

Jefferson

New Hampshire

Master

Plan

Revised February 1998

Jefferson, New Hampshire

Master Plan

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL STATEMENT

The town of Jefferson is situated within the northern reaches of the White Mountains in Northern New Hampshire, approximately one hundred and forty miles north of Boston, or about three hours by automobile, Jefferson is equidistant from the New Hampshire cities of Manchester, Hanover/Lebanon and Burlington, Vermont. By this measure New York is less than seven hours distant.

Viewed from almost any point in town, mountain peaks reach into the sky at four points of the compass in a spectacular panorama. To the north are Mount Waumbek and Starr King Mountain, the latter named for a famous nineteenth century preacher and naturalist. Eastward, the mountains of the Presidential Range, rise above the timberline and are among the highest in America east of the Mississippi. Mount Washington, which is in this range, is noted for the highest recorded wind speed (231 MPH in 1931) and treacherous weather conditions. Over one hundred lives have been lost on or near its unforgiving slopes.

To the south, the town is delineated by Cherry Mountain, scene of a disastrous mud slide in 1885. Southwest, in the distance, lies the Franconia Range and in the west, Prospect and Dalton Mountains. Further west, the Green Mountains of Vermont complete the panorama. The open landscape of meadows, woodlands, streams, ponds and pastures contained within the surrounding mountains provide some of the most dramatic views to be found in the eastern United States. There are few locations in the town that do not provide a magnificent view.

Based on results of town surveys conducted in 1986 and 1992, it is clear that Jefferson residents want to retain, preserve and enhance the town's principal assets, which are open land, abundant clean water, forest lands, spectacular vistas and a simpler, rural American based life style. It is clear too, that Jefferson residents face uncertain futures, and are concerned with high and increasing tax burdens and the need to earn a living.

Compared to its neighbors in the densely populated urban and coastal centers, Jefferson has untold advantages. The town is small enough that every voice can be heard. Regardless of appearances, at times there is flexibility in a small town which allows things to get done provided there is broad support. As a going entity, the town has a great natural asset base unmatched by the majority of our country's communities.

Unquestionably, as the quality of life in urban centers continues to deteriorate, more people will be attracted to rural communities, Jefferson among them. Anticipation of migration to our rural community, the strengthening of our economic base and the preservation of the fundamental qualities of environment and life are among the most important considerations as we plan for the future.

Experience has made it increasingly clear that the three town boards; Selectmen, Planning Board and Board of Adjustment, could gain much through forging a working alliance to gain a common understanding, establish common goals and adopt consistent approaches. The Conservation Commission should also be included in this forum. Recent progress in this direction is promising. Continuing efforts and progress are essential to the future well being of Jefferson.

Predictably, the pace and consequences of change will accelerate over the coming years multiplying community problems. This Master Plan is the beginning of what it is hoped will be a continuing effort to effectively identify and implement solutions.

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Chapter Two

History

Historians find our town has a rich and interesting history. Marauding Abenakis from the St. Francis Settlement passed through Jefferson in order to raid settlements in the southern parts of the state. On their return from a famous retaliatory raid on the St. Francis Indians, remnants of Roger's Rangers camped at the headwaters of Israel's river.

Originally named Dartmouth, Jefferson was chartered under a Kings Grant in 1765, some thirty years later than its neighbors Lancaster and Littleton to the South and West. Conditions of the original grant were not met. It was revoked and a new grant issued in June of 1792 to 70 individuals. Within four years, ownership of the town had been acquired by Col. Joseph Whipple at a cost of \$4,200.

Migration up the Connecticut River valley spawned the settlements at Littleton and Lancaster. Lancaster's boundary extended to the present day Riverton section by the time Dartmouth was chartered. In 1771 Timothy Nash and a partner named Sawyer discovered and established a trail through what is now Crawford Notch to Portsmouth. This provided the impetus for Col. Whipple, in consort with the state and other businessmen, to construct a road through the notch to Portsmouth. Population, spurred through land sales by Whipple, increased from 4 in 1775 to 111 by 1790.

In 1793 the citizens of Dartmouth petitioned the New Hampshire Legislature to incorporate. By an act of the legislature, approved in December of 1796, Dartmouth was incorporated as the town of Jefferson, thus fulfilling the definition of "town". John Marden was authorized to call the first town meeting. The original list of about twenty voters contained many whose descendants still live in Jefferson today.

Agriculture and timbering were mainstays of the early economy in Jefferson. A number of sawmills, grist mills and starch mills (potatoes grown in Jefferson were an important source of starch before western grown wheat became readily available) served the area. Dairy farms were extensive and in the early 1900s a creamery was established.

The first Inn Holders license was issued to Col. Whipple soon after his arrival. In 1799 an inn was licensed at the Howe Farm and in the early 1800's the Plaisted family established "The Red Tavern". In 1860 Benjamin Plaisted built the first Waumbek Hotel which he expanded in 1865.

In 1871 The first railroad extended to the Meadows ushering in the Hotel era of the late 1800's through the first half of the 1900's.

The Waumbek became the property of investors who formed "The Jefferson Hotel and Land Company". The hotel was expanded to become one of the largest top-rated hotels in New England. At the height of the hotel era the hotel/inn business, or what is now often termed "destination resort", was the largest economic factor in the town with upwards of 30 inns operating.

In 1928, the main building of the Waumbek burned to the ground and was never replaced. The hotel continued, on a smaller scale in the remaining buildings, under different management through 1979. Although declining, the hospitality business remained an important segment of the economy until well after World War II.

The Industrial Revolution, the advent of railroads and concentration of the population in urban centers to the south had remarkable effects that, with increasing mobility of the population, has continued to this day. The basic components of 19th and early 20th century Jefferson economy have eroded to the point of near extinction.

Among prominent Jeffersonians was Thaddeus Sobieski Coulinecort Lowe, a distinguished inventor, aeronaut and scientist born in the Riverton Mills section of Jefferson in 1832. He is credited with many significant inventions including the altimeter, a valve to control the hydrogen balloon, and a process of refrigeration using gas. He also organized the balloon corps, forerunner of the U.S. Air Force, during the Civil War. Legend has it that he was shot at more than any other man during the Civil War. Jefferson was temporary home to many other noteworthy visitors from the political and business arena.

Permanent population in Jefferson peaked at 1,080 in 1900 and declined to 600 by 1960. Since then it climbed to 965 in 1990 and is estimated at a little over 1,000 today.

Jefferson is small and unpretentious. Agriculture, logging, dairy farming, hunting and fishing figured prominently in its past and continue, to a somewhat reduced extent, in the present. Jefferson still retains the small town rural atmosphere that evokes nostalgic memories of earlier, simpler, lifestyles and values.

Noteworthy is the spirit of Jefferson's people. Original settlers were independent and self-sufficient through necessity. The nearest grist mill was in Haverhill, forty miles distant. The trip was often made on foot packing a bushel of corn and returning with the meal.

Life is much more convenient now, however independence and self-reliance persist. Families with names such as Ingerson, Kenison, Hicks, Tuttle, Holmes, Merrill, Plaisted and Lowe, are descendants of Jefferson's earliest settlers. Continuity of a long tradition of community leadership and participation in community affairs has depended, and continues, through these families.

A strong sense of community is fostered by the fraternal organizations, i.e. the Odd Fellows, the Rebeckas, the Grange, the Jefferson Historical Society, an active 4-H and the PTA which has a long history of contribution. In a five town regional school district Jefferson has maintained one of the few active PTA organizations. The annual, famed Hunter's supper, annual Independence Day celebrations and other volunteer activities proclaim a strong sense of community identity and pride.

Perhaps the best illustration of community spirit surfaced during the tragic summer of 1988 when many homes and buildings were destroyed in a series of arsons that captured national attention. The all-volunteer fire department worked ceaselessly. Money was raised through special events and the community prevailed despite fear, anxiety, suspicion and the glare of national attention.

The last two decades have seen vast changes; more perhaps than in the entire prior history of the town. Technical innovations, improved roads, almost universal ownership of automobiles, have introduced sweeping changes to Jefferson's life-style. Countless other manifestations of modern living, from snow machines to throwaway packaging have inevitably altered our lives. Along with the convenience, mobility and improvements wrought by the age of technology, change has complicated our lives and introduced logistical, social, political, economic and financial problems for the community on a scale difficult to imagine a few decades ago.

On balance, Jefferson is a very nice place to live. There is little crime of consequence, room to move around, room for personal expression and room to expand. Recognition of this quality of life and the strong desire to preserve it clearly emerged from the public opinion surveys conducted in 1986 and 1992.

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CHAPTER THREE

COMMUNITY GOALS

Identification of community goals is the springboard of the planning process. Physiology of the community; the physical environment such as water, climate, topography, geography and demographics determine the possibilities and the limits for the future.

The impact of state and federal law and policy is enormous. To a large extent the town is powerless to control its destiny. Thus, town planning must direct itself to a good understanding of what federal, state, and local areas of control are and what local options are.

Effective planning must reflect the intent and needs of the town's citizens. To this end the planning board has relied on results of surveys conducted by the planning board in 1986 and in 1992. Goals summarized below were embraced by a majority of respondents to these two opinion polls.

These goals cover a broad and ambitious spectrum. Accomplishment of all would sorely test those who bear the burden of getting things done. Some, by definition, may not lend themselves to available, practical courses of action.

Rather, goals set forth here are a framework of paths and priorities to follow in the community planning effort. Actions, based on the goals, should lead to improvements and progress in the future of Jefferson.

1. POPULATION:

- A.) To provide for growth at a rate consistent with growth in Coos County.
- B.) To maintain growth at a level that will not exceed the capacity of available community services.
- C.) To grow on a basis calculated to preserve the rural nature of the town.

2. **COMMUNITY CHARACTER:**

- A.) To identify and preserve historic sites.
- B.) To preserve the rural character and atmosphere.
- C.) To maintain and improve the appearance of the town.
- D.) To establish a healthy and attractive community for inheritors in the twenty first century.

3. **CRITICAL RESOURCES:**

- A.) To protect water quality in all sources including streams, ponds, ground water (aquifers) and the water shed.
- B.) To preserve wetlands.
- C.) To prevent erosion of steep slopes created by development.
- D.) To encourage agriculture and inhibit subdivision and development of agricultural property.
- E.) To promote good forest management and inhibit subdivision and development of woodlands.

4. **LAND USE:**

- A.) To preserve the fact and feel of large open spaces.
- B.) To inhibit obstruction of views.
- C.) To identify various types of development in varying densities consistent with the natural attributes of the land, best principles of conservation and the multiplicity of community needs.
- D.) To identify, establish and maintain recreational aspects of open space.
- E.) To protect the environment and natural resources from adverse effects of development.
- F.) To establish better controls for gravel pits, mining operations and removal of top soil.

- G.) To protect the environment from pollution from all sources including solid waste.
- H.) To provide for use, consistent with criteria above, that enables and enhances economic benefits to the town and its people.
- I.) To review the Land Use ordinance and update as needed to reflect approved provisions of the master plan.
- J.) To inventory lands based on soil capabilities and classify them based on potential uses

5. **HOUSING:**

- A.) To identify types of housing that meet demonstrated needs as well as environmental considerations.
- B.) To encourage construction techniques that emphasize energy conservation and efficiency.
- C.) To establish minimum safety, sanitary and aesthetic standards.
- D.) To encourage innovative, affordable construction methods that meet or exceed minimum standards.
- E.) To establish reasonable limits on size, type and location for development on a scale compatible with the town's needs and objectives.

6. **COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- A.) To identify and actively support development consistent with the town's other objectives to increase the economic base and provide employment opportunities.
- B.) To identify and clearly delineate clean, acceptable commercial development and to define and discourage unacceptable commercial development..
- C.) To retain and expand where possible, agriculture and timber related business.
- D.) To avoid "strip" development anywhere in town

7. **ROADS AND HIGHWAYS**

- A.) To preserve and maintain scenic roads. To keep informed and participate with state highway planners to ensure major route construction or reconstruction will serve the best interests of the town.
- B.) To monitor road building in subdivisions to ensure protection of the residents' and town's interests.
- C.) To assess and project future needs of roads and road maintenance.

8. **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

To assess needs and establish planning for improved town administration facilities, library and recreational facilities.

9. **MAINTENANCE OF MASTER PLANNING**

Update the planning process as needed.

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CHAPTER FOUR

LAND USE EXISTING AND FUTURE

In New England, a town is defined as "a rural or urban unit of local government, smaller than a city, a political subdivision of a state, having its sovereignty vested in a town meeting". By implication the town is a political unit organized in conjunction with a specific piece of geography. Its primary resources are the land and the people who inhabit the land. The inhabitants of the town are temporary custodians of the land with all its natural resources, and are inextricably woven in a synergistic relationship with the land they manage. The extent to which this relationship succeeds or fails has far reaching effects both now and for countless generations to come. Thus, achieving a mutually sustaining use of the land is perhaps the primary issue concerning citizens locally as well as globally.

A town is further defined by history, terrain, geography, population and economy, and from these combined factors derives its own unique identity. Such identity aside, Jefferson shares a multitude of common traits and problems associated with New Hampshire towns.

Jefferson contains approximately 25,000 acres originally divided into 11 ranges of twenty three 100 acre lots and an additional 4,000 acres, annexed by petition of settlers of the unincorporated town of Kilkenny in 1842. Jefferson's total terrain of over 29,000 acres varies from mountainous, to a large inventory of bottom, agricultural land, wetlands and woodlands.

DETERMINING FACTORS IN LAND USE AND LAND USE PLANNING:

Leading considerations for land use and land use planning include:

- A.) Geographical location
- B.) Historical uses
- C.) Demographics

- D.) The Economy, local, national and global
- E.) Terrain and water resources
- F.) Soil conditions, slope and geology
- G.) Climate
- H.) Vegetation
- I.) Animal life
- J.) Government regulation (Federal, State and Local)

DETERMINING FACTORS AS THEY RELATE TO MASTER PLANNING

A.) Jefferson's Geographical Location, from its earliest days can be described as remote. Not as remote, perhaps, as parts of Maine or Northern Coos County but, none the less, distanced from the more southerly centers of population and commerce. From the earliest days, access to Jefferson was limited by hostile terrain and distance from a navigable waterway. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries railroads were a major factor in the development of the region, and the town of Jefferson. In recent years, particularly in the last two to three decades, railroads have declined to near extinction, while the highway system has made quick access to major cities and facilities a reality.

A noticeable increase in the variety and freshness of groceries has resulted from the modern highway system. Businesses established in the region have quick access to supply sources and markets as a result of advances in trucking and the development of United Parcel Service.

On the other hand, public transportation is lacking. There are no passenger trains and very few freight trains. Bus service to points south originates in Littleton which is over 20 miles from Jefferson. Personal transportation is limited to the private automobile. (see Transportation Chapter)

B.) Historical use of land in Jefferson follows the town's progress from early settlement where homesteading, hunting and gathering prevailed. Timbering and agriculture were the main activities until augmented in the late 1800's by the summer resident/tourist business. That mix prevailed until World War II. During that era, new road systems, improved national transportation and war-related travel prompted outward migration, a decline in local farming and a decline in the resort business. As a result, population declined until the boom of the 1980's when second home development spurred modest population growth.

C.) Demographics - In 1960 the population of Coos County stood at 37,014. By 1980 that figure had declined 5.4% to 35,014. From 1980 through the 1990 Census the county population was stable. The figure declined less than 1% to 34,828. During this same twenty year time span, The State of New Hampshire grew in population at an average rate above 22% , with most of the growth occurring in the southern counties.

In 1970 the population of Jefferson totaled 714. It grew to 803 in 1980. The 1990 Census recorded a total population of 965. Projections prepared by North Country Council, Inc., in the 1995 Housing Assessment, predict that Jefferson's population will be at 1,112 by the year 2000.

Population density in Jefferson (1990) is 19.2 persons per square mile; relatively thin compared to a state average of 123 and the much higher densities in urban settings. This low existing density is one indicator of room for growth.

Distribution of population from 1980 through 1990 has remained remarkably consistent. Pre-schoolers comprise 5.5% of the population, school age children 20.2%, working age (18 to 64) are 40.6% and people of retirement age (64 and older) are 12.4%. Based on national demographic trends it would appear safe to assume that, for the next decade, the average age will increase, school population will decline and the over 64 group will increase.

D.) Jefferson's economic outlook, along with most of Coos County was somewhat bleak. In 1990 and 1991, the first years for which figures were compiled for Jefferson by New Hampshire Employment Security, there was a total labor force of approximately 540 to 550. In August of 1992 unemployment for Jeffersonians was 9%.

While there is a lack of hard information, some assumptions based on observations seem reasonable. First, a majority of Jefferson's work force commute to employment in adjacent communities ranging from Littleton, Whitefield and Lancaster, to Berlin and Groveton. Employment statistics swing with the seasons. Temporary unemployment increases between winter and summer activities. There is a very small base of available year-round jobs within the town.

The local economy is sustained by:

- 1.) Resident retirees
- 2.) Employment in neighboring towns
- 3.) Seasonal tourist business
- 4.) Timber harvesting

- 5.) Construction (seasonal)
- 6.) A few small businesses, proprietorships and home-based businesses.
- 7.) Government work (local and state)

In terms of revenue, tourist dollars represent the biggest income source. Two tourist attractions, Santa's Village and Six Gun City, draw large numbers of "day-hoppers" as well as some overnighers in local motels or bed and breakfast inns. Campgrounds attract additional tourist activity. Three local convenience stores depend on this traffic for a large portion of annual income.

E.) Terrain and water resources - Terrain in and around Jefferson presents an interesting variety, from low meadow land along Israel's River and its tributaries, through moderately sloped lands to steep, mountain slopes and four peaks above three thousand feet. Of these, Mt. Waumbek rises to an elevation of 4,005, Mt. Starr King to 3,913, Mount Martha to 3,575 and Owl's Head to 3,258.

In the early 1900's there was a high percentage of productive agricultural land. Much of this land reverted to woodlands with the decline of farming. Some has been converted to residential and commercial property; some to other miscellaneous uses. Still, the largest percentage of land in Jefferson is woodland.

Jefferson has a generous supply of high quality water. There was, at an earlier time, a proposal to impound waters of the Israel River for use in flood control and to supply communities along the Connecticut River to the South.

A long time summer resident of Jefferson, Mary Waterous, compiled an extensive and detailed dissertation (date unknown) covering all aspects of Jefferson's water resources. It is interesting reading and a must for comprehensive planning. (See bibliography).

F.) The soil types, slopes and geology of a community determine the types of activities which can take place in a particular area. Soils provide the surfaces on which buildings can be erected. Soils also provide nutrients and sustenance for both man and beast, in the nature of plants for food. Soils support forest growth, pastures, fields and wetlands.

Different soils have unique capabilities and characteristics that govern their use. Sometimes the character of the soil makes it unsuitable for building, or other activities such as wood harvesting or recreation.

When looking at a site for building or other activity the slope, or steepness of the land should be considered. Typically, slope classes provided by the USDA Soil Conservation Service are graded from no slope or low slope to steep pitch. The steeper the slope, the more difficult it becomes to use the land.

Slope Class Categories:

- A 0 to 3% (rise and fall per 100 feet)
- B 3 to 9%
- C 8 to 15%
- D 15 to 21)%
- E 25% +

The USDA, in a recently completed (1994) soil survey has compiled information on dozens of soil types, (i.e. hydric, well-drained, sand and gravel, etc.), identifying their characteristics and defining their uses (woodland, community development, houses with basements, houses without basements, etc.). The soils are also rated further for such factors as erosion hazard, equipment limitations, seedling mortality, wind hazard, plant competition, etc.

Water features are identified, so that builders can determine if a particular site is suitable for a septic system, lagoon or sanitary landfill. The descriptive categories can be utilized as a guide to the Planning Board and others in determining whether or not to issue a building permit or approve a subdivision application.

The USDA soil survey has established approximately 200 soil types or classes within the boundaries of Jefferson. The survey, published in 1994 and made available to the Planning Board, forms the basis for decisions with lasting impact on the future development of Jefferson.

"Hydric" soils are an important issue. These are generally defined as "Somewhat Poorly Drained", "Poorly Drained" and "Very Poorly Drained". More detailed delineation's of these soils involve specific soil components, layering and water table levels as well as other criteria. Hydric Soils are addressed in the RSAs concerning regulation of septic systems. Presence of some "Somewhat Poorly Drained" soils and all "Poorly" and "Very Poorly Drained" soils, within limits established by the statutes can preclude building of a septic system and thus limiting use of the site for building or other activity. The specific (New Hampshire) statutes were passed in 1990 and have been revised in each session through 1993.

The impact of the act is such that many building sites acceptable before 1990 are no longer acceptable. As of this date, no accurate inventory of lands classified by potential use exists for Jefferson. Obtaining this inventory will be very important in going forward with plans for Jefferson's future.

G.) Jefferson's climate has enormous impact on social and economic life. Northern latitude, mountainous configuration of the land, relative proximity to the sea (in terms of cyclonic weather patterns) and altitude combine for prevailing cool, sometimes hostile weather.

No description of Jefferson is complete without mentioning climate. Temperatures get very cold in the winter months. The low meadows form a vast frost pocket where cold air flowing down the western slopes of the Presidential Range collects. Readings in the 50 degrees below range have been recorded. It's a dry cold, which is more bearable than the penetrating damp of coastal areas even though considerably lower in temperature.

Spring comes late to Jefferson and is preceded by "mud season". During mud season temperatures fluctuate between freeze and thaw turning the ground from mud to a cement-like turf in repeating cycles, testing the mettle of even the most hardy outdoorsmen and women

The lowest point of land in Jefferson is in the Meadows, at or near 1000 ft. in elevation. Here, cold air flow spills off the western slopes of the Presidential Range and collects in a vast frost pocket with prevailing temperatures sometime reaching 20 degrees colder than nearby locations at higher elevations.

The growing season is short, weather patterns are variable in long and short term cycles. Precipitation averages up to 144 inches annually. Snow fall up of 200 inches annually has been noted and may have been exceeded in 1969 during which phenomenal snowfall occurred throughout New England.

Sunshine averages 1400 hours per year which makes the area one of the two grayest in the country. This contrasts to approximately 5000 hours annually in the sun belt and is said to account for a higher than average rate of health problems associated with depression.

Prevailing winds are southwesterly and can be strong. Winds approaching gale force accompany some of the "Northeasters" experienced. The summit of Mt. Washington, in plain view at a distance of 10 to 20 miles as the crow flies, experiences extremely strong winds. The record, recorded in 1934 was 231 mph. Jefferson is a cooperative NOAA weather station with meteorologist Gregory Gordon in charge.

H.) Vegetation - Many of Jefferson's forests were cut during the early part of the century, mainly to provide timber for the burgeoning home and industrial construction market. Since that time, previously cut areas have been replaced by a secondary growth forest. The 1993 Natural Resource Inventory notes that the following common trees are native to Jefferson:

EVERGREENS: white pine, red pine, white spruce, balsam fir, tamarack, red spruce, black spruce, white cedar and hemlock.

DECIDUOUS TREES: Speckled alder, white ash, balsam poplar, American beech, white birch, yellow birch, black cherry, American elm, red maple, sugar maple, oak, and Hop Hornbeam.

Other Vegetation - Jefferson is also home to many woody stemmed plants and shrubs, including beaked hazelnut, highbush cranberry, staghorn sumac, choke cherry, hobblebush, and shadbush. A "Flora and Fauna Survey" produced by Jefferson School students includes a number of ferns found in Jefferson, including grape ferns, adder's tongue fern, royal fern, interrupted fern, cinnamon fern, harscented fern, fragile fern, rusty woodsia, crested shield fern, evergreen wood fern, oak fern, marsh fern, New York fern, long beech fern, Christmas fern, maidenhair fern, eastern bracken, and common polypody. The students' survey also noted two fern allies which inhabit marshy area. They are horsetails and scouring rush. Various clubmosses identified are shining clubmoss, bristly clubmoss, staghorn clubmoss, bog clubmoss, running clubmoss, ground cedar and ground pine.

Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge, designated as a National Natural Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1972, consists of two shallow warm water ponds about one-half mile apart and their surrounding marsh, bog and forest vegetation. The outstanding characteristics of the Pondicherry area include a great variety and abundance of submerged, floating and emergent wetland vegetation, and unusual variety of bird life. Five of Jefferson's thirteen deer yards are located in the vicinity of the pond, providing significant habitat and food for the animals.

Jefferson's forests are primarily mixed growth evergreens and deciduous trees. Rising from Route 2 to the 1,100 - 1,200 foot range of the Killenneys, sugar maples are predominant. The northern hardwood forest continues to the 2,500 foot elevation; beyond that, paper birch and yellow birch predominate up to the 3,000 foot mark, and beyond that from 3,000-4,000 feet, the forest mix consists of spruce and fir.

The vast majority of hardwood trees are of fairly good quality, and scattered throughout are old apple orchards, which provide food for deer before they overwinter in the area. Jefferson is home to very little white pine or hemlock. Some scattered oaks can be found along Route 2, growing in the warmest thermal belt where weather conditions are stable and the soil is well-drained.

Cherry Mountain is home to the northern hardwoods up to the 3,000 foot mark, with spruce and fir covering the mountain to the summit.

The valley area between US Route 2 and NH Route 115 is a mixture of trees with balsam fir, spruce, white birch, aspen and red maples predominating, particularly near Cherry Pond. Other lowland areas include red maples and mixed forest trees.

The Turnpike Road area, severely burned in the 1880's, never really recovered. It is home to tag alder, mixed with white birch and black cherry.

Agnew State Forest, located at the end of Chambers Road near old Cherry Mountain Road, is a 109 acre parcel consisting of mixed hardwood and softwood forests, open fields and a stretch of Mill Brook. Several specimens of the balsam poplar can be found in the Agnew State Forest in the fields adjacent to the old buildings there. This unusual species, also known as the Balm of Gilead, is noted for its large sticky pods and bronze leaves.

The White Mountain National Forest manages three tracts of land totaling 4,376 acres within Jefferson's boundaries. The largest of these parcels is located north of Route 2 and includes Mount Starr King. Other public lands include land along the Jefferson Notch Road and a tract near Owl's Head.

There are no areas above the timberline in Jefferson, and the town does not support any threatened or endangered species. One anomaly worth mentioning is the stand of black spruce, white cedar and tamarack growing in close proximity to Mud Pond. Although the very acidic bog here should support acid-loving plants such as the black spruce, it is also home to a number of white cedars and tamaracks, two species which require alkaline soils to thrive.

Jefferson's forests have the potential to produce a continuing supply of high quality saw timber but will continue to do so only through following well established standards of good forestry management practices. Loss of our forests through overdevelopment, poor forestry practices or other mismanagement could have a long lived detrimental effect on the town's wildlife, water supply and aesthetic appeal.

I.) Animal Life - Both the 1978 Flora and Fauna Survey compiled by the Jefferson Elementary School students and the 1993 Natural Resource Inventory prepared by the Jefferson Conservation Commission provide a wealth of information on animal life typically found in Jefferson.

Wild life abounds in Jefferson. Numbers of deer, rabbit, partridge, woodcock and other game provide sportsmen exciting prospects. Moose have staged a remarkable comeback. Sightings are common. Other native species include, black bear, fox, skunk, bobcat, fisher, weasels, raccoons and coydogs or eastern coyote. Jefferson is identified, by the Audubon Society, as one of the three best areas in the country for bird watching. Game birds, several kinds of hawks, an occasional bald eagle, crows, ravens, waterfowl (including loons), as well as a wide variety of domestic birds make their permanent or migratory base here. Jefferson is a naturalist's paradise.

Topography of the town is such that it provides a variety of habitats for diversity of wildlife. The forested slopes of the Pliny Range and Cherry Mountain are home to white-tailed deer, moose, black bear, raccoon, skunks, porcupines, weasels and fisher, red foxes, eastern coyotes, and bobcat.

The area is also home to the northern varying hare, red, gray and flying squirrels, and smaller members of the rodent family, chipmunks, moles, mice, shrews, and voles. These rodents, as well as woodchucks also inhabit grassland areas.

The year-round bird population includes ravens, ruffed grouse, wild turkeys, jays, chickadees, nuthatches, woodpeckers, crows, purple finches, redpolls, pine siskins, evening grosbeaks, mourning doves, and goldfinches. In the warmer months they are joined by hawks, owls, woodcock, and many woodland songbirds, such as warblers and thrushes.

Wetland areas of Jefferson attract many creatures which prefer habitats along rivers, streams, ponds or in bogs. These waters are home to pickerel, horned pout, bass, perch, suckers, and both brook and rainbow trout. All the common varieties of frogs, toads, turtles and salamanders found in northern New England are at home here. Mink, otter, beaver and muskrat inhabit the banks of streams.

Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge is home to at least 48 species of water birds and many more land birds. Loons have nested here since 1980. Bluebirds, sparrows, robins and meadowlarks inhabit the open grasslands of the farms, while the edges of clearings and streams attract whippoorwill, snipe (rare), killdeer, kingfishers, warblers, great blue heron, and many others.

Maintaining the variety and abundance of flora and animal life, in Jefferson, is key to establishing future land uses and development plans. Degradation of these assets through ill considered development could have tragic impact on the future. Of equal importance is providing for economic prosperity, consistent with environmental needs without stifling human endeavor and progress. At best a difficult equation.

J.) Government Regulations and the interlocking dynamics of local, state and federal regulation have expanded prodigiously in recent years. Legislative bodies and government agencies are promulgating laws and rules at rates that are difficult to absorb. Without full-time planning and administrative departments, smaller communities, Jefferson being a perfect example, are hard pressed to implement the conglomeration of new edicts from State and Federal Bureaus. Invariably, higher costs to the town, business and individuals are a result. Striking a balance between establishing needed reforms and maintaining a stable financial base is difficult now, and promises to become more so in years ahead.

LAND USE PLAN

Prompted, for the most part, by the excessive land speculation and development pressures typical throughout the country at the time, it is to the towns credit that a Land Use Plan Ordinance (A euphemism for zoning ordinance) was adopted in 1987.

The ordinance created two-acre zoning in a one zone town and a Board of Adjustment charged, along with the Planning Board (established in 1970), with regulation of development in Jefferson.

A list of "Special Exceptions" to the ordinance provides for a few specific businesses to be established through the board of adjustment process. The list is generally confined to businesses already existent in the town. A recent amendment, however, has opened up possibilities for establishing small and home-based business.

There have been problems in interpretation and application and enforcement of the ordinance, particularly as it applies to establishment of business in the town. There has been litigation involving neighbors and the town over issues centering on provisions of the Land Use Plan Ordinance. This has proved costly, unproductive and has created some lingering uncertainty.

In spite of these few isolated problems the format and system has worked reasonably well to limit undesirable, counter productive development, particularly strip development which has wreaked havoc in some of our neighboring towns. Improvements in application of the ordinance are needed and are, predictably, occurring as experience and more widespread knowledge are gained.

It's a fair conclusion that, for the present, the ordinance and regulatory process is adequate to meet the town's needs.

CONCLUSIONS

The town has a good inventory of unused land. There appears to be sufficient space, based on the two acre zoning requirement, to support a substantially increased population without undue strain on the land. Such expansion, however, is not necessarily deemed desirable or productive beyond the limits of availability of resources and infrastructure.

During the height of the hotel era, summer population both permanent and temporary, far exceeded today's without dislocation or disruption of the environment. There is sufficient land, if managed well, to accommodate modest, balanced growth in desirable enterprise and population while maintaining and enhancing the environment.

Jefferson, New Hampshire

Master Plan

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIO / ECONOMICS

Based on the 1995 property valuation, Jefferson is a \$55,969,708 enterprise. Revenues generated primarily through property taxes are falling short of needs and yet represent a heavy and growing burden on the town's property owners, especially when looked at in terms of average family income. Consistent with needs at local, state and federal levels, Jefferson must find ways to increase income, reduce taxes and reduce expenses in terms of real dollars. Common sense seems to dictate that one very necessary means to this elusive and difficult end is expansion of the Town's economic base.

A heavy tax burden, driven by excessive school costs (in proportion to income) has created increasingly severe financial problems for the community and its people. Because Jefferson is outvoted by the two largest towns in the regional school district there is not much, on the surface, that can be done by Jefferson to contain and control school costs. Financial burdens aside, there are valid concerns for the quality, productivity and kinds of education currently generated by our school system.

Given the fact that school costs account for approximately 70% of the overall operating budget, there is not a great deal to be done in the area of cost containment. While every effort possible to limit costs of government and schools is warranted, the only significant means of limiting increases in tax rates beyond the point of no return is building up the tax base. Opportunities for Jefferson do exist.

Identification and exploration of such opportunities will require a substantial investment of time, effort, talent and organization involving representatives of each of the town's governing boards and to find volunteers necessary to fill positions on these boards.

With the advance of technology and the resulting displacement of workers, there has been a resurgence of people engaged in crafts and arts both as a means of earning a living and improved lifestyle through the medium of productive, satisfying work. Jefferson is ideally suited to such activity.

Perhaps Jefferson has the opportunity to pioneer a "Rural Renewal" movement. There are numerous possibilities of things to do and many avenues worthy of exploration for financial support, from public and private sources.

"RURAL RENEWAL" SUGGESTIONS

Among suggestions for renewal of the economy and social structure of Jefferson are:

- A coalition of small crafts, home based business; and other small businesses producing quality products based on traditional New England/New Hampshire mystique, made more powerful and effective through a collective marketing effort.
- Encouraged development of the Waumbek Golf Course through cooperative planning involving the owners and the town.
- Attract year round service businesses involving minimal mess and hazard, retail operations centered around the local business coalition, a modest sports center (existing golf is a big draw) as well as guest facilities and some living quarters as needed, are all possible components of this idea.
- Jefferson could accommodate and attract one or more larger small businesses without dislocation if architectural, open space and process criteria are established. Any number of service businesses, an advertising business or small research laboratory for example, could do business here given the state of the communications art and the proximity of a serviceable airport.
- Among other possibilities for productive presence in Jefferson are a small, exclusive school devoted to outdoor and wilderness activity as well as academic discipline. There is a growing number of these through out the country. Certainly there is room for more.

Countless other small businesses could fold into the community comfortably. Presently, there is in Jefferson a home based business that books rock and roll bands all over the country and Europe. Another long existent small business provides computer services to customers over a wide geographical area. A third home based business produces shaker style furniture which is marketed internationally. There are no better illustrations of possibilities.

EXISTING BUSINESSES:

The largest economic units and employers in town are tourist attractions operating seasonally, primarily the summer/fall season. There is one restaurant, three convenience stores,

a few contractors (some of which operate seasonally), logging and chipping operations, a number of campgrounds (again seasonal), a smattering of businesses operated from peoples' homes, a riding stable, three operating farms and a sawmill dedicated to production of log homes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Set goals which will lead towards the enhancement of the socioeconomic well being of the town's residents. Such as:

The formation of a development committee or board of advisors to explore, initiate and coordinate long range economic and development plans, drawing membership from the governing town boards and the community at large and, working with subcommittees, charged with these tasks:

- A.) Define and refine criteria for expansion of the economic base consistent with the objectives of the Land Use Ordinance. Establish consensus.
- B.) Identification of economic opportunities.
- C.) Investigate ways to turn opportunity into working reality.
- D.) Investigate and identify private and public sources of financing for community development projects.
- E.) Review public facilities and the means of enhancing same.
- F.) Annual review of existing ordinances and recommendations concerning revisions, updating, implementation and enforcement.
- G.) Establish incentives for sprucing up the town with a view to enhancing the economic and social climate.
- H.) Investigate and recommend a policy of mediation or arbitration to settle disputes that have proved costly to the town financially as well as having a negative effect on town spirit and good will.
- I.) Explore the possibility of forming a Community Economic Development Corporation to explore and encourage beneficial development as well as raise capital for desirable enterprise in Jefferson.

Jefferson, NH - Master Plan

CHAPTER SIX

TRANSPORTATION

The location, diversity, condition and efficiency of a community's transportation system can ultimately affect the quality of life in that town. The general mobility of the residents and those who visit, as well as the general economic prosperity of a community are functions of a town's roads and transportation services. Good highways and access are necessary for most active land uses and may serve to spark development in a particular area. Conversely, certain land uses generate an amount of additional traffic which could require expansion of the transportation network.

Transportation connections to the outside world are important to the economic stability and growth of a community by providing needed access to goods and services not found in the town. This makes it necessary to conduct transportation planning based on projected and desired community development, patterns and character. The Transportation Map shows the various systems in the North Country. (Appendix A)

COMMUNITY ATTITUDE SURVEY

Respondents to the Community Attitude Survey conducted in 1986 and 1992 indicated that the town's goals which pertain to transportation should be as follows:

- A) To preserve and maintain scenic roads
- B) To be well informed and participate with state highway planners to ensure that major route construction or reconstruction will serve the best interests of the town.
- C) To monitor road construction in subdivisions to ensure protection of the resident's and town's interests.
- D) To assess and project future needs of roads and road maintenance.

STREETS AND HIGHWAYS

The task of providing a road network is a prime governmental function and responsibility. Distribution of capital expenditures for highway maintenance and construction can have a vital influence on the economic well-being and prospects of a municipality. It is, therefore, important for the town to carefully assess its needs and establish an orderly and realistic range of expenditures and priorities.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF STREETS AND HIGHWAYS

A circulatory system generally contains elements of different capacity, each of which performs a specific role. Since there are different types of movement, a highway system should be made up of roads which serve varying types of traffic and volume.

Although there are many variations in types of streets and highways, they may be subdivided into four basic categories; limited access, arterial, secondary and local. The characteristics of each type are described below.

Limited access: designed for rapid movement of heavy volumes of traffic; direct access to adjacent property; parking in the right of way eliminated.

Arterial/Primary Highways: designed for movement of through traffic/heavy local traffic; crossings at grade; construction for speed and volume; access to adjacent property generally regulated.

Secondary/Collector Streets: designed to link local streets to arterials; collect traffic from several local streets; bypass traffic around residential neighborhoods.

Local Streets: serve traffic at generation point; provide access to adjacent property; through traffic not desirable; parking/loading allowed in right of way.

Without a planned street and highway system, certain streets will be pressed into uses for which they were not intended or designed. An arterial street, built to facilitate through movement, can easily become a local street once strip development with unlimited and uncontrolled points of access has occurred along the right of way. The reverse situation is also sometimes found. A local street gradually becomes overburdened with heavy through traffic because no convenient alternate route is available. Parking and loading needs can also impose restrictions upon the smooth flow of traffic, harming not only the function of the road but also the businesses adjacent to it.

ADMINISTRATIVE CLASSIFICATION OF HIGHWAYS

Highways are placed into seven administrative classes in New Hampshire, depending upon which governmental agency is responsible for the highway.

Class 1: Known as Trunk Line Highways, consists of those on the State Primary System except those segments lying within compact sections of cities or towns with 7,500 or more population. Department of Transportation has full control and pays the costs of construction, reconstruction and maintenance.

Class 2: Known as State Aid Highways, consists of those on the State Secondary System, are characterized in the same way as Class 1 Highways.

Class 3: Known as Recreational Roads, consists of roads leading to and within State reservations designated by the Legislature. Department of Transportation has responsibility.

Class 4: Known as Compact Section Highways, consists of those segments within the compact sections of cities and towns with over 7,500 year-round residents. Compact sections are defined as the territory of any city or town where the frontage of any highway is mainly occupied by dwellings or year-round businesses. Construction, reconstruction and maintenance is the responsibility of the city or town.

Class 5: Known as Town Roads, consists of all other traveled highways for which the towns have responsibility.

Class 6: Consists of all other public ways, includes highways discontinued as open highways and made subject to gates and bars, and all highways which have not been maintained and repaired by the town for five or more consecutive years.

Class 7: All other highways not previously mentioned, consists of federal forest service roads such as those leading to fire towers, fish hatcheries, etc..

With close proximity to two major interstate highways of New England, ground transportation is the predominant form of travel in the North Country. Interstate 93 (accessing the Boston Metropolitan area) and Interstate 91 (accessing the Montreal, Springfield and Hartford Metropolitan areas) connect the area to major growth centers. For Jefferson, US routes 2 and 3 and NH routes 116 and 115 serve as connectors to the town from these major interstate highways.

Jefferson's own highway network covers 51.24 road miles. These miles are comprised of Class 1, 2, 5, and 6 roads, as stipulated in table 6 -1. The 29.71 miles of State maintained roads in Jefferson are Routes 2, 115, 116 and 115A. The balance of 21.53 road miles are town maintained. The road network can be found on the approved E-911 map.

TABLE 6 - 1
HIGHWAY MILEAGE BY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION
JEFFERSON, NH

<u>CLASS</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>MILEAGE</u>
1	State Highway Primary System	9.65
2	State Secondary Highway System	20.06
5	Town Maintained Highway System	20.01
6	Town Discontinued, subject to gates / bars	1.52
Total		51.24

Source: NH Department of Transportation Classified Road Mileage, Jan 1, 1993

SUMMARY OF ROAD CONDITIONS

Jefferson's town roads are maintained at an acceptable level which insures the health, safety and welfare of the town's residents.

STATE HIGHWAY EVALUATIONS

The State Highway Sufficiency Rating System, where each segment is given points for condition, safety and service was done away with in January 1995 and was replaced by the "Long Range Statewide Transportation Plan" which contains a series of maps which show pavement conditions, safety concerns and service. Unfortunately, these maps do not show NH 115A and much of the data is from 1994.

ANNUALIZED AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC COUNTS

Annual average daily traffic counts along the state maintained highways have increased in recent years. A continuous traffic count determines the number of vehicles (car, bus, truck, etc.) which pass by a given point in a year. From this, average daily counts are computed. This count does not designate the direction of movement. Table 6 - 2 contains the most recent data available.

**TABLE 6 - 2
JEFFERSON TRAFFIC COUNTS
ANNUALIZED AVERAGE DAILY FIGURES**

Aver. Vehicles per day			
<u>Location</u>		<u>1990</u>	<u>1993</u>
US 2:	East of NH 115	3919	3985
US 2:	At Lancaster T.L.	3000	3100
NH 116:	South of US 2	-	1300
NH 115:	West of US 2	1600	1800
NH 115A:	At Israel River Bridge	-	610
NH 115B:	South of Valley Road	1000	510
US 2:	At Priscilla Brook	3900	2700
US 2:	South of Israel River	3900	4400

TABLE 6 - 2 (Cont.)
JEFFERSON TRAFFIC COUNTS
ANNUALIZED AVERAGE DAILY FIGURES

Aver. Vehicles per day			
<u>Location</u>		<u>1990</u>	<u>1993</u>
NH 115:	Over Red Brook	-	2000
Old NH 115:	Valley Road Over Red Brook	-	270

Source: NH Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Planning

LEVEL OF SERVICE

Level of service is a quantitative measure of the operating conditions of a roadway or intersection when accommodating different traffic volumes, given the specific roadway geometry, travel speeds and vehicle delay. It is used as a comparative index to assess the operating qualities of the road or intersection being analyzed. NH 115 and NH 116 are listed by the DOT as being at a LOS "A" which indicates an optimum free-flow condition with no delay or maneuverability restrictions on traffic. US 2 is listed as being a LOS "C" or "D" which indicates stable flow but with some restricted flow. As part of the National Highway System and a major east/west route from Maine to Vermont, this route should be brought up to a LOS "A". NH 115A is not listed.

TRAFFIC COUNTS

The increasing traffic counts shown in Table 6 - 2 represent the growing traffic conditions that Jefferson has been experiencing. The business district of Jefferson is primarily spread out across US 2 from Santa's Village to Six Gun City at the juncture of NH 115. This area consists of the two main tourist attractions mentioned above as well as three motels, five campgrounds, a restaurant, a golf course, three bed and breakfasts, three convenience type stores, the town hall, library, fire department and historical society museum.

Traffic in this area substantially increases during the summer months and fall foliage season as supported by the 1993 Scenic and Cultural Byways Program Base Line Research conducted by the Institute for New Hampshire Studies at Plymouth State College for the Offices of State Planning, Office of Travel and Tourism Development and the Department of Transportation. The traffic counts identified during this study are found in Table 6 - 3.

TABLE 6 - 3
AVERAGE TRAFFIC COUNTS ALONG US 2 IN JEFFERSON AND NH 115
1993 TOURIST SEASON

Location	July 1993	August 1993
US 2 - Aver. week day	6,000	6,480
US 2 - Aver. Saturday	5,750	7,060
NH 115 Aver. Weekday (6 HR Period)	955	-
NH 115 Aver. Saturday (6 HR Period)	-	1,157

Source: The Scenic and Cultural Byways Program Base-Line Research prepared for the Dept. of Transportation by the Institute for NH Studies at Plymouth State College

Items which were identified as needing attention in this study were as follows:

- Better directional and interpretive signage
- More pull-off areas with improved accessibility and parking
- Selective trimming of vegetation to improve vistas
- Better passing and turning opportunities must address the conflict between those who wish to travel slowly and appreciate the landscape versus those who are in transit across the area.
- Cooperation among local, regional, state and federal agencies and between public and private sectors.

Area visitors reported less familiarity with the Lancaster /Jefferson area than other parts of New Hampshire. They also cited the importance of highway signs in attracting them to the area.

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM

US Route 2 is a National Highway System Highway. In the Long Range Statewide Transportation Plan, dated January 1995, the Safety Concerns Map indicated minor safety concerns for this highway from the Randolph town line west to the Lancaster town line. The typical safety concerns reflected on this map are: The ability to safely negotiate curves, poor sight distance, speed loss due to roadway geometry and grades, and less than adequate travel way and shoulder widths for existing travel volumes. The method chosen to correct these problems could have a major economic impact on the Town of Jefferson. Widening of the existing route with improvements in shoulders is in the best interests of the people of Jefferson.

TRUCKING

An area of concern in the growing traffic flows of Jefferson is the prevalence of trucking. Trucking is very important to the North Country and many industries depend on it as their means of shipping and receiving. US 2, NH 115 and NH 116 are major trucking corridors running through Jefferson. In addition NH 115A, originally designed as a horse and buggy route, has become a connector link between US 2 and NH 115 for trucks traveling south to I-93. Along with the small trucking businesses located on NH 115A, trucks carrying material to the Whitefield Industrial Park use this route as an alternative route due to time restrictions imposed on truck travel on Hazen Road by Whitefield. The increase of heavy truck traffic on 115A has caused severe deterioration of this roadway.

SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

In the event of subdivisions and developments, there are specifications by which roads must be constructed or upgraded. These are detailed in the town's subdivision regulations. Furthermore, the town should discourage subdivisions and developments in areas that are remote and where there are inadequate roads. This would avoid negative impacts on Jefferson's fiscal condition and its ability to provide emergency services. The provision regarding premature and scattered development within the Revised Statutes Annotated, Chapter 674:36 II (a) addresses this issue and allows planning board denial of proposals found to be premature and scattered. Identification of inadequate roads and remote areas is needed.

BRIDGES

The condition of bridges is important in determining the adequacy of the entire road network. If a critical bridge is too narrow or in poor repair, the carrying capacity of the entire highway can be affected. Table 6 - 4 contains information about the bridges in Jefferson that is relevant to planning for a maintenance schedule.

**TABLE 6 - 4
JEFFERSON BRIDGES**

<u>Facility Carried</u>	<u>Feature Crossed</u>	<u>Last Inspct</u>	<u>Lnth</u>	<u>Aver. Daily Trips</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Structure Obsolete or Deficient</u>
US 2	Israel River	6/92	164	3000	1990	
NH 116	Israel River	9/91	95	1500	1991	
NH 115A	Israel River	6/92	84	500	1991	
NH 115A	Mill Brook	6/92	27	500	1991	

JEFFERSON BRIDGES (Contd.)

<u>Facility Carried</u>	<u>Feature Crossed</u>	<u>Last Inspct</u>	<u>Lnth</u>	<u>Aver. Daily Trips</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Structure Obsolete or Deficient</u>
NH 115A	Priscilla Brook	6/92	27	500	1991	
NH 115A	Mill Brook	7/92	36	1000	1990	
US 2	Huppe Brook	8/92	11	3300	1991	
NH 115	Mill Brook	7/92	36	1600	1991	
Old NH 115	Benway Brook	11/91	16	500	1990	
Chambers Rd.	Mill Brook	8/92	42	55	1987	Struct. Deficient
A. Kennison Road	Israel River Overflow	11/92	10	55	1987	
A. Kennison Road	Israel River	8/92	51	55	1987	Funct. Obsolete
NH 115	Red Brook	7/92	11	1600	1991	
NH 115	Israel River	7/92	91	1500	1991	
US 2	Priscilla Brook	8/92	13	3100	1991	
US 2	Stag Hollow Brook	10/91	22	3100	1991	
Valley Road	So. Branch Israel	9/91	38	100	1990	

Source: NH Department of Transportation

SCENIC AND CULTURAL BYWAYS

Jefferson has been invited to participate in the identification and nomination of roads for designation as elements of a statewide scenic and cultural byway system. The purpose of the program is to highlight New Hampshire's most outstanding scenic roads and to enhance traveler's appreciation and understanding of the state's natural and cultural resources. In addition to the "scenic" aspects of the roadways, excellent cultural, historical, archaeological and recreational resources will be identified and featured. It is hoped that the program will not only highlight the best known areas but also focus attention on lesser known routes and regions, helping to attract recreational driving, bicycling, and tourism more widely throughout the state.

During 1997, Jefferson will be working with the Regional Scenic Byways Committee to include US 2 from the Lancaster T.L. east to the Randolph T.L (9.6 miles), NH 115 from the Twin Mountain T.L. north to the junction of US 2 (6 miles), and NH 115A from US 2 south to the junction of NH 115B (3.2 miles) and left on NH 115B to the junction of NH 115 (1.7 miles) in the scenic byways loops. This is a total distance of 20.5 miles. The benefits of participating in this program is funding, for improvements to these routes, made available through the Federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991. (ISTEA)

SCENIC ROADS

Any road in a town, other than a Class 1 or 2 highway, may be designated as a scenic road (NH RSA 231:157). The designation "Scenic" denotes that the road is deserving of particular care, especially in protecting stonewalls and trees situated on the public right-of-way. Repair, maintenance or paving cannot involve destruction of these historical landmarks without the consent of the planning board or selectmen. Scenic roads are also protected from despoliation by utilities companies without the consent of the owner or payment for damages. Jefferson has designated Ingerson Road which loops from US 2 to US 2 as "Scenic" under RSA 231:157.

AIR TRANSPORTATION

The airport nearest to Jefferson is the Mount Washington Regional Airport in Whitefield. The airport is accessible from either NH 115 or NH 116. At present this facility does not offer any passenger or commercial service and is basically underutilized due to limited availability of fuel and hanger facilities. With improvements this airport could play a major part in the growth of the area.

The nearest major airport offering domestic passenger service on a regular basis is the Manchester Airport which is approximately 125 miles south of Jefferson. Optional airports offering domestic service, which are equidistant from Jefferson, are Burlington, VT and Portland ME. International service is available at Boston's Logan Airport.

RAIL SERVICE

The New Hampshire and Vermont Railroad runs through the Riverton section at the western end of Jefferson and is used to connect the paper mills in Groveton with Wells River, VT. There is no passenger service available.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

There is no public bus transportation service available in Jefferson. Residents in need of transportation, on an as needed basis, can call Tri-County CAP and obtain transportation from them on the Senior Wheels Van. The Senior Wheels Van is available for all residents, not just for senior citizens.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

The White Mountain Regional School District contracts out its transportation needs. Three buses are used to transport Jefferson pupils to the various district schools, serving an average of 205 miles daily by the buses. Approximately 200 Jefferson children ride the bus system.

Jefferson utilizes a total of 27 road miles. The priorities on the local road system are those roads traveled by the school buses since the major roads are maintained by the Department of Transportation.

TAXI SERVICE

There are no taxi services available in Jefferson.

BICYCLING

In Accordance with Section 1033 of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation has developed a bicycle and pedestrian plan for the state.

The overall goal of the statewide bicycle and pedestrian plan is to recognize, support and encourage bicycling and walking as alternatives to motorized forms of transportation. The network is comprised of interconnected existing state and town maintained roads that are considered safe and efficient for bicycle travel. The backbone of the network consists of "shared roadways". A shared roadway is a road with a four foot paved shoulder. Although bicyclists are frequently seen in Jefferson during the summer months, the only road that qualifies as a shared roadway is NH 115. Several walkers also use this route for their daily walking exercise routine. If recreational bicycling is to be encouraged in Jefferson, safety improvements providing four foot paved shoulders are necessary on US 2, NH 116 and NH 115A.

Mountain biking is very popular along the power line and pipeline right of ways as well as on the snowmobile trails. An abandoned section of track which runs east to Randolph is also planned to be opened to bicycling in the near future.

HIKING TRAILS

Mount Starr King - There is parking at the Starr King Trail head located off US 2 just east of Jefferson Village. This is a popular trail since it provides access to Mt. Starr King and Waumbek Mountain's 4,000 ft. peak.

Mount Martha and Cherry Mountain- The Owls Head Trail, available from the parking lot located at the Cherry Mountain Slide Historic Marker on NH 115, leads to the summit of Owl's Head peak, Mount Martha's peak and the Cherry Mountain peak.

SNOWMOBILE TRAILS

The Waumbek Methna Snowmobile club in the Riverton section of Jefferson, on US 2 and The Jefferson Highlanders Snowmobile Club are two snowmobile clubs which maintain trails that are part of a statewide snowmobile trails network. Together, during the winter months, they maintain close to two hundred miles of groomed snowmobile trails on both private and state lands.

CONCLUSIONS

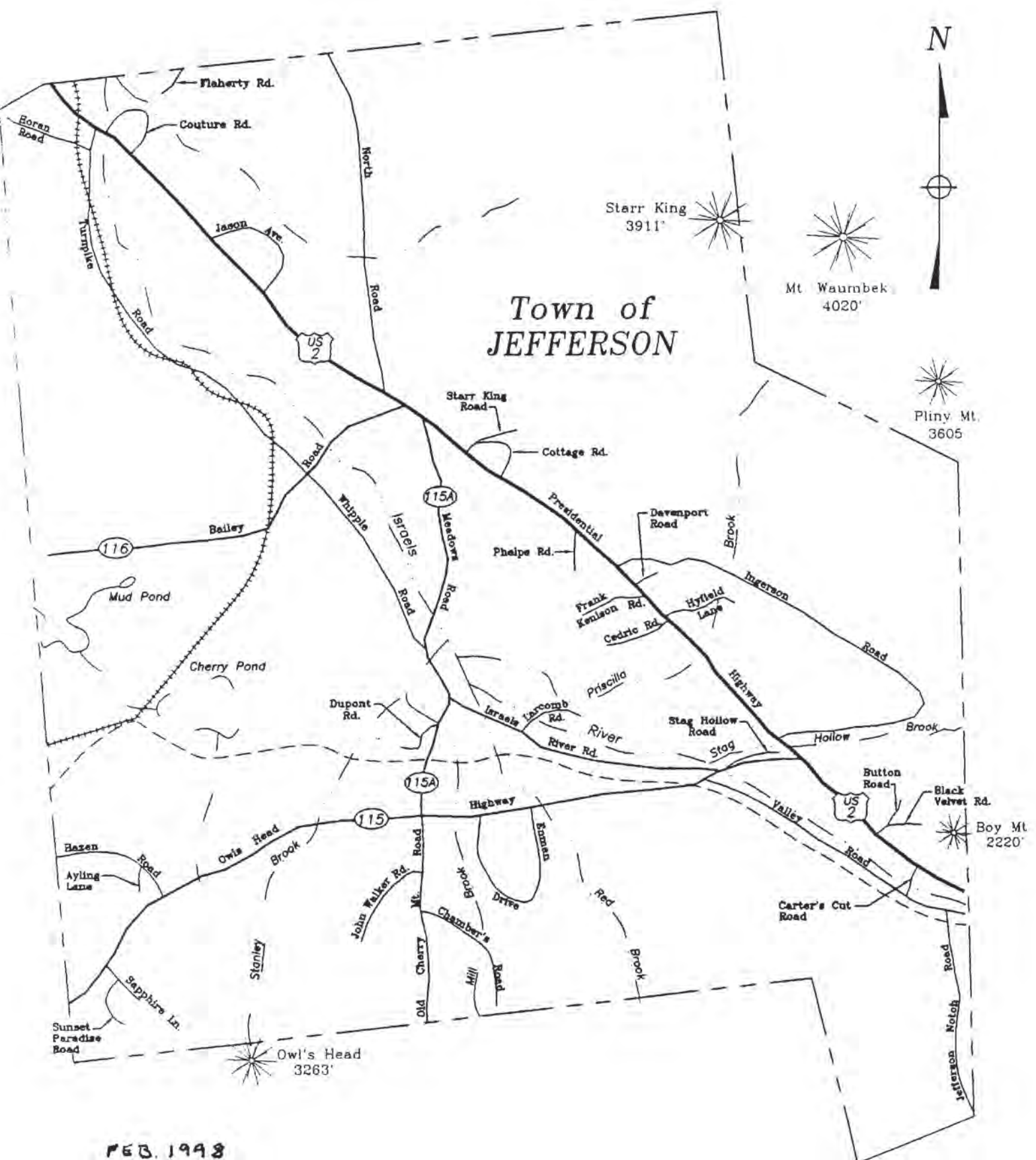
There is absolutely no mass transit available in Jefferson. Without a vehicle, you must either arrange for transportation on the Senior Wheels Van or obtain a ride from a neighbor. Most residents of Jefferson must travel a minimum of 10 miles in order to shop at the nearest supermarket.

The Department of Transportation should be expending a greater effort in correcting the road conditions that exist on the state maintained roads in Jefferson. This is of critical importance to the people of Jefferson. A major part of the town's economy is tourist based. Well maintained, safe roads are a key factor to the tourist based businesses in town.

NH 116 was identified by the DOT, in January of 1995, as having minor safety concerns over the entire Jefferson segment of this route and is not scheduled for any corrective improvements in 1996.

Improvements of the conditions that exist on NH 115A are long since overdue and are still not scheduled for 1997. This roadway is badly deteriorated, very bumpy and has very poor drainage. Spring thaws frequently flood this road in the meadows thereby cutting off residents who live on Cherry mountain Road and all the roads off NH 115 from vital ambulance services and the Fire Department. When this occurs, these services must travel east on US 2 to NH 115 and go south on NH 115. This adds approximately ten miles to the trip, when the time necessary to make the trip is critical and may be a life and death situation.

Although identified, by the Department of Transportation, as having minor safety concerns US 2, an integral part of the National Highway system, is not scheduled for any corrective improvement other than the 3/8" resurfacing completed in 1996. Residents of Jefferson do not consider the safety concerns, identified by the DOT, as minor. This is a dangerous road. The New Hampshire Chapter of Associated General Contractors list this route as one of it's "Dirty Dozen" which is a list of the twelve worst roads in New Hampshire.



FEB. 1948

Jefferson, NH - Master Plan

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

Conservation and preservation of any town's Natural Resources should always be considered when making planning and zoning decisions. But for a town as rich in and dependent upon its natural resources as Jefferson, the protection of our water and air quality as well as the compatibility of any proposed development with the rural and scenic nature of the town must be a top priority.

Many residents of Jefferson derive their income, directly or indirectly, from the land around them. Farm land provides scenic open views for visitors and townspeople alike even as food and a livelihood are being produced. Loggers and manufacturers of timber products all need a diverse and sustainable forest to provide continued bountiful harvests. Visitors who help support our local economy drive this far north primarily for the natural beauty and outdoor recreational opportunities.

Many of Jefferson's special qualities cannot be found elsewhere as noted in the Conservation Commission's "Natural Resources Inventory" (*please reference Natural Resources Inventory available in the Town Hall Reference Library*). Of particular concern to townspeople as we plan for the future is; 1 - the protection and preservation of our town's uniqueness, 2 - its character as a small rural community and 3 - its sense of place.

To that important end, certain specific areas deserve particular consideration:

AIR AND WATER

1) Israel's River and all of its branches are one of our prime natural resources. Even as the further development of the town continues, we must be careful to protect their integrity by carefully monitoring development at its source and along its banks.

2) Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge - including Cherry Pond, Little Cherry, Mud Pond, and the deadwaters between the ponds must be protected in its natural state. A grant has been received to purchase a corridor of public access to the Pond, but much work remains to be done to protect this important resource.

3) All of our water resources must be protected to provide for the needs of our residents. These resources also include our extensive wetlands that provide habitat for many of our flora and fauna.

4) Although most air pollution may come from afar, Jefferson must do what it can to protect this essential resource by guarding against any land use that might contribute to further pollution.

AGRICULTURAL LAND AND OPEN SPACES

1) For centuries agricultural land has been a cornerstone of the local economy and contributed to aesthetics of our community. All reasonable efforts to preserve the town's few remaining farms as open spaces must be made.

2) Jefferson is well known for the quantity and quality of its spectacular views. These viewing points include but are not limited to: a) Route 2 from the Waumbek Golf Course and all overlooks, b) the Route 115 Scenic Overlook, c) the views from the Meadows along 115A, d) views of and from Israel's River.

3) The preservation of the Waumbek Golf Course as an open space providing incredible views and recreational opportunities along our most traveled highway is essential to maintaining the character of our community.

TOWN PLANNING LAND USE QUESTIONNAIRE

Surveys of townspeople in 1986 and 1992 affirmed our citizens strong desire to preserve the town's rural character.

In the 1986 survey 342 of 350 respondents hoped that Jefferson would either "be like it was 20 years ago" - 24, "stay the same as it is now" - 117, or only "grow moderately" - 201. The same survey registered these responses to the question "What kind of town would you like Jefferson to be in 20 years?" (more than one could be chosen): Rural - 286, Agricultural 124, 30 chose Commuter Suburban, - Commercial 15, Light Industrial 44. In an answer to another question, only 9 respondents, wanted to see factories in Jefferson.

In the 1992 survey asking "What kind of town you would like Jefferson to be in 20 years?" (the year 2012), the answers were much the same: Rural 220, Agricultural 105, Resort Recreational - 144, Commercial - 8, Light Industrial 72, Heavy Industrial - 3.

THE FOREST

Public and private forest lands must continue to be managed for multi-use and to sustain our forest based economy as well as maintain important recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

We must strengthen our cooperative relationships with all large public and private land owners as we look together towards the future.

Agnew State Forest is a jewel located adjacent to the White Mountain National Forest. It is currently the site of much snowmobile activity, but its potential goes well beyond that. Its access and the areas surrounding it must be preserved.

RECREATION & TOURISM

1) Snowmobile trails provide important winter recreational opportunities for our townspeople and attract many visitors. These and other corridors have the potential to be expanded to provide other recreational opportunities including mountain biking, cross country skiing, horseback riding, and additional hiking trails. One particular opportunity is the potential for the expansion of the fishing grounds along Israel's River.

2) Access to and the integrity surrounding such hiking trails as Owl's Head, Boy Mountain, Pondicherry and others must be guaranteed.

3) Hunting and fishing is important both to local residents and a growing number of tourists. These unique opportunities should be protected on both public and private lands. A special opportunity is the potential for the expansion of the fishing grounds along the Israel's River.

4) Golf, swimming and other recreational activities provided by the Waumbek site should continue to be encouraged.

The results of the 1986 survey of Jefferson residents 284 listed peace and quiet as one of the things they "liked most about Jefferson ", 86 said general recreational opportunities, 83 hunting, 89 fishing, and an overwhelming 301 noted "the importance of mountain scenery "

HISTORIC BUILDINGS & SITES

Historical buildings and the areas around them must be preserved including, but not limited to: the Historical Society, Town Hall, the Town Library, the Waumbek Colony and Golf Course area, the Highland Chapel, the Carter Tower and the site of the historic Cherry Mountain Slide.

CONCLUSIONS

The potential benefits of any proposed changes and/or development must be measured carefully against its effect on natural resources and landscape, as well as its effect on our unique community. A great deal of land in our town holds potential for further development. How that development is handled will determine not just the aesthetic beauty of our town, but the future of farming, logging, tourism, and recreation long into the next century.

~

**PREPARED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE JEFFERSON
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
(1997)**

Jefferson, New Hampshire

Master Plan

CHAPTER EIGHT

HOUSING

An estimated 20% of residential property is owned by nonresidents as vacation or investment property. The Portland Pipeline right of way extends from the eastern town line to the northwestern town border. The line conveys petroleum from Portland, Maine to Montreal. The pipeline is a major factor in the property tax base.

There are few buildings left in Jefferson of architectural distinction or historic significance. Many of the town's most attractive and historic buildings have been razed in the last few decades for a variety of reasons. Some Had aged beyond the point of repair . Others were torn down to avoid or lower property taxes and many were lost in a rash of arson in 1988.

This chapter of the Master plan will be completed in 1998.

Master Plan Addendum

In 2008, the Planning Board reviewed the current master plan, as revised in 1998, in order to determine if it continued to meet the goals of the town. The Board found that the demographics of the current plan needed to be updated. The Plan notes that the population of Coos County in 1990 stood at 34,828. The U.S. Census Bureau's data now finds that the 2007 population of Coos County stood at 32,772. According to the data, Jefferson's population in 2007 stood at 1,057. It was also interesting to note that "projections prepared by the North Country Council, Inc. in the 1995 Housing Assessment, predict that Jefferson's population will be at 1,112 by the year 2000." Clearly, those expectations have not been realized.

Jefferson's current population density stands at 21.1 persons per square mile, still considerable lower than the state average.

As noted in the Master Plan, "Jefferson's economic outlook, along with most of Coos County was somewhat bleak". Based on the closure of paper mills in Berlin and Groveton, and the poor outlook for the mill in Gorham, the County's economic future continues to look bleak. The Board found, however that access to high speed internet by area residents could provide economic opportunities for many in the region and an effort to provide that access should be fast tracked.

The Board found that it was important to note that the Community Goals outlined in Chapter Three of the Plan continue to hold true today. In making this determination, the Board relied on a survey conducted in 2006. The Master Plan Community Survey was mailed to 756 households of which 403 were returned. It is important to note that:

- 364 respondents found that preserving the rural character and atmosphere of the town continues to be important or very important.
- 332 respondents found that preserving the natural resources of the town continues to be important or very important.
- 328 respondents found that the People and Community spirit continues to be important or very important characteristic of the town
- 281 respondents found that the Historical Character of the town continues to be important or very important to the community.

An analysis of the 2006 Master Plan Community Survey has helped the Board determine that the Master Plan revised in 1998, continues to reflect the community's goals as it pertains to development, and encourages the preservation of natural resources as well as maintaining the rural character of the town that makes Jefferson a beautiful and unique place to live.