game Department identifies landscape conditions that can support special ecological communities and the habitats of species of concern in New Hampshire. The project is mandated by federal law as a measure to preserve species of plants and animals at risk before they become endangered.
- The "Southwest Region Natural Resources Inventory, First Edition, 2003" is 1) an analysis of landscape fragmentation caused by development in the Southwest Region and 2) a cursory quantification of the fragmentation of natural resources, such as riparian areas, farmland soils and forest soils types. The Inventory is offered as basic information for municipal planning and a point of departure for further research and analysis through the development of municipal Natural Resource Inventories.

## X. CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

The primary source for identifying earth materials suitable for excavation and for use as construction materials is the Soil Survey of Cheshire County, NH published in 1984 by the USDA Soil Conservation Service (today known as the Natural Resources Conservation Service). The classification of construction materials is based on observed soil performance and properties, as well as site features that affect the removal of the material and its use as a construction material.

**Roadfill** is defined by the Survey as soil material that is excavated in one place and used in road embankments in another place. Only soils suitable for low embankments (under six feet) were rated by the Survey. Roadfill is rated as being “good”, “fair” or “poor”. “Good” soils are those comprised of significant amounts of sand or gravel or both, and slopes of 15% or less. “Fair” soils have in excess of 35% silt and clay-sized particles, and slopes of 15-25%. “Poor” soils contain many stones, or slopes of more than 25%.

**Topsoil** is defined in the Survey as material used to cover an area in order to establish and maintain vegetation. For the purposes of the Survey, only the upper 40 inches of soil were evaluated for its use as topsoil. Topsoil is also rated as being “good”, “fair” or “poor”. Soils rated as “good” contain no stones or cobbles, have little or no gravel, and slopes of less than 8%. “Fair” soils are sandy, have considerable amounts of gravel or stone, or slopes of 8-15%. “Poor” soils are comprised of a lot of sand or clay, have a large amount of gravel or stone, and slopes of more than 15%.

**Sand and gravel** are defined in the Survey as natural aggregates suitable for commercial use with a minimum of processing. The Survey evaluated only the probability of finding materials in quantities large enough as to be suitable for removal. The properties used to evaluate sand and gravel soils include the thickness of the material, the size of the grain, and the content of rock fragment. A soil rated as “probable” has either a layer of clean sand or gravel, or a layer of sand or gravel with up to 12% silty fines. In addition, the material must be at least three feet thick and have less than 50%, by weight, large stones.

The table below presents the calculated acreages for all four construction material types depicted in the attached maps.

**Table #19**  
**Calculated Acreages for Construction Materials**

CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL	AREA (in acres)	% OF TOTAL LAND AREA
<b>Roadfill</b>		
Good	4,189	13%
Fair	12,022	35%
Poor	17,751	52%
<b>Topsoil</b>		
Good		
Fair	2	0%
Poor	32,615	96%
<b>Sand</b>		
Probable	844	3%
Improbable	33,088	97%
<b>Gravel</b>		
Probable	176	1%
Improbable	33,756	99%
<b>Total Land Area – 33,932 Acres</b>		

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Summary of Stoddard Master Plan Update Survey Findings**

The following findings are based on 535 responses of which 184 were from those for whom Stoddard is their principal residence (residents) and 351 from those who have vacation homes here (non-residents). Though the responses were tabulated separately, the groups, except where noted, responded similarly. Full results will be available at the Town Hall, Town Clerk's Office and Library.

- Overwhelmingly people choose to live and vacation here for the small town and rural lifestyle, outdoor recreation opportunities, low crime rate and low taxes. There was no discernable pattern to the reasons for considering leaving.
- In addition to a vacation site, Stoddard can be characterized as a commuter and retirement community.
- Within 5 years, 39 non-resident respondents and their families plan to become full-time residents with an additional 16 families in the 5-10 year period thereby changing the use of the Town's housing stock.
- Few people (9) are considering sub-dividing their property.
- There is a strong preference for controlled development of community services and for control of the development of open lands.
- The present system of governance by a Board of Selectmen is preferred to a shared town administrator.
- There is a 2:1 preference for retaining the present system of allowing commercial/industrial development in the rural districts when approved by the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment.
- There is divided opinion regarding a commercial zone with more residents opposing it and non-residents almost evenly divided. There is strong opposition to an industrial zone from both groups.
- The majority of residents (67%) are in favor of allowing additional employees under home occupation regulations while non-residents report a slight preference for no change in the current regulation.
- Both groups are strongly in favor of permitting small retail businesses.
- There is considerable interest in creating historic districts and in placing more emphasis on historic preservation
- Residents were almost evenly divided regarding their concern for our growth rate while the majority of non-residents do not find the rate to be of concern.
- The requirements for lot sizes should remain as they are. There is little support for cluster or multi-family housing.
- Respondents are very concerned about: maintaining dark skies, controlling signs, protecting drinking water, shorelands and wetlands, controlling junkyards and traffic speeds in town.

- Services respondents felt were very important to have in town in addition to the basic rural community services of fire and police departments and government were a restaurant or café and an improved post office. The most often noted need is for a general store.
- The most often noted views to be preserved were Pitcher Mountain, Bacon Ledge and views from the lakes.
- There was little support for any increased services or programs that would result in higher taxation except for historic preservation.
- Roads should not be extended, but there is interest in improved maintenance.
- The majority of residents and a greater number of non- residents would like to see Town Offices centralized.
- There is greater than 2:1 support favoring the Town purchasing properties of special value to the Town.
- Though the rate of current use of the library is low, responses indicated that use would double if the collection and/or hours were expanded.
- In response to the question of the number one improvement citizens would like to see in Stoddard the following were noted 10 or more times.

Increased access to Town government and civic services (including transfer station)

Expanded library

Road Improvements

General store/restaurant

More Town recreation and community events

No changes

- Additional comments not included elsewhere include non-residents feeling that they have high taxes without representation or consultation, the request for a landfill area for brush, better lake water quality and safety controls and the desire to have the Town remain as it is. There was also a request to consider a new residential zone behind Granite Lake.

## APPENDIX II

### **Economic Development Business and Home Occupations Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with 21 business owners in Stoddard. These include home occupations such as consulting, general contracting, art/design studios, and all the major commercial/retail operations. The results are summarized below. If a number appears after a comment, that indicates the number of times it was noted.

**1) What one thing could the Town do to make the atmosphere more friendly to your business?**

Uphold town laws, treat everybody equally.  
Site Plan review too strict for small business.  
Would like to hire employee, but can't. Regulations not receptive to small business.  
Business is running smoothly, not an issue.  
Allow for the possibility of hiring one employee.  
Nothing – business does not impact Town (3).  
Town has been receptive.  
Improve internet speed/access for e-business which is ideal for this recreational Town.  
Wider, better maintained roads to allow tractor trailer access. Have to leave (materials?) in Marlow under some road conditions.  
Allow for the possibility of adding retail to studio in Lakeside district.  
Only one employee, not an issue.  
Leave the enforcement of regulations to the selectmen.  
Treat all businesses the same across the board.  
Unequal application of regulations for business as well as town. All town departments must abide by regulations just the same as businesses.  
Implement a method to expedite visits to the selectmen's office. Applications, regulations and information should be available without having to wait in line.  
Increase education of landowners on current rules and regulations. Prepare an information package relevant to projects being proposed.  
Town officials should treat all individuals in the same manner across the board, without prejudice. Adherence to existing rules and regulations by officials... There is no incentive for anyone to comply with any of our regulations.

**2) What has been your major problem dealing with the Town?**

No problems (9)  
It would be helpful to understand the community's attitude toward business to achieve common ground that respects needs of both.  
Un-permitted businesses allowed  
Uneven application of rules.  
Under the current boards, I haven't had any problems.  
Have plenty of rules/regulations but not enforced uniformly.  
Lack of diplomacy on the part of town boards. Turning a blind eye to violations of regulations.  
Planning Board not adequately prepared to review complex materials requested under site plan review.  
Lack of ability of officials to deal effectively with problems.

Superior attitudes of some members of the boards (3).

**3) How do you see your business developing?**

Downscaling as retirement approaches, just need personal office space in home.

No planned expansion (6).

Might want to hold group seminars (2).

Web business might expand.

Developing well; planning to expand existing type of products only.

Tentative plans; need follow-up

No growth, too hard for business.

Need to be able to hire help. In the long term may have to relocate.

Don't plan to expand, can't find employees.

Retain as family operated business.

Don't expect to expand but may like to hire part-time employees (home occupation).

No planned expansion. Frustrated with existing process and no enforcement on business that ignores town regulations.

Would like to hire an additional person outside the family.

Hard to compete as a compliant business with others which just begin operation.

## **APPENDIX III**

### **Existing Land Use and Development Potential Analysis Methodology**

#### **Town of Stoddard, NH Master Plan Update**

Tax property boundaries, assessing information, zoning standards, and environmental data were used in the analysis to identify properties that could be subdivided and/or further developed based on lot size, frontage requirements, and existing land-use. Environmental constraint information was then applied to eliminate those areas in which development would be difficult. Environmental constraints included surface water bodies or watercourses from US Geological Survey (USGS), hydric soils from US Department of Agriculture soil survey, and steep slopes greater than 25 degree from USGS Digital Elevation Model. The resulting information illustrates the properties that can be developed and the areas that do not have an environmental constraint.

Land use was obtained from the municipal tax assessor's database. Commercial use and exempt use were assigned to parcels with commercial square footage and exempt areas greater than 0, respectively. Institutional use was assigned to parcels owned by the Town or State. Vacant use was assigned to parcels with no buildings (using 'TYPE' equal to 'L/O' in tax assessor's database). Cemeteries, common lands, and beaches were identified with the assistance from the Town Administrator. Residential use was then assigned to parcels other than any types identified above. Conservation land data was obtained from the GRANIT database, a state GIS data center.

For parcels less than 4 acres, the land use was assigned to the entire parcel. For parcels equal to or greater than 4 acres, the land use was assigned to a 2-acre square area within the parcel. It is important to note that the square only presents the land use on the parcel graphically without any indication of specific location of the land use or buildings.

Theoretical capacity numbers for housing units and square feet of commercial/industrial floor space were calculated, where permitted, for each parcel in the town. The minimum lot size criteria specified in the local zoning ordinance was used to estimate capacity for residential units. Additional development potential was calculated as the difference between the theoretical capacity and the existing land use, where existing land use was quantified using the local tax assessing database. The estimates were then aggregated and summarized by zone.

It is important to note that this simple perspective on development potential presents gross development capacity and therefore over-states actual development potential. Furthermore, the estimates for single-family residential, two-family residential, and multi-family residential units are mutually exclusive.

The tables that follow present statistics for existing conditions and the development potential GIS analysis.

## EXISTING LAND USE CONDITIONS

<b>Lakeside Zones</b>					
	Parcels	Acres	Residential Units	Commercial / Industrial SF	Environmentally Constrained Acres
Residential	691	517	691	0	56
Commercial	2	13	2	31,600	2
Cemetery	1	28	0	0	17
Common Land	11	21	0	0	6
Conservation Land	15	368	1	0	46
Institutional/Exempt	37	34	14	0	12
Undeveloped/Agricultural	322	341	0	0	54
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,079</b>	<b>1,322</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>31,600</b>	<b>192</b>

<b>Residential Zones</b>					
	Parcels	Acres	Residential Units	Commercial / Industrial SF	Environmentally Constrained Acres
Residential	79	412	79	0	60
Commercial	3	3	2	105,050	1
Cemetery	3	4	0	0	0
Common Land	0	-	-	-	-
Conservation Land	3	5,641	1	0	548
Institutional/Exempt	21	16	12	0	3
Undeveloped/Agricultural	20	73	0	0	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>6,149</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>105,050</b>	<b>628</b>

<b>Rural Zones</b>					
	Parcels	Acres	Residential Units	Commercial / Industrial SF	Environmentally Constrained Acres
Residential	278	2,652	277	0	432
Commercial	5	1,074	4	1,053,900	490
Cemetery	4	150	0	0	8
Common Land	2	83	0	0	3
Conservation Land	63	13,428	22	0	1,959
Institutional/Exempt	23	56	3	0	13
Undeveloped/Agricultural	515	6,183	0	0	914
<b>Total</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>23,626</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>1,053,900</b>	<b>3,820</b>

## Number of RESIDENTIAL HOUSING UNITS

Zone	Count of Existing Units	Theoretical Capacity for Housing Units	Unused Capacity for Housing Units
		Considering: Zoning Standards Existing Lot Size & Severe Environmental Constraints	Zoning, Lot Size, Severe Environmental Constraints & Existing Land Use
Lakeside	708	442	333
Residential	94	364	325
Rural	306	3,719	3,583
<b>TOTAL ALL ZONES</b>	<b>1,108</b> <i>Existing Units</i>	4,525	<b>4,241</b> <i>Additional Units Theoretically Possible</i>

## Square Feet of COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL Floor Space

Zone	Existing Commercial Space	Theoretical Capacity for Commercial Space	Unused Capacity for Commercial Space
	SQUARE FEET	Considering: Zoning Standards Existing Lot Size & Severe Environmental Constraints	Zoning, Lot Size, Severe Environmental Constraints & Existing Land Use
Lakeside	31,600	NP	NP
Residential	105,050	NP	NP
Rural	1,053,900	SE	SE
<b>TOTAL ALL ZONES</b>	<b>1,190,550</b> <i>Existing Commercial</i>	SE	<b>SE</b> <i>Additional Commercial Theoretically Possible</i>