

Town of Atkinson



Master Plan
1998

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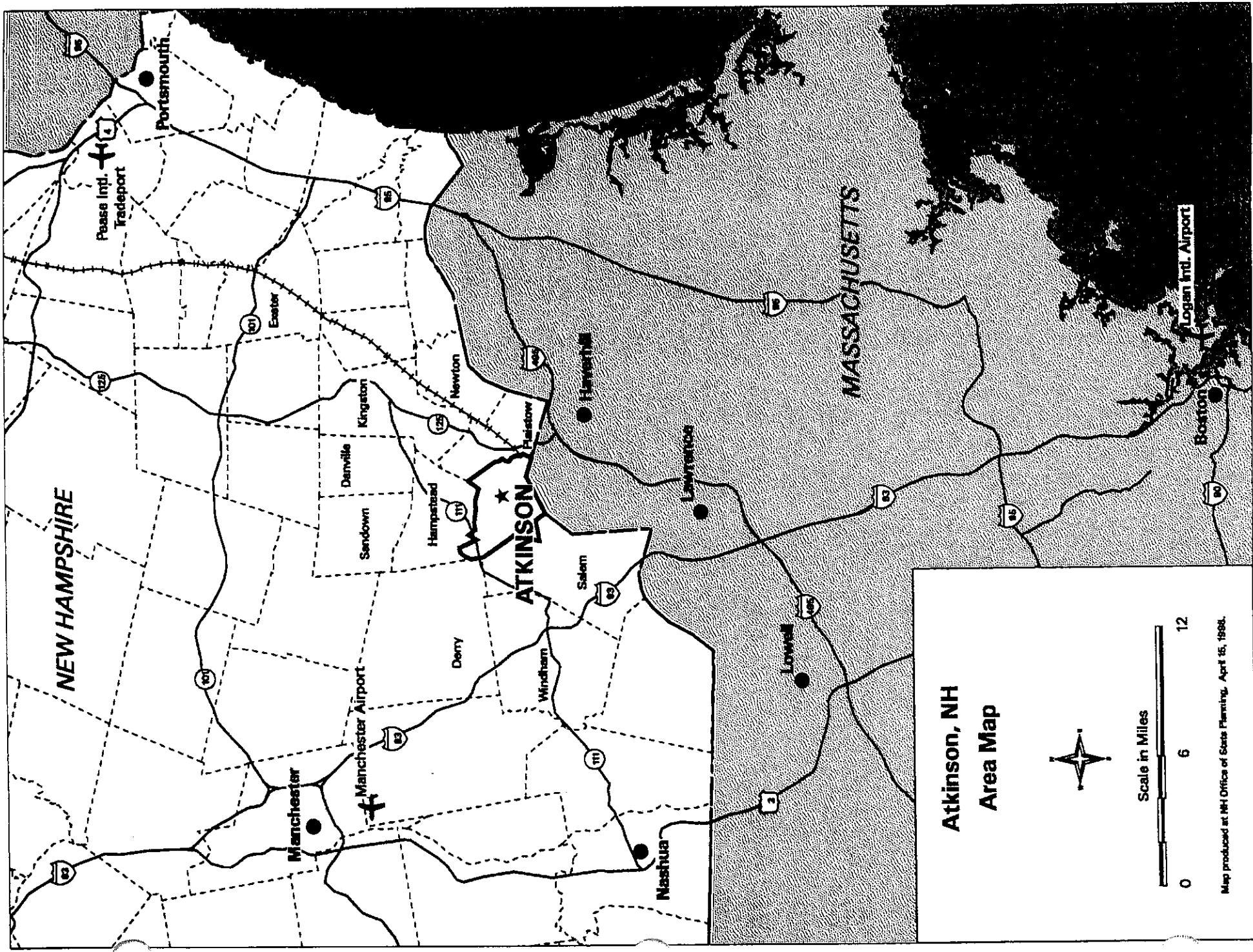
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Atkinson, NH Area Map



Scale in Miles



Map produced at NH Office of State Planning, April 15, 1988.

INTRODUCTION

Atkinson's Setting

The Town of Atkinson is located in Rockingham County, New Hampshire, in the lower Merrimack River Valley, on the northern border of State of Massachusetts. This region is one of the most rapidly developing regions in the United States. Rockingham County is one of the fastest growing counties in the southern New Hampshire Growth Belt. Over 60 million people live within a days drive of the Merrimack Valley.

Atkinson is bordered by Hampstead and Derry to the north; Salem to the west; and Plaistow to the east. Salem and Derry comprise two of the six largest municipalities in the State of NH; the three largest, Nashua, Manchester and Portsmouth, respectively, are all within a 35 mile radius of Atkinson. Concord, the capitol of NH, is less than an hours drive from Atkinson via Route 93. Likewise, Boston, MA, an international, commercial and population center, is also within an hours drive from Atkinson, again via Route 93.

Atkinson is positioned in the middle of the New England Transportation Triad. Manchester Airport is easily accessible to the northwest, as is Pease International Tradeport to the northeast in Portsmouth/Newington and Boston's Logan Airport to the south.

NH Route 111, which runs east/west through the northern part of Atkinson, is heavily used by Town commuters, as is north/south Route 121 (Main Street) which bisects the Town. Additionally, Atkinson is located within close proximity to Route 125 to the east, Route 93 to the west, Route 101 to the north and Route 495 to the south in Massachusetts.

The Boston and Maine rail line, runs through the southern part of Atkinson, connecting Portland, ME, to Boston, MA. Commuter rail service from Portland to Boston is presently expected to be restored in 1999.

History of the Atkinson Master Plan

The first Master Plan for the Town of Atkinson was prepared in 1980 to document the needs of the Town and desires of its' residents. It also contained recommendations for improving the existing zoning ordinance, and provided the necessary scientific data to support these changes. The 1985 Master Plan Supplement made recommendations to allow Atkinson to meet it's obligation to provide it's fair

share of low-moderate income housing while continuing to maintain the Town's rural character. The 1990 Master Plan amended the original plan, bringing it up to date with the changing needs of the town.

At the time of preparation of the 1980 Master Plan, Atkinson was coming off of the rapid growth period which had occurred in the late 1960's and early 1970's, and the Planning Board was looking for ways to avert similar growth patterns in the future. At the same time, the Planning Board recognized the need for zoning which was based upon scientific documentation. The Town was learning to recognize a need to integrate the rights of the individual landowner with restrictions designed to protect the rights of many to enjoy their property and preserve their property values. Thus, the Introduction of the 1980 Master Plan includes an extensive treatise on the importance of land-use regulations to promote orderly growth and protect the larger community from the actions of individuals.

By the mid 1970's, it was apparent that the majority of Atkinson citizens recognized a need for strong, but fair, land-use regulations. In 1976, a separate Conservation Commission was appointed which, two years later, prepared a Wetlands Ordinance, subsequently adopted by the Town. This measure was supported strongly in all community surveys. In the following years, Atkinson completely revamped its regulations and repeatedly supported this process at the polls. In addition to comprehensive zoning and revised and strengthened subdivision regulations, the town adopted Site Plan Review regulations, an Excavation Regulation, road construction specifications, and National Fire Association Standards.

Atkinson residents place a significant value on the preservation of the rural character of the Town, as shown by the results of all four surveys conducted over the past 18 years. The 1985 survey indicated that 58% of the residents chose to live in Atkinson for this reason, and the 1998 survey results confirm the residents' desire to maintain the Town's rural character. The strong value placed on maintenance of open space and preservation of wetlands, along with the related desire to responsibly control growth, must be recognized in developing future land-use regulations.

The 1998 Update

This most recent update to the Master Plan strives to incorporate the history of prior planning efforts in Atkinson, along with current data, philosophy and citizen opinion. In addition a new format has been introduced with the hopes that from this update forward the Plan itself becomes a usable "living document" that is both easy to comprehend, utilize, and update. Individually, the chapters stand alone for comprehensive treatment of particular issues and for ease of updating on a singular

approach; together they form a more complete and in-depth picture of the current status of the Town of Atkinson and a more tangible and direct vision of specific issues and solutions for Atkinson's future.

First, there are larger margins. These margins are provided to allow people using this document to keep notes and maintain a constant "file" of data with the Plan itself, for when updates are necessary or when decisions and interpretations are made that enhance the usability and understandability of the document. Second, the document itself is presented in a three-ring binder format to allow for individualized updating when needed. Rather than viewing the document only as a comprehensive singular statement, this choice reinforces the concept that the Master Plan is a compilation of statements of a variety of issues and that each chapter presents its own unique policy. This format eases individualized updating and permits the involvement of numerous town boards and commissions in the process. Furthermore, changes in the status of public facilities or policy shifts regarding public services can be reflected in an update to that chapter without having to reproduce the entire plan. Chapters can be easily discarded, making way for the new, and the Plan will thrive as the living changing document it is meant to be.

Each Chapter will be individually numbered and provided with its own date of revision. Furthermore, with each revision a sheet at the front of the Plan will include the latest update for each chapter. Recommendations will appear both at the end of each individual chapter, as well as within a separate recommendations section which can be more easily reviewed.

In preparation for the writing of this Master Plan, the Planning Board conducted an informal survey, the goal of which was to ascertain how Atkinson residents feel about their community, what they feel are the Town's strengths and weaknesses, what is special about Atkinson and how they would like to see their community develop in the future. The results of this survey have influenced the production of this Master Plan.

The Master Plan provides the basic data and rationale and expresses the broad principles which serve as guidelines to the Planning Board, Selectmen, and other town bodies as they plan for the future.

The Planning Board is authorized under the provisions of RSA 674 et seq. to develop a strategy, in the form of a Master Plan, to guide the future growth of the community.

This document is that plan. It replaces the existing plan and brings it up to date with respect to the changing needs of the community.

The Plan serves many purposes. It brings together an analysis of the social, economic and physical characteristics of the community, the distribution of population, income statistics, where people work, the capacity of public facilities, and the amounts of open space, forest, and playgrounds. The Master Plan also provides a means to coordinate land development with Town facilities, including schools, recreation, police, and fire, as well as other services provided by the Town. The Plan serves as a guide in the making of daily decisions regarding development and the use of land in terms of their long-range consequences.

Today more than ever, planners must become ever more involved with environmental concerns. The conflict between growth and preservation of natural and cultural resources becomes more and more apparent as the amount of open, developable land diminishes. The balance between property rights, and regulation becomes more focused as governments struggle to preserve disappearing resources that are an integral part of community identity, health, and well-being. The Master Plan must provide a statement concerning the objectives for the protection of wetlands, streams, forests and floodplains. The tenets of historic preservation strive to keep important the buildings that are a part of the permanent environment. Through these actions our future generations and current citizens will be able to connect with and learn the lessons of our past, while looking toward the future.

The people we serve are the people of Atkinson. This is not just the people who vote at today's election, but our ancestors, and most importantly our children who stand to inherit the results of our decisions and actions. It is they who will benefit from the solid, and well-reasoned decisions we make today; they will be forced to suffer the consequences of our mistakes. This Master Plan must reflect these interests and priorities, and the programs that are implemented must help the community survive and maintain the desired quality of life which is a critical aspect of Atkinson's identity as a town. At the same time we must be aware that people have also become more sophisticated in pursuing special interests. They are better informed, understand the laws and procedures, have greater political skills, and are more persistent. They have learned that planning brings order to change, and therefore, seek to influence the process of planning. The challenge of planners is to balance the demands of competing interests into a dynamic community consensus sufficient to enhance their decisions.

In the future, planners will continue to work under conditions of scarce economic resources and will constantly be faced with the competing priorities of residents, neighborhoods, interest groups, and both resident and non-resident developers. The delivery of adequate public services will pose serious problems for the foreseeable future. As our town continues to grow, it will undergo recurring adjustments. It is the task of the planners to minimize the impacts these cycles of change have on the town's residents.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Introduction

Presented below is a discussion of the goals, objectives and policies that are submitted for consideration by the Planning Board, which is assisting the community in updating the Master Plan. It is important that these goals, objectives and policies be adopted by the Planning Board and supported by the Board of Selectmen, so that subsequent planning recommendations can be set forth affording the voters the opportunity to guide the development of the Town of Atkinson.

These Goals, Objectives and Policies are part of the Master Plan and serve as an overall umbrella for the Town's development plan.

Goals: A Goal is defined as a fundamental purpose that requires the application of long-term effort and energies of the Town. It is designed to give direction, guidance and coordination to the Town's changes and future development.

Objectives: As part of the attainment of goals, specific objectives are designed to make recommendations that contribute to the fulfillment of the established goals for Atkinson.

Policies: The Planning Board may suggest policies to the Selectmen and the Voters. The legislative body should make decisions that implement policy recommendations. In order to realize goals and objectives, policies must be consistent with the Master Plan.

Recommended Goals

The following are goals submitted for consideration by the Planning Board.

1. Retention of the Quality of Life for Atkinson Residents

This basic and broad goal is one upon which subsequent goals must rest. It is stated here, though broad, for true value and planning purposes. This goal assures the continued focus on the quality of life in Atkinson.

Objective: In order to attain such a vast goal, the Town must accept the responsibility of creating conditions for all citizens that may best meet basic human needs and are commensurate with the common

good. To attain this, it is important that both the individual and the community follow through with a plan that has as its aim a balanced program for change and development.

Policy: The Master Plan must provide the framework for the continuation and improvement of policies aimed at providing for the well being of the citizens of Atkinson and for providing for growth and change without undue hardship in retaining the quality of life established to this date.

2. Atkinson's role in the Regional Setting

The Town should not be expected to provide employment opportunities and services, and thereby accepts a continued dependence on outlying communities.

Objectives: The Town must maintain a Land Use Plan that primarily retains a desirable residential environment.

Policy: The policy must be one that continues an attractive residential community.

3. Retention and Protection of Property Values

The Town must recognize the importance of the protection of existing property values within Atkinson, the maintenance of open spaces, fostering of community pride and protection of natural resources.

Objectives: The objective is to provide for balanced growth and change while maintaining the existing rural character of the community. The objective must reflect the densities and specific uses permitted within certain areas of the community. The careful identification of land uses and their interrelationship and coordination with soil and subsoil is imperative.

Policy: The adoption of subdivision regulations and zoning ordinances that are designed to be commensurate with the community's capacity to assume growth and change must be kept in mind.

4. **Recreation**

Atkinson should make every effort to expand recreational opportunities for the town. This goal is to provide for the continued opportunity for residents to enjoy physical activities.

Objective: The objective is the establishment of a long range open space and recreational improvement program that provides for strategic locations of publicly accessed land.

Any recreational program must recognize the need for balanced year round recreational opportunities.

Policy: The policy necessary for the continued progress towards acquiring open space and developing recreational opportunities in the town is to adopt a long term plan, and to seek all possible sources of funds to make appropriate purchases.

5. **Streets and Highways**

The goal should be to provide for a street and highway network that will discourage major through traffic and be one that is primarily designed to serve the residents of the community. In addition, Atkinson must actively cooperate with area towns to assure that regional highways meet the needs of all communities. Traffic congestion on regional arterials is an increasing source of frustration to the residents

Objectives: The objective of this goal is the maintenance of a residential community environment. This means that access should be provided, but that fast and high volumes of traffic should be limited to certain areas of town. The creation of road and highway networks should primarily serve the residents of Atkinson.

The Master Plan and Capital Improvement Plan must spell out a comprehensive roads strategy. Since roads represent the most significant part of Atkinson's budget, it is recommended that a professionally prepared maintenance/reconstruction/construction plan be developed.

Policy: The policy is to adopt road and highway standards that retain the scenic roads, encourage the continuing maintenance of the road network, and adopt standards and specifications that are designed to meet the needs for the assigned functions.

Although road maintenance is not strictly under the jurisdiction of the Planning Board, except for its responsibility to prepare a Capital Improvements Plan, the Master plan and Capital Improvements Plan should serve as a catalyst for all involved parties (Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Road Agent) to agree on a long-term road maintenance/reconstruction/construction strategy.

6. Sewage Disposal and Water Supply

The goal is to maintain a sufficiently low development density that will allow for individual sewage disposal facilities and individual water supply. Such a goal is to be established under the existing water quality laws of the State of New Hampshire and those health regulations in the Town of Atkinson.

Objective: The objective is to avoid the large capital expenditure required to provide public sewer and water services. To assure the avoidance of town water and sewer, an objective is to provide for continued measures that allow such densities and such regulations addressing subsoil conditions that will keep individual water supplies and sewage disposal systems efficient without ground water or surface water pollution.

Policy: The policy to attain such a goal and accomplish the objective is to provide for a detailed project review that will address soil and subsoil conditions. This will also require sufficiently low densities throughout the community so that water pollution will not occur, ensuring safe and sufficient water for the foreseeable future.

7. Maintenance of the Master Plan

A master plan is not a static document. Information and conditions change, and the citizens of Atkinson need to provide continued input to the planning process.

Objective: The Master Plan and associated capital improvement program will be kept up to date on an ongoing basis.

Policy: The Master Plan and CIP will be reviewed annually by the Planning Board to determine if significant changes have occurred in its underlying assumptions. Any changes of these underlying assumptions will be cause for an update.

Summary:

It should be recognized that the articulation of goals and the establishment of objectives along with the policies necessary to carry out these goals are an ongoing process. Goals and objectives along with the appropriate policies for implementation may be added to, amended and changed as necessary and should be addressed as a basic element in the Master Planning process.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Introduction

The Town of Atkinson is rich in history. Many of the original homes, buildings, roads and trails of previous generations still exist for the enjoyment of Atkinson's residents. The following sections provide a summary of Atkinson's unique history, a list of historic resources in the town, and recommendations for continuing and enhancing the town's historic resource preservation.

Atkinson's Pre-Revolutionary History

The Town of Atkinson was originally a part of Haverhill, Massachusetts, and its history is inseparably associated with that of its larger, more urbanized neighbor to the south.



The first recorded settlers in what was to become Atkinson were Ben Richards of Rochester, John Dox of Haverhill, and Nathaniel, Jonathan and Edmund Page of Haverhill. In the years 1727-1728 they became residents of the western portion of Haverhill's "North Parish", which included those lands now known as Plaistow and Atkinson.

The earliest settlers began as subsistence farmers who grew forage for their animals and family food such as corn, wheat, fruit and potatoes. (The cultivation of potatoes and flax for the spinning of linen had been introduced to the area around 1718 by a group of Scotch-Irish immigrants who eventually settled near Londonderry). These two products, the area's first major marketable commodities, represented the first link in the chain of agricultural trade that was to sustain Atkinson's economy through the latter part of the nineteenth century.

When the New Hampshire-Massachusetts boundary was established in 1740, much of the "North Parish" became part of New Hampshire. On February 28, 1749, the town of Plaistow was incorporated. The area known as Atkinson was subsequently separated from Plaistow and was incorporated as a town on August 31, 1767.

The town was named after Theodore Atkinson, a nephew of the former Provincial Governor of New Hampshire, Benning Wentworth. The part of the original land grant that Governor Wentworth reserved for himself, as was his custom, was located along what is now Providence Hill Road.

During the first year after incorporation, town meetings were held in the home of John Dow, and by the end of 1768 a meetinghouse had been built on the north side of Main Street next to the old cemetery. (The meetinghouse fell into disrepair and was razed in 1845). By the time of the Revolution, at least three saw and grist mills had been built and a cemetery had been established (1773). The remains of the mills may be seen today on Shannon Road, West Side Drive and Island Pond Roads. The old cemetery on Main Street still stands.

Surviving Architecture of this Period

There are some 22 houses representing the three Georgian style house types that survive in Atkinson.

They include the 2 1/2-story, 5-bay, central chimney house, the 1 1/2-story, 5-bay, central chimney Cape and the "half-house."

The historically significant John Dow House (site #65), built by one of the original settlers, is an example of the 2 1/2-story Georgian house, and the Peaslee House (site #1) is a good example of the 1 1/2-story Georgian Cape. The Page homestead (site #83), built by Edmund Page, also an original settler, is an excellent example of the Georgian "half-house."

Atkinson's Post-Revolutionary Federal History

The period following the Revolution was the time of a regional upswing in industry, education, transportation and architecture.

Textile mills and shoe factories in Haverhill began to assume importance in the local economy. In Atkinson, due to the opening of new roads, the advent of the stagecoach and a general increase in travel, the services of blacksmiths and wheelwrights became more in demand than ever before.

A surge of interest in educating the young people of the new republic led to the organization of library associations, colleges and academies. The Atkinson Academy, surviving as the town's single most architecturally significant building, was built in 1803 (site #71). It was designed by Ebenezer Clifford, who had also designed the Exeter Congregational Church and several buildings at the Phillips-Exeter Academy. The establishment of the Academy changed Atkinson from a purely agricultural town to an "academy town" and had a strong impact on the Town's culture and economy.

The early nineteenth century was the era of the stagecoach. By 1793, stagecoach service had begun between Haverhill and Concord, passing through Atkinson. The route taken through the town was the Post Road (now Main Street). Serving this route, several taverns operated in or near the town center.

The new republic's national pride began to be expressed in new construction in the Federal style and the remodeling of older Georgian style houses to fit the new, more sophisticated fashion of the times. At the same time, many builders in the town clung to the earlier styles of the eighteenth century.

Surviving Architecture of this Period

There are 23 Federal style houses surviving in Atkinson. They include three basic house types: the 2 1/2-story, 5-bay brick house, the 2 1/2-story, 5-bay, wood frame house, and the 1 1/2-story Cape style house of both brick and wood construction.

The Hiram Pierce House (site #68) is an excellent example of the brick Federal House. The John Vose House (site #74) is a wood frame house in the Federal style. An example of the Cape style of the Federal period is the Mason House (site #4).

Atkinson's Pre-Civil War (Greek Revival) History

The period following the Federal period and preceding the Civil War was marked by increased industrialization in the Haverhill-Atkinson area. Turnpikes and canals, hailed as great advances, in a few years were superseded by the network of railroads that left only a few farms more than a half day's drive from a station. By the middle of the 19th century, the New England network of railroads surpassed in density anything to be found elsewhere in the United States.

Haverhill emerged as an important industrial town and some Atkinson inhabitants began to turn out piece work for these factories in their homes. This opportunity for people to earn cash income in their homes went hand in hand with a general agricultural prosperity due to the coming of the railroad and the accessibility of transportation for their produce.

The Atkinson Academy continued to grow and play an important role in the life of the town. Its students were boarded in various farmhouses throughout the area and many of them became teachers in Atkinson and neighboring towns. Other alumni became prominent in public life and included at least two governors, a State Supreme Court Justice, and several members of Congress.

Agriculture was gradually becoming less an all-inclusive calling than a diversity of occupations. The era of the milk runs began, and Atkinson now had the capacity to ship milk, butter and cheese to markets in Boston as well as Haverhill. Around 1854, E.N. Greenough became the first local farmer with a milk run between Atkinson and Haverhill.

The high incidence of new construction (in the Greek Revival style) can be seen as a reflection of the expanding industrial, and agricultural economies of Haverhill and Atkinson.

Surviving Architecture of the Period

There are 22 houses surviving in Atkinson that were built in the Greek Revival style. Some of them were built as 1 ½ or 2-story houses with gable front orientation to the street and side-hall entry. Others were built on the central hall plan with the main facade facing the street. A third type is the Cape style house of the period, adapted from the earlier, Georgian Cape.

The Noyes House (site #13) is an excellent example of the 2 1/2-story Greek Revival house with gable front orientation to the street and side-hall entry. The central hall plan type is represented by the Little House (site #90), and the Barratt House (site #19) is a Greek Revival Cape.

Atkinson's Post-Civil War (Late Nineteenth Century) History

The thirty years that followed 1870 seem to have been one of the most difficult periods that the local farmers had ever faced; a time when they had to adapt to the changing needs of a nation that was moving West.

By the time of the 1870 census report, thousands of the poorer, multi-purpose farms of New England had gone out of production, and the era of the abandoned farm was beginning.

Ironically, the same railroad system that had created a period of prosperity for the small farm of southeastern New Hampshire was now taking it away by its expansion into the Midwest and West. Looking for a product to replace the wheat and cattle that the West now produced more cheaply, the one product that would appeal to the markets of Boston and other large cities of the region was milk. As these cities became more industrialized and more densely populated, the demand for milk and other dairy products grew and the trend from the multi-purpose farm to the dairy farm had begun.

The farms of Atkinson became a part of this "milkshed", as the fresh milk area came to be called. By 1875, local dairy farmers were selling 420,000 quarts of milk annually to Boston, making Atkinson the second ranking milk-producing town in Rockingham County.

The effect of the general decline of multi-purpose agriculture in the forestation of towns like Atkinson was dramatic. The decade of the Civil War (1860-1870) had marked the area's high point for cultivated land and the low point for its forest cover. Steadily, as people abandoned the farms and sought employment in nearby mill towns, young forests began to take over.

This change in ecology is reflected in present-day Atkinson's high percentage of wooded area, a condition that had not existed in the earlier nineteenth century when a thriving, multi-purpose agriculture had flourished on the cleared lands of the town.

Several efforts to revive the sagging economy of the town were made in the late nineteenth century. One of these was an effort to attract summer tourists to Atkinson. In 1877, a correspondent for the Exeter News Letter described the town as "a pleasant little town of less than 500 souls and a favorite resort for city people who rent a house for the warmer weeks or board in private homes here." One aspect of the effort to attract tourists to the town was a new emphasis on beautification, witness the planting of handsome trees along Maple Avenue which still stand today.

Another manifestation of the attempt to combat the economic pressures of the times was the widespread organization that characterized agriculture during the last part of the 19th century. The establishment of local Granges began at this time and continued into the early 20th century. In Atkinson, the Grange Hall was built in 1912, and razed in 1987.

Surviving Architecture of this Period

There are 18 houses in Atkinson that were built in the late nineteenth century, after the Greek Revival Period. They comprise a varied mixture of vernacular and eclectic house types and styles, the most significant of which is the Colonial Revival. The Colonial Revival style is expressed in the Congregational Chapel (site #60), the Gilmartin House (site #45), and the Sawyer House (site #104).

Twentieth Century History

The first half of the twentieth century was marked by a general decline in agricultural activity. In 1900 there had been 11 milk runs bringing a total of \$60,000 per year into the town; by 1942, there was only one remaining milk route to Haverhill. Accompanying this decline was the movement of a number of farmers into full time employment in the factories of Haverhill.

Attempts to attract summer tourists to the area continued in the early years of the century. Newspaper articles of the time depicted Atkinson as a "resort town", and in the first decade of the century a trolley car line was proposed to run from Haverhill to Hampstead to the playground area of Island Pond. The advent of the automobile led to the cancellation of the plan but the Island Pond area to this day has several cottages that are opened for the summer season.

In Atkinson, as in the rest of the nation, the twentieth century brought with it technological advancements that would eventually change the character of the town and the lifestyle of its inhabitants.

Telephones appeared in town as early as 1905, and in 1911 the Plaistow Electric Company provided electricity to Atkinson households for the first time. Henry Ford introduced his Model "T" automobile in 1908, and the first automobile to be owned by an Atkinson resident is believed to have been purchased in 1910.

With the advent of the automobile, crushed stone surfaces began to take the place of mud and gravel on farm-to-market roads, and these new roads were to be the precursors of the network of interstate highways that now surround the town.

Surviving Architecture of This Period

The construction of vernacular houses, basically unremarkable from an architectural point of view, continued into the twentieth century. The single most identifiable house type that emerged in the first quarter of the century was the bungalow, of which there are three within the time frame of the survey (pre-1931) that survive in Atkinson. The bungalow was popular nationally and regionally as an inexpensive and easily constructed house which had a style of its own but was affordable by the middle class.

Excellent examples of the bungalow style are the Orio House (Site #113) and the Sawyer House (Site #105).

While this architectural/historical survey stops at the year 1930, the history of Atkinson is continuous. Great changes have taken place, particularly since the 1950's. During the 1950's and 1960's, increased mobility afforded by the large interstate highways created a situation in which 61.8% of the town's work force in 1979 were employed out of town.

Boston's urban sprawl and the flight from Massachusetts, along with New Hampshire's more favorable tax rate, have contributed to a tremendous increase in the population of Atkinson.

The challenge of reconciling Atkinson's future with its past experience lies in the hands of its present generation.

Key to Historic/Architectural Areas and Landscape Vistas

Atkinson's architectural character is inseparably linked to the landscape. Atkinson was historically a farming community, and the architecture and the landscape reflect this agricultural heritage.

There are areas of Atkinson where there survive concentrations or clusters of older structures. These areas have been defined as Historic/Architectural Areas. They are shown on a base map and keyed with a capital letter to be easily distinguishable from numbered individual sites. Areas of the landscape which retain their historic agricultural character or which scenically frame the historic architecture have also been noted. These have been designated Landscape Vistas¹. This key contains a brief description of the features and sites identified in each of these areas. They are grouped by road for easier location.

¹ "Landscape Vistas" - not to be confused with "Scenic Vistas" and 'Pronounced Landscapes' as designated in the 1980 Master Plan.

The original character of the town is relatively unaltered within these areas. Standing in or driving through them it is possible to recall the earlier days of Atkinson's heritage.

East Road

The northern end of East Road has experienced a considerable amount of new development. There are several unchanged areas however, and the southern end remains almost entirely untouched including the agricultural Landscape Vista to the north and west. The overall character of this road is derived predominantly from the number of brick Federal farms and related open fields.

Area A is on the northern end of East Road and includes the property historically known as the Peaslee House, a one and one-half story Georgian cape. To the northwest is an open field enclosed by stone walls creating a strong visual reminder of Atkinson's agricultural heritage.

Area B includes site #'s 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6. Federal and Greek Revival architectural styles are featured in this area: a transitional Federal/Greek Revival cape (site #2); two brick Federal capes (sites #'s 3, & 4); a one and one-half story Greek Revival style house (site #5); and a vernacular house which incorporates many Greek Revival elements (site #6). Site #'s 3 & 4 are linked historically to the French family. They also make an important visual impact on this area as they are almost identical. This area readily recalls the small family farms that were the backbone of the town.

Area C contains the property historically known as the Noyes Homestead (site #7), a two and one-half story Georgian home with a Victorian era ell connecting the house to the Greek Revival barn. For over 100 years, this home was owned by the members of the prominent Noyes family, and in the late 1800's it was the location of one of Atkinson's larger dairy farms. This complex is also educational, visually tracing the historical evolution of one family's farm through its architectural modification.

Area D contains site #'s 9, 10, & 11. These three houses were built during the Federal Period, including the brick Federal cape which has been modified by the addition of a mansard roof (site #9). The Campbell house, site #10, is an intact twin chimney brick Federal style home. In 1785 General Nathaniel Peabody established a school for boys here, which was the predecessor to the Atkinson Academy. Site #11 is a two and one-half story twin-chimney Federal style home which is the first historic structure seen when entering Atkinson from Plaistow along East Road. Entering the town from this direction, affords the viewer a pleasant agricultural vista to the north and west.

Maple Avenue

The character and name of Maple Avenue were changed at the end of the 19th century when George Wason planted the maple trees which have grown into an impressive canopy. One of the older roads in town, it exhibits a collection of houses from nearly every architectural style.

Area E is situated along the northern portion of Maple Avenue and includes site #12, which is a two and one-half story central-chimney Georgian style house. Built c. 1730, it is one of Atkinson's oldest surviving structures. In the mid 1700's, Asa Page, a relative of one of the first settlers, lived here.

Area F is situated along Maple Avenue south of the intersection of Maple and Academy Avenues and includes site #'s 19, 20, and 21. Site #19 is a handsome and intact Greek Revival cape. Site #20 is an early 20th century vernacular cape which shows the Bungalow influence in its exposed rafters. This property has a particularly interesting barn with unusual windows. Site #21 is a Greek Revival style house which was later modified with a fieldstone porch.

Area G includes site #'s 22 and 23. The Lt. James Noyes house (site #22) is an intact twin-chimney Federal style home built c. 1774. Pleasant View Farm (site #23) is a two and one-half story central-chimney Georgian style structure built c. 1780.

Area H starts on the west side of Maple Avenue encompassing site #'s 24 and 25, then crosses to the east side of the road to include site #'s 26, 27, 28, and 29. Site #'s 25, 26, 27, and 28 have historical ties to the Little family. Two impressive examples being the Samuel Little House (site #26) and the Little Family Home (site #27), Federal and Georgian styles respectively. Other architectural styles represented in this area include: transitional Federal/Greek Revival (site #25); Vernacular Colonial Revival (site #24); and Bungalow (site #29). A Landscape Vista extends along the east side of Maple Avenue from site #25 and site #30 and includes Blunt's Pond.

Main Street

Area I is situated on the northern end of Main Street and includes site #'s 89 and 90, both houses built in the Greek Revival style. The Little House (site #89) is an outstanding example with its gable-end oriented to the street, side-hall entry topped by a full entablature, and sidelights extending the height of its four panel Greek Revival door. These houses also have historical ties because in 1892 they were owned by members of the prominent Little family. This links them as well to Area H on Maple Avenue. Surrounded by an extensive agricultural Landscape Vista, this area serves as a gateway when entering Atkinson from Route 111.

Area J includes site #'s 55 through 85 and 13 through 15. It runs northwest along Main Street from the intersection of Willow Vale Avenue to and including the Town Pound (site #85). It extends eastward along Academy Avenue to and including the

property of the Rockwell School (site #15). This major Historic/Architectural Area encompasses the town center, and is important historically, visually, and socially to the town. This was the first portion of the town to be developed, and it includes some of Atkinson's oldest homes many of which are located along Main Street which originally was the Post Road from Haverhill to Concord. Surviving from this era are several fine examples of Georgian style architecture. Some of these are: the John Dow House (site #65) which has been remodeled with Greek Revival and Victorian era additions; the Nathaniel Cogswell House (site #56) a modified cape; and the Kimball Library (site #75). Other examples are: a Georgian half-house (site #59); two central-chimney Georgians (site #'s 57 and 58), and a two-story Georgian Saltbox half-house (site #83) which is one of the oldest houses in town.

The second (and most important) period of development in the town center was after the Revolution, during the Federal Period. The Atkinson Academy, built c. 1810, was and still remains the finest building in Atkinson. The raising of this magnificent building in the town center surely gave the impetus for the construction of the several fine Federal style houses nearby. These houses include site #'s 61, 62, 66, 68, and 72, 73, 74.

Development during the Greek Revival period, roughly 1830 to 1860, is represented by five surviving examples. There are four houses: site #'s 63, 64 and 13, 14. The most noteworthy Greek Revival is the Congregationalist Church c. 1835 (site #60). The parsonage, built somewhat later c. 1890 (site #112), was obviously designed to compliment the church.

A 20th century addition of some historic and social importance was the Grange, built c. 1912 (site #69), which was used as the Town Hall and offices until 1985.

Non-architectural sites included in the town center area are the town cemeteries (site #'s 76 and 78), and the Town Pound (site #85).

A Landscape Vista, important to this area, includes the fields and woodland at the north side of Main Street opposite the Page Homestead (site #83). Historically, this was the area where the militia trained. A second, larger Landscape Vista is located on the south side of Main Street stretching in back of all the properties (site #'s 77 through 54).

Area K located southeast of the intersection of Sawyer Avenue and Main Street, includes the property historically known as the Thomas Wheeler House (site #47). This attractive and intact twin-chimney brick Federal style house was the birthplace of Hon. Judge Stephen M. Wheeler, New Hampshire's Attorney General from 1942 to 1957. Open fields and woodland are visible from this intersection, and extend along the south side of Sawyer Avenue.

Area L includes site #'s 39 through 46. Several architectural styles are represented here, and although modern in-filling has occurred within the historic area, it is still possible to recall Atkinson's earlier days. The most visually interesting structure is the Densmore House (site #39), a brick Federal style house which was modified with Italianate details. These details combine with the setting (it is screened by four large pines) to give this house a most unusual atmosphere. The Colonial Revival style is represented by site #45, and the Sawyer House (site #46), are vernacular houses with Greek Revival and Italianate ornamentation. Another vernacular house is the Witley House (site #44) which was the site of Atkinson's first and only factory. Run by A.M. Sawyer from 1907 until the onset of World War I, this factory canned local produce. A Landscape Vista extends to the rear and south of site #'s 42, 43, 45, and 46. This open space nicely frames the surviving structures.

Area M includes site #'s 37 and 38. These two houses form a cohesive unit as they are almost identical in design. Both are twin-chimney brick Federal Style homes which have even been similarly modified with Victorian era porches.

Island Pond Road

Area N is located on the west end of Island Pond Road. The fields have now returned to woodland. This area is characterized by its first generation forest and a meandering stream, Hog Hill Brook. Not particularly visible, but nonetheless extremely important for preservation considerations, are the two historic archaeological sites found in this area. One is the ruins of a saw mill begun by Joseph Chandler c. 1770 and later owned by the Hall family until at least 1880. The other is the site of a "black and white" smithy run by Paul Heald 1835-1860. Two surveyed house sites within this area (site #'ss 91 and 92) are one and one-half story capes.

Sawyer Avenue

Area O situated at the intersection of Sawyer Avenue and Meditation Lane, includes the property historically known as the Jeremiah Poor farm, a brick Federal style house built c. 1830. Surrounded by open land, including a horse track, and a distant Landscape Vista to the northeast, this property provides a strong visual link with Atkinson's agricultural heritage.

Shannon Road

Area P includes site #'s 97 and 98. Site #97 is a twin-chimney Federal style home whose property includes the site of a grist mill once operated by Nathaniel Watts c. 1770. Site #98 is a one and one-half story cape style structure. This area is visually similar to area N characterized by woods and Hog Hill Brook.

North Broadway

Area Q includes two houses at the intersection of North Broadway and Salem Road (site #'s 103 and 104) and two houses on the north side of North Broadway (site #'s 105 and 106). Site #'s 103 and 104 are linked historically as both properties were

owned at one time by Jesse Sawyer, whose son Charles operated one of Atkinson's largest dairy farms at site #104. The house located on this property built c. 1887, and modified c. 1915, is linked to the Colonial Revival style and features a palladian window. Site #105 is a superb example of the Bungalow style. It has historic ties with sites #103 and #104, being built by Arthur Sawyer c. 1913. Site #106 is a two and one-half story Georgian style home which was built by Joseph Page, one of that prominent family of Atkinson's first settlers. James Merrill, who bought the property in 1768, opened a tavern here in 1791.

Area R is located at the southern end of North Broadway and encompasses sites #108, a Federal style house built c. 1810 which exhibits a semi-elliptical louvered fan; site #109, a Greek Revival style house built c. 1840 and later site #107, a vernacular house with a cross-gable roof.

Salem Road

Area S located at the intersection of Salem and Jericho Roads, contains site #'s 100, 191 and 102. The rolling fields and woodlands capture the essence of Atkinson's agricultural character. Site #100 is a two and one-half story Georgian style home which was occupied by the decedents of John Pettengill for five generations. Site #101 was owned by J.W. Pettengill in 1892. The third house in this area, site #102, is a late 10th century Victorian era home with unusual detailing including a canted corner.

Atkinson's Architectural Time Line - Map Index

c.1725 to c. 1749	c.1750 to c.1774	c. 1775 to c.1799
#65 c.1727 2.5 story Georgian	#18 c.1756 Georgian Cape	#88 c. 1776 2.5 story Georgian Cape
#12 c. 1730 2.5 story Georgian	#55 c.1757 2.5 story Georgian	#27 c. 1780 2.5 story Georgian
#99 c. 1730 Georgian Cape	#106 c. 1757 2.5 story Georgian	#23 c. 1780 2 story Georgian
#8 c. 1735 2.5 story Georgian Saltbox	#1 c. 1760 Georgian Cape	#28 c. 1780 2.5 story Georgian/ Federal
#83 c. 1737 2 story Georgian Saltbox half-house	#94 c. 1768 Modified to Greek Revival	#10 c. 1780 2.5 story Brick Federal
#7 c. 1738 2.5 story Georgian	#56 c. 1766 Georgian Cape	#11 c. 1780 2.5 story Federal
#57 c. 1740 2.5 story Georgian	#59 c. 1770 2.5 story Georgian	#61 c. 1790 2.5 story Federal
#87 c. 1740 2.5 story Georgian	#75 c. 1772 2.5 story Georgian	#72 c. 1790 2.5 story Federal
#100 c. 1740 2.5 Story Georgian	#58 c. 1770 2.5 story Georgian	#26 c. 1793 2.5 story Federal
		#22 c. 1794 2.5 story Federal

c. 1800 to c. 1824	c. 1825 to c. 1849	c. 1850 to c. 1899
#3 c. 1800 Brick Cape	#111 c. 1830 2 story Brick Federal	#19 c. 1850 Greek Revival Cape
#4 c. 1800 Brick Cape	#2 c. 1830 Federal Greek Revival Cape	#21 c. 1850 1.5 story Greek Revival
#74 c. 1800 2.5 story Federal	#33 c. 1830 Greek Revival Cape	#17 c. 1850 Cape
97 c. 1800 2.5 story Federal~	#84 c. 1830 2.5 story Federal Greek Revival	#20 c. 1850 1.5 story Greek Revival/Stick Style
#71 c. 1803 2 story Federal (High Style)	#92 c. 1834 Cape	#44 c. 1850 2.5 story Vernacular
#9 c. 1805 2 story Brick Federal Cape (mansard roof)	#25 c. 1835 Federal/Greek Revival	#49 c. 1855 2 story Greek Revival
#68 c. 1810 2.5 story Brick Federal	#60a c. 1835 1.5 story Greek Revival	#89 c. 1860 2.5 story Greek Revival
#73 c. 1810 2.5 story Federal	#5 c. 1840 1.5 story Greek Revival	#31 c. 1870 Cape
#86 c. 1810 2.5 story Brick Federal	#13 c. 1840 2.5 story Greek Revival	#32 1870 1.5 story Greek Revival
#108 c. 1810 2.5 story Federal	#14 c. 1840 1.5 story Greek Revival	#34 c. 1870 2 story Greek Revival
#47 c. 1812 2.5 story Brick Federal	#63 c. 1840 1.5 story Greek Revival	#50 c. 1870 2 story Greek Revival
#39 c. 1820 2 story Brick Federal Ital. modification	#64 c. 1840 2.5 story Greek Revival	#54 c. 1870 #3 c. 1800 Brick Cape 1.5 story Vernacular
#66 c. 1820 2.5 story Federal	#77 c. 1840 1.5 story Cape	#91 c. 1870 Cape
#101 c. 1820 Federal Cape	#79 c. 1840 1.5 story Greek Revival	# 82 c. 1874 Vernacular
#37 c. 1830 2.5 story Brick Federal	#90 c. 1840 2.5 story Greek Revival	
#38 c. 1830 2.5 story Brick Federal	#93 c. 1840 2 story Greek Revival	
	#95 c. 1840 2 story N/A	
	#109 c. 1840 1.5 story Greek Revival	
	#15 c. 1842 1.5 story Brick Greek Revival	
	#30 c. 1845 1.5 story Greek Revival	
	#98 c. 1840 1.5 story Cape	

c. 1875 to c. 1899	c. 1900 to c. 1924	c. 1925 to c. 1930
#51 c. 1875 1.5 story Vernacular	#45 c. 1900 2.5 story Colonial Revival	#53 c. 1927 1.5 story N/A
#70 c. 1880 1.5 story Vernacular	#67 c. 1900 2 story Vernacular	#29 c. 1930 1.5 story Bungalow
#43 c. 1885 Cape	#40 c. 1905 1.5 Story Vernacular	#96 c. 1930 1.5 story Vernacular
#104 c. 1887 2.5 story Colonial Revival	#41 c. 1905 1.5 story Vernacular	
#24 c. 1890 2.5 story Vernacular	#48 c. 1910 1.5 story Jerkinhead	
#36 c. 1890 1.5 story Eclectic	# 69 c. 1912 2 story Vernacular	
# 52 c. 1890 1.5 story Vernacular	#105 c. 1913 2 story Bungalow	
#103 c. 1890 2.5 story Vernacular	#107 c. 1915 2 story Cross Gable	
#112 c. 1890 2.5 story Vernacular	# 110 c. 1916 1.5 story Vernacular	
#6 c. 1895 1.5 story Vernacular	#113 c. 1919 1.5 story Bungalow	
#46 c. 1895 1.5 story Vernacular	#42 c. 1920 1.5 story Vernacular	
#102 c. 1895 2 story N/A		
#60b c. 1897 1.5 story Colonial Revival		

Recommendations:

1. The resources identified in this report should be considered with the other elements in the planning process such as soils, transportation, public services, etc.
2. Modifications to the existing zoning ordinance should take into consideration the sites and areas identified by this inventory.
3. The school system should be encouraged to use the information in this Chapter to teach the history of Atkinson.
4. The survey should be updated periodically to indicate changes to buildings that have occurred. Included are such changes as remodeling, fire or demolition. Changes in surrounding environment should also be noted and mapped.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Cultural and Landscape Resource Inventory Map

Town of Atkinson, NH

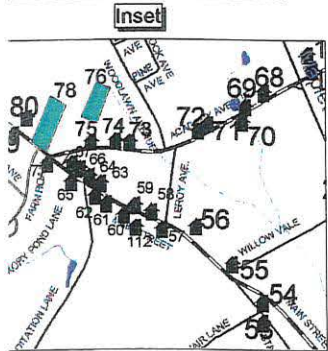
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in boundaries, hydrography, roads) from USGS Digital Line 100, as archived in the GRANIT database, Complex Systems, Inc., University of New Hampshire. Registered in NAD 83 and in UTM coordinates.

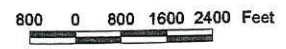
UNT represent the efforts of the contributing organizations from the cited source materials. The Rockingham Planning Commission (RPMC), under contract to the Office of State Planning (OSP), and in consultation with cooperating agencies, initiated a program to identify and correct errors in these maps. RPMC does not make any claim as to the validity or any implied uses of these data.

ultural features from the 'Cultural Resources Inventory, and Plan', December 1979.



map was funded by Office of State Planning Targeted Grant funds and the Town.

- Historic sites
- ★ Archeological Sites
 - Surveyed Structures
 - Graveyards
 - Town Boundaries
 - State Line
 - Town Line
 - State Class I
 - State Class II
 - Town Class V
 - Town Class VI
 - Private
 - Collectors
 - Surface Water
 - Shoreline
 - Stream
 - Intermittent Stream
 - Water



Prepared by the
Rockingham Planning Commission
June 25, 1998
DRA

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Introduction

One of the primary responsibilities of local governments in New Hampshire is providing community facilities for its residents and businesses. The availability and quality of these facilities are often major factors in determining the quality of life and general character of a community. It is extremely important to consider the effect population and economic growth will have on a Town's ability to provide essential services and facilities for its residents.

A primary focus of a master plan is the use of land – now and in the future -- and its capacity to handle development. Use of the land affects community services and facilities just as community services and facilities affect the use of land.

It is important then, to look at community services and facilities both in terms of the quality and quantity of services rendered, as well as the impact of those services and facilities on land use. From this perspective, the town can define problem areas and address future needs.

The following is an inventory of the community facilities and town-owned land resources.

Kimball Charitable Trust

In 1912, Joseph Kimball donated land and the historic Peabody home to the Town for use as a library and "possibly a museum," with permission to use a portion of the land as a cemetery. The donation falls under the jurisdiction of the State of New Hampshire Attorney General's Office, Division of Charitable Trusts, with decision-making responsibility resting with the Kimball Public Library Trustees.

Kimball House

This building, once the home of Rev. Stephen Peabody, is under the jurisdiction of Library Trustees through the New Hampshire Charitable Trust. Between 1913 and 1975, this building was the town's Library, with all books being stored in one small room. It also housed the Librarian and her family. Today, the Atkinson Historical Society maintains a museum in the Kimball House. Town Meeting granted the Society permission to use the building through the year 1999. This historic building has exhibits in several of the rooms on both the first and second floors, and is open to the general public one day each week. It does not meet ADA requirements.

Kimball Public Library

The Kimball Library is actually an addition to the historic Kimball House, built in 1974/5 with Federal Revenue Sharing Funds. During the first several years, the lower level of the new Library was an open room, used by various local organizations, and filled an important function in town. Various organizations were able to use the area for their meetings. Town Government, too, took advantage of the space for public hearings on issues that would have drawn attendance exceeding the limits of the Old Town Hall. Elections were conducted in this building, too. As the numbers of library patrons increased, the Library expanded – first in to the old Kimball House, where a Children's Library was created. When the needs of the children exceeded the space allowed, the Children's Library was moved to the lower level. With continued growth in population and the explosion in media technology, today's Library is feeling the pressure of keeping up with the times within the limitations of the building.

In 1996, Aaron Cohen Associates, Inc. was hired to do a study of the library. This comprehensive document, on file at the Library, identifies both major and minor library problems. The standard space needs provide that a library should provide 2 square feet of space for every resident of the town. Kimball Library, at 4800 square feet, falls far short of meeting the needs of a town with a population of 5,795. The Library has 1,131 linear feet of shelving for the adult section. Included on those shelves are videos and CDs. The Children's area contains 735 linear feet of shelving. There is limited space for additional shelving, and old books must periodically be reviewed and removed, to make room for the new. The parking area, shared by the Library and the Fire Department, presents concerns, particularly when thinking in terms of children who may be in the parking lot when firefighters are responding to an emergency fire call. The quality of water from the Library well, shared with the Fire Station, is poor. Both departments maintain bottled water for drinking purposes. The septic system is a constant source of annoyance.

Assuming that approximately 20 to 25 percent of the residents have personal computers in their homes, the remaining 75 to 80 percent do not now have access to the vast sources of information available through computers. In this growing arena of knowledge, the Library should be looking to provide this source to their patrons -- particularly the students.

The Library's bathroom is located on the lower level. While the building has exterior handicapped access to both the upper and lower levels, there is no handicapped access between floors within the building.

Fire Station

The Fire Station is centrally located near the junction of Main Street and Academy Avenue. In 1947, the Fire Station was built on Kimball Trust land with permission of Town Meeting, but not with the approval of the Charitable Trust, which requires that the Trust will be compensated for any such transaction. Further expansion of the Fire Station -- if allowed at all -- would require the Town to compensate the Trustees at fair market value for any land used, and for the original 100 foot by 40 foot area on which the Fire Station sits.

The volunteer fire department consists of approximately 38 volunteers. Because of the lack of public water, some 16 water holes provide water for fire-fighting efforts.

In 1988 The town adopted a zoning ordinance requiring non-residential buildings and multi-family homes to be sprinkled. The Board allowed one developer to provide water for fire-fighting through a hook-up to Walnut Ridge Water Company. This has proven to be a satisfactory arrangement, and has been used in other subdivisions where sprinklers would normally be required.

In 1988, Donald Bliss, a consultant for Boyer, Bennett and Shaw, Inc., prepared a Fire Department Study in which he cited the need for a new Fire Station. Fire Department vehicles are stored in bays on the first floor on the existing station, and many have been especially designed to fit within the dimensions of the building. The Communications Room, meeting room and bathrooms are on the second floor. There is no handicapped access. Storage is in the eaves.

The Fire Department is currently developing plans for a new station which will be situated on the "1 Academy Avenue" site. The 1998 town Meeting approved funds to design a new structure.



Cemeteries

Neither the "New Cemetery" (part of the Kimball Trust, located behind the Kimball Library) nor the Old Cemetery (Main Street) has vacant lots. Cemetery lots are available in Section III, a one-acre parcel adjacent to the Old Cemetery, but Cemetery Trustees have voiced concern about the rapidly dwindling availability of space. The purchase of the "1 Academy Avenue" parcel will provide land to connect the Old and the New cemeteries, thereby expanding the cemetery to accommodate growing needs.

"1 Academy Avenue"

Voters purchased this 8 acre parcel of land at the corner of Main Street and Academy Avenue, in March 1995 at a cost of \$215,000. The initial intent of the warrant article was to purchase only a portion of the land for future expansion of the cemetery. The acquisition of the total parcel offers multiple opportunities. In addition to cemetery expansion, the land now houses a new Town Garage and, pending town meeting approval, a new Fire Station. Upon removal of the house, there is opportunity to re-align Academy Avenue which will afford easier access by Fire Department vehicles.

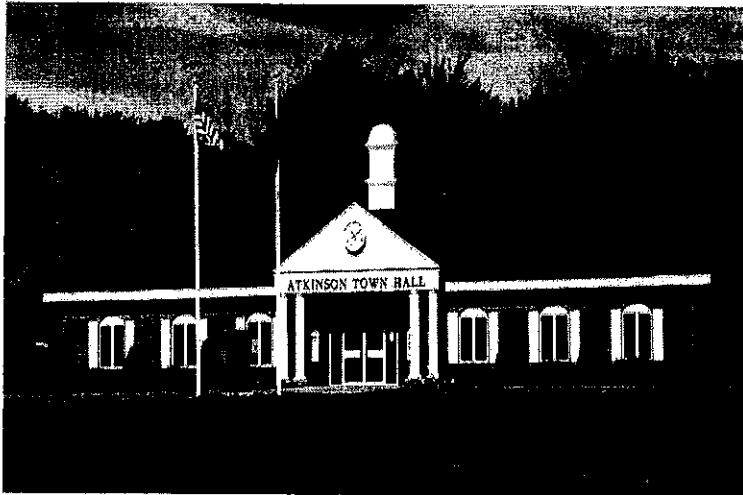
This re-routing has been a long-time recommendation of the State, which owns both streets. With the re-location of Academy Avenue, there will also be an opportunity to enlarge the Town Common and give Atkinson's Town Center an identity. Each of the preceding Master Plans and Master Plan up-dates has cited the lack of an identity, and made this recommendation.

The 1997 Town Meeting voted to authorize the exchange of a quarter of an acre of the land located on Academy Avenue and owned by The Trust for four acres of back land from the 1 Academy Avenue parcel. This exchange will facilitate the use of the "1 Academy Avenue" land for town purposes, including the construction of a new garage and new fire station. Once the new fire house is completed and occupied, the old building will become the official property of the Library Trustees, to do with as they choose.

Town Hall

Atkinson Town Hall was built in 1985 and dedicated in 1986. It replaced the Atkinson Grange Hall, built in 1913, which sat on the land abutting Atkinson Academy. The Grange was ultimately razed, creating more parking for both the Academy and the Town Hall. One pair of stained glass windows which had been donated to the Grange, is the focal point in the atrium of the new building.

Town Hall was architecturally designed to be in harmony with the community and was attractively landscaped. Space-wise, it was projected to adequately serve the town needs up to a population of 10,000.



The building houses five full-time employees, and is also home base for several part-time elected and appointed officials, including the Tax Collector, Treasurer and their deputies; building, electrical, plumbing and fire inspectors; the Health Officer and the Code Enforcement Officer.

Since 1988, one office originally planned for use by transient professionals, has been given over to staff increases deemed necessary through increased demands for service. A storage room, spacious in 1986, is nearly filled with documents that the town is required by state law to maintain. Many of these documents have been put on microfilm, kept in the Town Clerk's Office. In addition, several of the committees with no offices of their own maintain file cabinets in the storage room, and the postage meter, FAX and copy machines are located there as a central convenience to all departments.

The Selectmen's Office, when fully opened, will house approximately 100 people, but the room can be partitioned off to provide two meeting rooms in addition to the Selectmen's quarters. The middle room, which is small, is seldom used. Since all committees are staffed by volunteers, most committees meet in the evenings. At times, Town Hall has three committees meeting at one time, occupying the Planning Board, the Selectmen's Office, and the "back" meeting room. Tax maps and assessing information are kept in the Selectmen's Office to be accessible to the public, and transient professionals, such as the auditors or assessors, use the Selectmen's Office for their work.

A very small room off the Selectmen's Office houses cable television equipment with utmost efficiency. As there is no extra space, television cameras are left in the Selectmen's Office, where they are most frequently used to televise the Monday night Selectmen's meetings. Other, accessory cable television equipment is stored in the closet in the bookkeeper's office.

Voting is also held in Town Hall in the Selectmen's Office. With growth and the statutory requirements for the numbers of voting booths, the voting area is becoming too small for efficient elections. The Selectmen's Office is also used for various other town programs and public hearings.

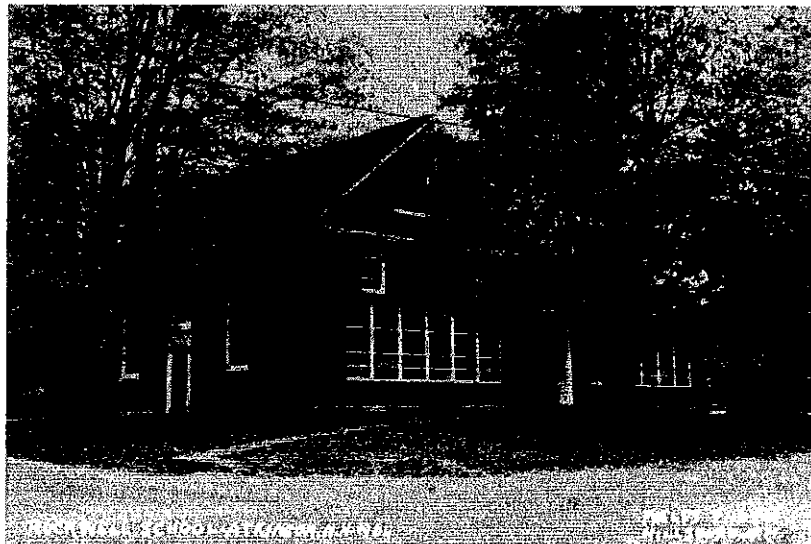
The pond in front of the building serves multiple purposes. In the winter, it's used for ice-skating; in the fall, it's a resting place for migratory birds, and, year-round, it's a fire-pond for the Fire Department.

Police Station

The 1990 Master Plan writes of plans for a Safety Complex which would house the Police Department, Fire Department, and Dispatch. This was felt to be an ideal solution to space problems for all departments. The Police Department, occupying the small building opposite Atkinson Academy on Academy Avenue, was running out of storage space, and it's nineteen part-time and two full-time officers encountered space problems in the very small building. There was no area large enough to accommodate a departmental meeting, no private area for interviews and no place to contain anyone who was to be transported to the Brentwood facilities.

The Fire Department had already been looking towards new quarters, with an indication from town officials that, once the Town Hall bond issue was paid in 1996, the Fire Department would be the next building priority.

In 1992, when it was learned that the School District might be willing to give the Rockwell School back to the Town, negotiations took place, and the Town entered into a "swap" with the Timberlane School District. The agreement provided that the Town would agree to give the District



approximately 2 acres of land between the new Town Hall and Atkinson Academy, plus the sum of \$25,000, put in escrow, to be used in combination with school money

to pave the parking area. Timberlane District agreed to return the Rockwell School, being used as a storage facility, to the Town. The exchange gave Timberlane additional land to apply to density requirements, if an addition to the Academy is necessary, and it gave Atkinson building in which to house the Police Department. A part of the agreement included provisions that Atkinson could continue to use the Town Garage until 1995 when, it was thought, the Town would have a new highway facility. The Selectmen have received three extensions on that date.

The 1993 Town meeting approved the sum of \$238,720 to remodel the Rockwell school for use by the Atkinson Police Department. It now houses the four full-time and twenty one part-time police officers. The renovated building was designed to match, as closely as possible, the original building, built in 1845 as a Unitarian Church. The new station, re-named the Rockwell Building, includes a dispatch station, training room, detention facilities, juvenile office with adjoining conference room, Chief's office, officers' office, interview room, viewing room with two-way mirrors, prosecutor's office, armorer's room, equipment room, evidence rooms, squad room, file room, and utility room. With the expanded facilities, the Police have been able to add more sophisticated and modern law-enforcement equipment. The building is handicapped accessible. The Chief's major concern since occupying the new building has been the lack of a sally-port for the safe transfer of suspects from the cruiser to the station, and it is one of the two major priorities. A second on-going concern is for a local firing range. The officers, who are required by State law to qualify each year, presently use privately owned land for practice.

Parking at the station is limited. Meetings or functions involving several people have presented problems in the past; for example, a flu clinic for the elderly, once held at the new station, had to be moved to the Town Hall, where there is adequate parking.

Town Garage

The 1998 Town Meeting approved funding of \$190,000 to construct a new Town Garage, to be located on the "1 Academy Avenue" land. The 60 foot by 40 foot building will accommodate up to three vehicles (the town presently owns one) and the town sanders. It includes an office and bathroom facilities. The existing building, located adjacent to the Town Hall, technically belongs to the Timberlane Regional School District. Based on recommendations put forth in the 1990 Master Plan update, minimal repairs have been made to this building, in anticipation of the new facility. Construction on the new Town Garage began in September, 1998, and was completed in November 1998.

Community Center

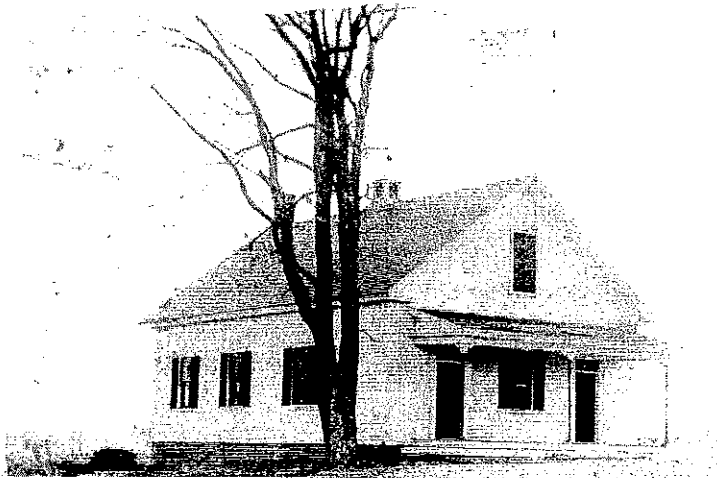
In 1985 Atkinson purchased the former Trinity House Camp on Main Street, including 50 plus acres of land. The land was originally sold to the New Hampshire Society for the Preservation of Forests, which subdivided the parcel into two lots. One lot, including the house and 5 acres, was sold to the Town. The second lot was sold to the Conservation Commission, but remains under the supervision of the NHSPF to guarantee it will remain forever green.

The Town was enthusiastic about the acquisition of the facility, which has been re-named the Atkinson Community Center. Its long, large room was considered ideal for use by many of the civic and non-profit organizations in town which needed a place to meet. Since its acquisition, voters have approved several articles to improve the meeting area and bring the kitchen to code. It is now very actively used by those organizations, and can be rented for private functions as well.

In 1995, the Town approved major renovations to the attached house, and placed the building under the supervision of the Recreation Commission. Until this past year, the house had been used primarily for storage. The Commission has made one of the down-stairs available to senior citizens who might wish to play cards, read or watch television. The meeting area has appropriate ramps and bathroom facilities; however, it is not handicapped accessible; therefore the second floor rooms are "off-limits".

"Old Police Station"

The former police station on Academy Avenue has been used in past years as Selectmen's quarters and a school when originally built in 1865. There has been periodic discussion regarding appropriate use of the building for town purposes, including use as a Cable TV studio. Until a decision is made, it is being used by Family Meditation, one of the service agencies supported by the Town.



Recreational Facilities

Woodlock Park is located in the geographic center of Atkinson, and seemed a very appropriate location for recreational opportunity in 1969, when the Town voted to purchase five acres of woodland on which to create a ball field. Most of the work to create the first ball field was done through volunteer effort, and, in 1972, the first ball field was christened. In the 1970s, a Federal Grant gave Atkinson the money for additional recreational opportunities, including the tennis courts and a second ball field. The plans also called for the creation of walking paths throughout the area. In the 1990s, state funding, together with matching town funds and donations from the Timberlane Soccer League and Atkinson Youth Baseball, allowed the addition of yet another ball field, along with bathroom and storage facilities and an outdoor pavillion to accommodate the growing population.

Today, all athletic fields are in frequent use during the respective seasons, and the Recreation Commission is looking to add another soccer field, allowing use of one while the other spends a year in rehabilitation.

A key attraction at Woodlock Park seems to be the Tyke Towers, a playground for small children, which is in use throughout the day in warm weather.

Parking is a problem at Woodlock Park, where the safety of children is the major concern.

Dyke Auditorium is used during winter months for basketball. Older children participate in programs held at the Middle School and High School facilities in Plaistow. The Town runs a Sun 'n' Fun program for six weeks during the summer for elementary school aged children, held on the Atkinson Academy grounds. .

A canoe launch to Big Island Pond was built on town land off Stickney Road for use by the general public. There is no public swimming facility in Atkinson.

Two trail systems are available for hikers. There is a 1½ mile hiking trail throughout the 140 acres of the combined Sawyer, Cirome and Bonin Town Forest parcels. Additionally, there is a trail slightly over 1-mile in length though the 35.17 acre Marshall Town Forest parcel abutting Island Pond.

Solid Waste Disposal

Atkinson has moved from the family dump (many yards of older homes have them) to a town dump, located on Meditation Lane prior to 1970, to a transfer station once located on Pope Road, to curb-side pickup and removal of trash and garbage.

Trash is picked up "curb-side" weekly, through a contract with a private company. The contract also provides for the removal of one piece of furniture and one tire weekly.

A brush dump on Pope Road is open from April to the first snow fall to accommodate disposal of leaves and brush. Residents may drop off white goods and many metal objects at the white-goods container in the same area. Car parts and anything else which might be hazardous are not accepted. Permits, available in the Selectmen's Office, are required for the disposal of appliances.

Recycling began through the efforts of a large group of volunteers who were anxious to see Atkinson join other communities in actively doing their part to protect the environment. During the early years, the Recycling Station, located next to the existing Town Garage, was actively and enthusiastically manned. Proceeds from the sale of recyclable goods, though relatively insignificant, were returned to the town's general fund. Volunteers to help receive the recyclable materials have dwindled through the years, and there are often problems. Some residents tend to drop off their goods whether the station is manned or not, creating undesirable situations. The area itself is relatively unprotected, lending to access at any time, day or night. Recyclables, including glass, plastics and aluminum cans, are accepted at the Recycling Area. That facility is open two days each month. Recycling is not mandatory in Atkinson. . Newspapers, packaged in paper or bundled and tied, are left curb-side and picked up every other Friday.

Educational Facilities

Atkinson, Danville, Plaistow and Sandown are members of the Timberlane Regional School District. Elementary schools are located in each town, while students in grades 6 through 12 attend the Timberlane Middle School and Senior High School on the Greenough Road in Plaistow. Atkinson's elementary students, grades 1 through 5 attend Atkinson Academy.

The Town's educational responsibility is met by providing funds to the Timberlane Regional School District and by paying for its proportional share based on the number of students enrolled from Atkinson.

In 1998, the Town instituted School Impact Fees in accordance with State Statutes to help pay for required capital improvements necessitated by growth.

Until such time as kindergarten is added to the public school system, Hampstead Academy and Countryside Schoolhouse, both located on Maple Avenue, offer kindergarten to Atkinson's pre-school children. There are other private kindergartens in surrounding communities.

Other Public Facilities

State Properties

The State of New Hampshire owns two parcels in Atkinson. One very small parcel is located at the intersection of Hall Farm Road and the new Route 111. The other parcel is located on east Road near Lisheen Drive, and once served as a source for State gravel. In 1995, Atkinson attempted, unsuccessfully, to obtain this parcel for use as a town garage site.

Public Town Parcels

Appendix 1 identifies the number of parcels of town-owned land and the uses applicable to each.

Post Office

A new Post Office is located on Main Street, opposite the Atkinson Community Center.

According to Postmaster Henry Dumont, the Post Office employees deliver mail to 1,960 customers along 5 routes, and serve 957 box holders.

Semi-Public Facilities

Hospitals

Atkinson is served by Hale Hospital in Haverhill, MA, the Exeter Hospital in Exeter, NH, Lawrence General Hospital in Lawrence, MA, the Columbia-Parkland Medical Center in Derry, NH and the Holy Family Hospital in Methuen, MA. Hampstead Hospital, on East Road, offers substance abuse assistance.

Ambulance services are provided contractually through AMR Ambulance Service which maintains a substation in Hampstead.

Churches

The Atkinson Congregational Church on Main Street, and Pentucket Baptist Church on East Road serves Atkinson. Other denominations attend churches in nearby New Hampshire and Massachusetts communities.

Appendix 1:**TOWN OWNED LANDS**

<u>Map</u>	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Use</u>
3	18	N. Broadway/Forest Road	57.87	Conservation – T.F.
3	108	Sawyer Avenue	13.98	Conservation – T.F.
4	11-1	Sawyer Land	48.38	Conservation – T.F.
5	48	Behind Trinity Camp	59.1902	Conservation – T.F.
12	2	Merrill Drive	0.173	Conservation – T.F.
12	2	Pope Road	28.4	Conservation – T.F.
12	8-1	Main Street/Pope Road	11.67	Conservation – T.F.
18	77	Off Knightland Road	17.43	Conservation – T.F.
18	78	Off Knightland Road	45.74	Conservation – T.F.
18	83	Off Knightland Road	3.85	Conservation – T.F.
19	18	Off East Road	23.4	Conservation – T.F.
19	61	Crown Hill	1.46	Conservation – T.F.
19	76	Plaistow/Hampstead	2.0	Conservation – T.F.
20	15-1	Route 111	3.4	Conservation – T.F.
20	35	Conley Grove	24.3	Conservation – T.F.
20	36	Houles Grove Road	35.17	Conservation – T.F.
23	91	Lakeside Drive	0.16	Conservation – T.F.

Total Town Forest Land 376.5732

4	48	Main Street	4.2	Conservation
4	50	Main Street	24.3553	Conservation
9	27-8	Main/Washington Road	3.475	Conservation
9	34-10	Maple/Wason	5.8	Conservation
		Jericho Road	7.0	Conservation
12	2-3	Merrill Drive	1.805	Conservation
19	61	Noyes Rock Shelter	5.9	Conservation
19	80	East Road	4.07	Conservation
20	13-1	Lakeside Drive	3.91	Conservation
20	15	Route 111/Hall Farm	0.6	Conservation
12	17	Off Pope Road	2.6	Conservation
18	70	Maple Avenue	4.2	Conservation
23	40	Lakeside Drive	0.25	Conservation
8	41	Newbury Drive	7.0	Conservation
19	17	Off Crown Hill	0.21	Conservation

Total Conservation 75.3753

TOWN OWNED LANDS (cont.)

<u>Map</u>	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Use</u>
3	114	Corner N. Broadway and Sawyer Avenue	0.138	Town
		Sleepy-Hollow	1.0	Town
4	11	Sawyer Land	20.0	Town
7	204	Providence Hill Road	0.16	Town
12	7-1	Pope Road	8.25	Town
4	46	Hovey Meadow	8.0	Town
13	43	Academy/Woodlawn	0.82	Town
12	12	Pope Road Area?	2.0	Town
17	11	Main Street North	1.3	Town
17	94	Oak Ridge Drive	4.1	Town
		Off Dearborn Ridge	10.0	Town
17	26-3	Westside Drive	0.547	Town
18	86	Off Knightland Road	4.0	Town
Total Town – Vacant			53.415	
5	67	Community Center	5.055	Town Buildings
13	31	Academy Avenue	8.0	Library
				Fire House
				Kimball House
				Cemetery
13	70	Academy Avenue	0.5	Town Buildings
13	70	Academy Avenue	4.0	Town Buildings
17	77	Academy Avenue	0.09	Old Police Station
13	77	Academy Avenue	0.09	Old Police Station
13	88	Main Street	1.5	Cemetery
13	88	Main Street	2.0	Cemetery
13	91	Main/Academy	0.18	Town Common
13	70	Academy Avenue	1.0	Town Buildings
13	30	1 Academy Avenue	8.0	Town
7	198	Providence Hill	0.378	Fire Pond
9	90	Kelley Lane	2.65	Fire Pond
10	6	East Road/Plaistow Line	1.21	Fire Pond
7	199	Merrill/Hawthorne Drive	5.87	Recreation
11	4	Pope Road	7.502	Recreation
11	4	Little Pope	4.0	Recreation
12	2	Pope Road	1.0	Recreation – T.F.
12	5	Pope Road	10.0	Brush Dump
				Recreation
Total Town Use			63.025	

TOTAL TOWN LAND 578.3885

Recommendations:

1. The Town should maintain Zoning Ordinances that will protect itself from incurring the expense of constructing public sewer or public water facilities.
2. The Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board should work cooperatively to assure that there is a committee for the on-going planning of community facilities (this function is presently served by the Building Needs Committee).
3. The Town should establish a committee to develop the Master Plan for the Town Center. Within the Town Center, provisions should ultimately be adopted to allow for community services and facilities of a specialty retail nature and civic function as well as professional services. The Town should maintain functional and design control over the District to create a community focal point that is psychologically and visually functional.

Community Facilities Town of Atkinson, NH MP - 1

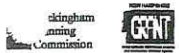
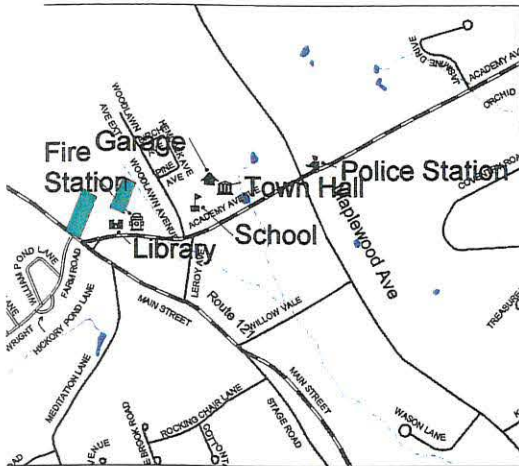
- Graveyards
- State Class I
- State Class II
- Town Class V
- Town Class VI
- Private Railroad
- Town Boundaries
- State Line
- Town Line
- Surface Water
- Shoreline
- Stream
- Intermittent Stream
- Water
- Community Center
- Fire Station
- Schools
- Post Office
- Town Hall
- Library
- Town Garage
- Police Station
- Brush Dump
- Ball Fields
- Tennis Courts

085:

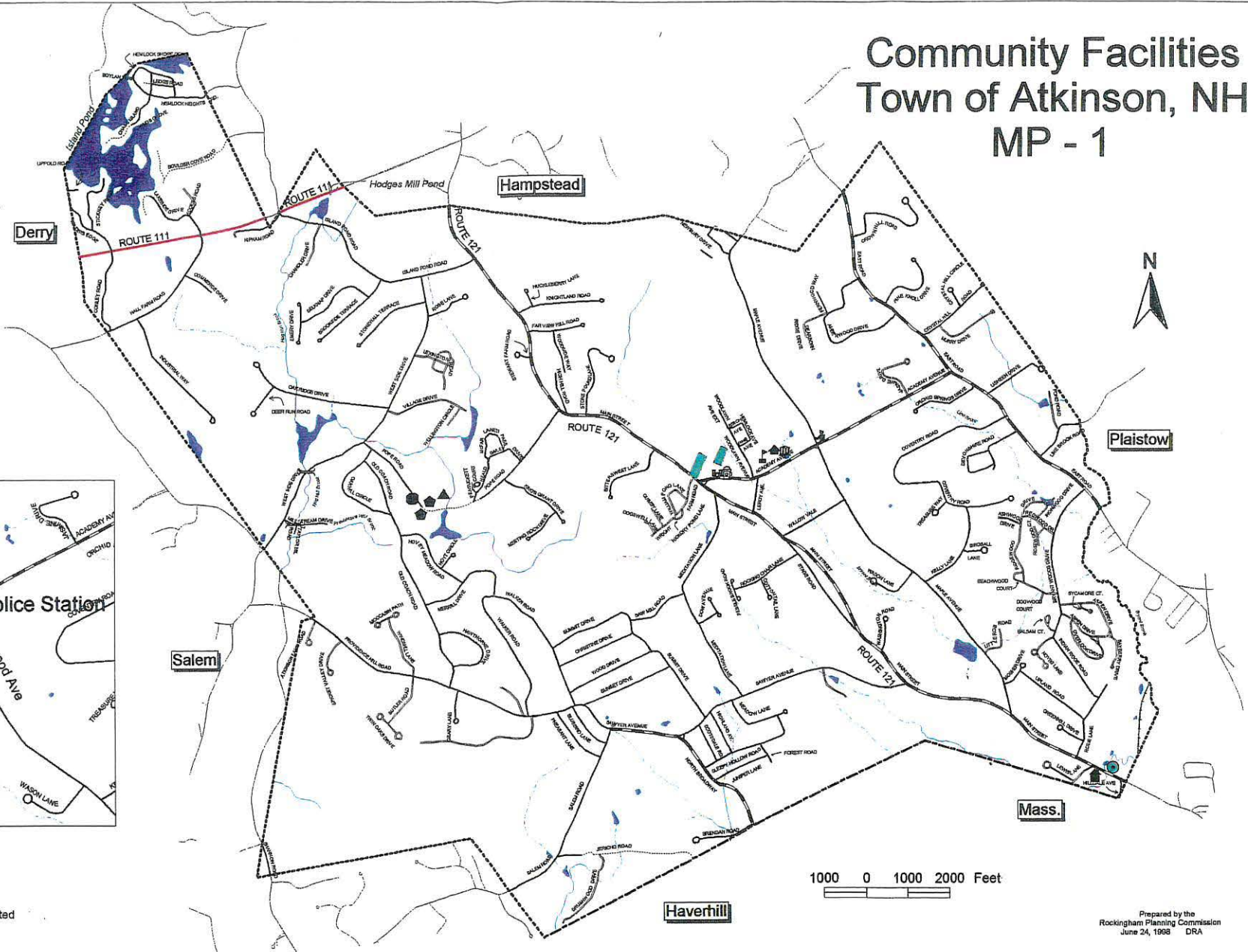
data (town boundaries, hydrography, roads) from USGS Digital Line
no. 124,000, as archived in the GRANIT database, Complex Systems
Research Center, University of New Hampshire. Registered in NAD 83 and
State Plane Coordinates.

all data in NH GRANIT represent the efforts of the contributing
agencies to record information from the cited source materials.
plex Systems Research Center (CSRC), under contract to the Office
of State Planning (OSP), and in consultation with cooperating agencies,
has a continuing program to identify and correct errors in these
data. Neither OSP nor CSRC make any claim as to the validity or
reliability or to any implied uses of these data.

Inset



This map was funded by Office of State Planning Targeted
lock Grant funds and the Town.



Prepared by the
Rockingham Planning Commission
June 24, 1998 DRA

NATURAL RESOURCES

Introduction

Atkinson's natural environment is characterized by forests, agricultural lands, ponds and brooks, and wetlands. Historically, these resources have provided Atkinson with a high quality environment contributing to the high quality of life in the community. Although Atkinson's natural features still exist in abundance, past development has inevitably resulted in the loss of some resources, especially open spaces and active agricultural lands. Careful attention must be given to future development so that further losses to both the natural and cultural environment are minimized and that the essential qualities that make Atkinson the community it is remain intact.

This chapter of the Master Plan will discuss existing natural resources and examine existing conditions and future needs for protecting the Town's land. The chapter concludes, like all others in this Master Plan, with specific recommendations regarding the steps which the community should take to protect and conserve these essential Town resources.

Soils

Soil information is critical in making sound land use decisions, particularly in Atkinson where sewage disposal depends exclusively on the use of on-site septic systems. Knowledge regarding soil suitability can be used to direct development activity away from poorly suited areas and toward those with the capability to sustain it. For example, residential development should be located away from areas with unstable soil conditions, high water tables, and slow percolation rates which impose constraints on placement of building foundations and septic systems. Other soils are better suited for agricultural uses because of level topography, good drainage and lack of stones.

Slopes

Steep slopes cause problems with access to sites (excessive grades) and high rainwater runoff. When this occurs on some soils, excessive erosion occurs during construction and in areas where the natural ground cover has been disturbed.

Limitation Gradient	Acres
Opportunities & Slight Limitations	460
Slightly Moderate	1,839
Moderate	590
Moderately Severe	2,360
Severe	1,190
Unsuitable for Development	805
TOTAL	7,235

Source: Photographic Interpretation Corporation,
Air Photography
NRCS, 1993

The above table reflects the interpretation of natural conditions identifying opportunities and gradations of limitations to development. In addition, approximately 2,625 acres, some of which has already been developed, have been identified as land suitable for agricultural endeavors, portions of which should be preserved for agricultural use in the future through the possible acquisition of development rights of prime agricultural lands.

Surface Water

Surface water systems are any type of water resource located above ground on the earth's surface. Examples of surface water systems include: streams, rivers, marshes, ponds, bogs, lakes, wetlands, etc. Within Atkinson are three major brooks (Bryant Brook, Hog Hill Brook and Providence Hill Brook); three marshes (Sawmill Swamp, Hill Brook Marsh, and an unnamed marsh located off of East Road bordering Plaistow); a major lake (Island Pond) which is located within Atkinson, Derry and Hampstead; and the following ponds; Blount's Pond, Stewart Farm Pond, Hovey Meadow Pond, Golden Pond and several other unnamed ponds of varying size.

More dynamic than groundwater systems, surface water systems, are influenced by the effects of wind, rain, and temperature. They are also subject to varying rates of flow, such as the difference between the flow rate of a river as opposed to that of a pond.

Surface water resources function as holding areas for flood waters and seasonal high waters. In addition, they serve as recharge areas and discharge points for groundwater resources. The point of discharge is where the surface water and groundwater are hydrologically connected. Most commonly, surface water resources

will act as a discharge point for groundwater. However, during the spring months surface waters help to recharge groundwater resources, which in turn replenish shallow domestic water wells. It should be noted that prolonged dry periods can result in an overall lowering of the water table.

Continued protection of Atkinson's important resources, including its surface water resources is of great importance to the Town.

Wetlands

Wetlands are extremely sensitive areas providing habitat for wildlife and helping to control flooding. Wetlands cause problems for most types of development as they contain unstable soils and have high ground water tables. Most notably, the wetlands along Line Brook and Sawmill Swamp were mapped as having very severe limitations.



Wildlife and Plant Habitat

All wildlife types have three basic survival requirements: food, shelter and water. Fish, amphibians, and waterfowl require the presence of water for spawning and egg laying. Vegetation provides necessary cover to serve as nursery habitat. Water also serves as spawning grounds for insects which are a source of food for a variety of fish and animals. Fur-bearers such as muskrat, otter, and beaver utilize wetlands as habitat. Coastal and inland marshes serve not only as breeding grounds for waterfowl, but also as critical resting and feeding areas during spring and fall migration.

Atkinson's woodlands and fields provide habitat for a variety of mammals, including deer, fisher cats, foxes, coyotes, skunks, rabbits, woodchucks, squirrels, chipmunks, bats, otters and a variety of birds.

The value of an area as habitat depends on a number of factors, including size, contiguity with similar areas, and the amount of edge. Edge is the transitional area between habitat types. It consists of understory plants and early successional types of vegetation which provide both forage and cover for numerous species of birds and mammals. Edge can be created by utility transmission rights-of-way, crop and pasture lands, re-grown old fields, and similar types of clearings. The habitat value and edge effect of an area may be significantly reduced if adjacent land uses and encroachments create barriers or threaten the area's integrity.

While brief, the above discussion on animal and plant habitats only reinforces the importance that the Town needs to continually evaluate its land-use regulatory scheme to ensure the adequate protection of these valuable habitats.

Agricultural Lands

Aside from its obvious importance for growing food, agricultural land has value in Atkinson as a scenic resource, wildlife habitat, and as a groundwater recharging area.



The loss of farmland has a direct impact on the landscape as well as an indirect impact on the local tax rate. The indirect economic benefit of farming relates to the real estate value of the farmland itself compared to the cost of providing public services to residents once the land is converted to residences.

Forest Resources

Forest land is a major renewable resource, providing both commodities (e.g., wood products and maple syrup), and non-commodity benefits (e.g., water resource protection, air quality maintenance, energy conservation, wildlife habitat, recreation and scenic quality).

Currently, 17 parcels of forest land comprising 376.57 acres are officially designated as Atkinson Town Forest. These Town Forest parcels are under the control of the Atkinson Conservation Commission which periodically engages the services of a professional forester to oversee selective timber cutting operations.

Open Space and Land Conservation

One of the most important and defining elements of Atkinson as a community and as a place are its open spaces. As of 1998, the Conservation Commission has acquired 451.95 acres of protected open space for the Town, noted above. The Commission is beginning to actively acquire additional open space. These areas, which include forested lands, active agricultural lands, pastures and old fields, are very important both to the community and to the natural environment for a variety of reasons as briefly described below.

- ▶ Recreation and Scenic Quality: Open space lands help define the scenic and rural quality of the community. Farmland, in particular its wide open fields and pastures, are critical scenic elements. Open space is also important for many forms of outdoor recreation including hunting, cross-country skiing, hiking, mountain biking and nature observation.

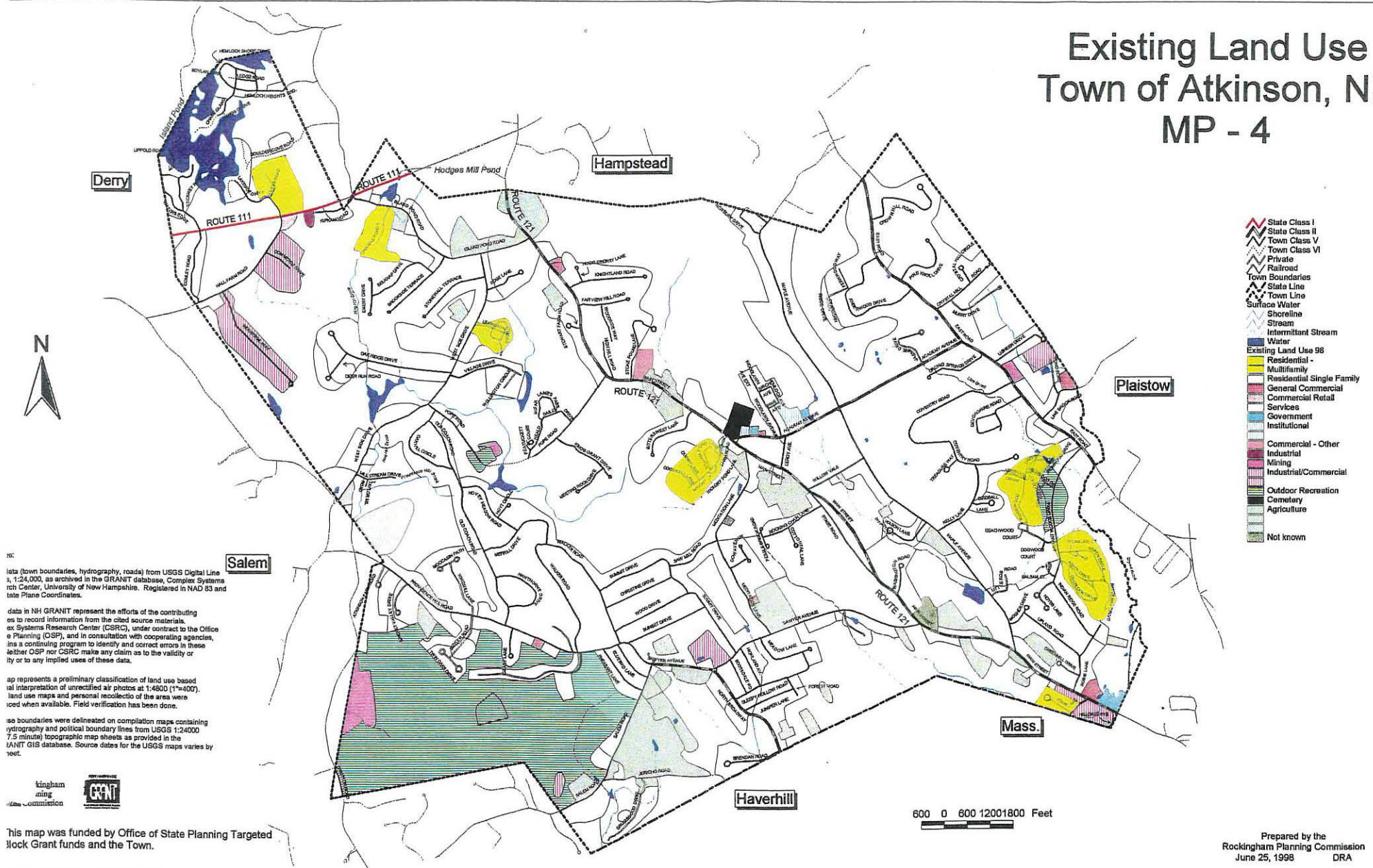
- ▶ Water Resource Protection: Open spaces are critical to maintaining the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater. They provide unpolluted recharge to the town's aquifers, help assimilate pollution from various land use activities before they reach water sources, and help reduce stormwater, erosion and flood damage that would result from major storm events.
- ▶ Wildlife Habitat: Expanses of open space area are vital to wildlife. Each of the major forms of open space in Atkinson (agricultural/open fields and pastures, old fields, forested areas, and wetlands) provide habitat to different important species. In addition, stream shorelines, contiguous strips of undeveloped land and even utility corridors are vital to wildlife as links to important habitat areas.
- ▶ Economics: Agriculture and forestry, particularly the former, have been part of Atkinson's economy since the Town's settlement. While this may not be true at all today, these lands continue to contribute to the Town's economic well-being both directly and indirectly. While farming in Atkinson currently represents a very minor economic activity, farmland helps reduce the cost of community services that would arise if these open spaces were replaced with residential development. This has been well documented in several communities in New Hampshire in the Cooperative Extension Report *Does Open Space Pay?* (UNH Cooperative Extension, 1995).

Although Atkinson has a considerable amount of open space, more is lost to development every year. It is increasingly important for the community to understand what is left (see the Existing Land Use Chapter and Map in this Master Plan) and continue to protect the most important parcels for the future.

Recommendations:

1. The Planning Board should continue to review and carefully consider resource information pertaining to soil, slope, wetlands, floodplains, and other natural resource information as part of its planning and development review.
 2. The Planning Board should continue to require site specific research, analysis and mitigation of specific environmental concerns whenever a proposed development appears to impact environmentally sensitive areas.
 3. The Conservation Commission should review, evaluate and provide recommendations regarding all development proposals affecting the Town's natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas. They should communicate their concerns and recommendations to the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Board of Selectmen, N.H. Wetlands Council or other body as appropriate.
 4. The Planning Board should consider ways to increase the amount of non-hydric open space set aside in residential development and make adjustments to Site Plan Review Regulations as appropriate.
 5. The Town should support and participate in regional efforts to identify and protect open space and trail networks and wildlife corridors, including efforts by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and the Rockingham Land Trust.
 6. The Conservation Commission should develop a strategy to preserve additional open space in the Town.
 7. The Conservation Commission should complete the Town-wide wetlands inventory using professional consultants, if necessary.
 8. Upon the completion of the Wetlands Inventory, the Planning Board should evaluate the adequacy of the regulatory buffer requirements around the wetlands identified in the Inventory.
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Existing Land Use Town of Atkinson, NH MP - 4



EXISTING LAND USE

The Existing Land Use chapter of the Atkinson Master Plan provides information on both the topography of the land and the land uses allowed (zoning areas) and which are currently taking place throughout the town. This information is depicted on two maps: the Base map is a topographical base map which shows the various elevations, waterways, roadways and specific reference points throughout the town; and the Existing Land Use map, which illustrates the various uses of the land and depicts which areas of the town are being used for retail, single family, mobile home, manufactured housing, commercial and other uses. The Existing Land Use map also displays the locations of existing gravel pits or in the confines of Atkinson. To provide a sense of history, direction and cohesion to the Master Plan, the Existing Land Use chapter describes the current conditions of development in Atkinson. For a historical context the Existing Land Use maps of previous Master Plans should be reviewed. A copy of the 1980 Existing Land Use map is provided with this chapter to show the growth and change that has occurred over the last 18 years.



Atkinson, located in the southern most portion of New Hampshire, maintains the character of a commuter community. What makes the Town of Atkinson desirable as a place for families to establish their roots is the "rural" setting and the sense of community and involvement found throughout the town. As discussed more fully in the Future Land Use chapter, this

rural attraction brings people to the area. However, the increase of residential development slowly erodes at the rural nature of the community. The nature and attraction of a rural setting is the cause of its own demise.

From 1980 to 1997, Atkinson experienced a 9.3% growth rate of residential development, which translates into the addition of 822 dwelling units during the period from 1,428 to 2,250. In the late 80's and early 90's the development slowed due to the decline in regional economic conditions coupled with stringent local land-use controls. In the late 90's with a substantially improved economy, many more

developments are emerging throughout town, although the Town, through its strengthened regulations is better equipped to review these developments during the permitting process. The establishment of new roads throughout the town creates frontage and allows portions of previously inaccessible land to be developed.

The construction in town has not been limited to a specific geographical area. Rather, this development has spread throughout the town. In the 1970's and 80's Atkinson's development concentrated primarily on, or very close to, the major thoroughfares in town. Now, in the late 90's, we can see that the development has sprawled deep and far from our major roadways with the construction of new roads.

A major concern presented by recent development is that the connection and continuance of roadways through these new areas be made with a logical layout in mind. It is important from a safety access standpoint that more than one roadway provides access to a particular location. This means that the number of dead-end roads should be minimized unless there is a limited number of housing units. **Refer to the Transportation Chapter for additional information.**

Countering this planning issue is the desire for residents of these new parcels to live in small quiet neighborhoods that do not experience extraordinary "pass-thru" traffic. An examination of the Existing Land Use Map shows these competing goals and issues in providing short dead-end "neighborhood" streets balanced against a general goal to provide a contiguous network of roadways for access and safety reasons.

The resolution of this issue will depend on the varying circumstances of each development. The balance must be struck between the needs of safety access and home owners enjoyment and expectations regarding their property. Some of the policies regarding future connections and dead-end roads are discussed more fully in the Future Land Use Chapter.

The predominant type of housing in Atkinson has been, and continues to be, single family detached residences, primarily on 2 acre sites, although an increasing number of condominiums are being constructed (see the Housing Chapter for more information). Since 1995 several cluster subdivisions were approved with Low/Moderate housing including:

- Dearborn Estates - 11, 3-bedroom single family homes with 3 units set aside for low/moderate housing.
- Carriage Chase Estates - 16, 4-bedroom and 5, 3-bedroom homes with 5 units set aside for low/moderate housing.
- The Woodlands - 56, 2-bedroom units with 12 units set aside for low/moderate housing.
- Mill Stream Crossing - 19, 4-bedroom single family homes and 5, 2-bedroom multi-family units.

These developments help to diversify the housing opportunities within Atkinson, and give a reasonable opportunity for low and moderate income families to reside here. This issue is more fully laid out in the Housing Element Chapter. Atkinson is progressing from its rural roots as a community of farmers to what could be called a "pre-suburban" community. In the near future it will continue to feel the development pressures associated with this growth.

Island Pond

Property surrounding Island Pond was originally developed in the 1940's as a seasonal/recreational use area where requirements were less stringent than in the central portion of town. Building sizes were smaller, and lot sizes were small. Septic systems were small and rudimentary (many were initially installed as holding tanks), which was not of great concern because of the seasonal use of the properties, allowing ample time for the recovery of the systems. Many of the septic systems which have been replaced over the past 50 years were found to be oil drums which had corroded, allowing raw septage to leach into the ground.

Our Town records indicate that the first year-round residents came to Island Pond in 1954, when the road crew was required to plow Hemlock Heights in order to provide emergency access to the family with several children. Between 1954 and the present, many of the cottages have been converted to year-round occupancy. Efforts by the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Adjustment to regulate these conversions (and, more importantly to monitor the septic systems) have not been entirely effective. The housing density surrounding Island Pond in Atkinson is upwards of 10 units per acre, whereas the rest of Atkinson is subject to one unit per 2-3 acres. The State of NHDES recommends minimum lot sizing based on soil types to support on-site septic and well, which are typically not less than one acre per unit. The Town's concerns are the potential impact that deteriorating uninspected septic systems may have, not only on the once pristine pond, but also on the quality of individual water supplies.

This is not just an Atkinson problem. Big Island Pond is shared by Derry, Hampstead and Atkinson, and all three towns have similarly developed shorefronts and associated problems. Deterioration of the pond and the surrounding lands could create sewage and/or water problems requiring State intervention. Costs to the towns, in general, and the property owners abutting the Pond could be tremendous. To protect the Town and the taxpayers, it is suggested that a tri-town committee be established to assess the area surrounding the Pond, analyze the problems, and develop regulatory solutions to ensure future protection of this important resource.

CHANGES IN THE LAND

There has been a substantial loss of open space in Atkinson due to the recent developments throughout town. Although there is some land left open, this may not be enough open space to maintain the desired rural character given the recent trend in land use. Current parcels of town owned land can be seen in the Conservation and Town Owned Lands Map.

Recreation Facilities and Land Use

While the Planning Board has approved many subdivisions which incorporate private trail systems and open space, the Town has also provided recreational facilities for its residents. Woodlock Park, located off of Pope Road, is the Town's primary recreational facility providing: 2-tennis courts, 1-(½ court) basketball court, 3-baseball fields, 2-soccer fields, a pavilion with restrooms, a playground and a small picnic area. No town beaches exist in Atkinson. Other issues and information regarding public recreational facilities as well as anticipated demand are discussed more fully in the Community Facilities chapter.

Commercial and Industrial Land Use

Atkinson has almost fully developed its commercially zoned land. No factories, few office parks, very little of an urban or suburban business atmosphere exists in Atkinson. However, most of the existing commercial businesses which do exist in Atkinson, fit into the town's rural character and rural setting. Commercial/Retail development is important and Atkinson has acknowledged this fact by a change in the Commercial District in 1992 to expand it northerly on Main Street as far as Robie Lane. Other areas of commercial and industrial possibilities exist proximate to Route 111 and in the extreme south-eastern portion of town. There have been advancements in Industrial/Commercial development in both these areas.

Excavations

Excavation and/or the removal of earth is not permitted in Atkinson unless the Zoning Board of Adjustment grants a special exception under RSA 155-E.

Incorporating Visual and Historic Areas into Current Land Use Scheme

An awareness of historic and visual resources has emerged as development continues to consume the attractive landscape in the community. The visual qualities of Atkinson have become an increasingly significant part of the planning process. The

information in this section details areas of Atkinson's landscape that contribute to the historic and visual make-up of Atkinson. A more detailed discussion of these areas can be found in the Historic and Natural Resources Chapter.

Through responsible planning efforts, the town will use its review process to minimize impacts of development and promote the positive effects of developments by exposing views and retaining qualities of the landscapes that have been identified.

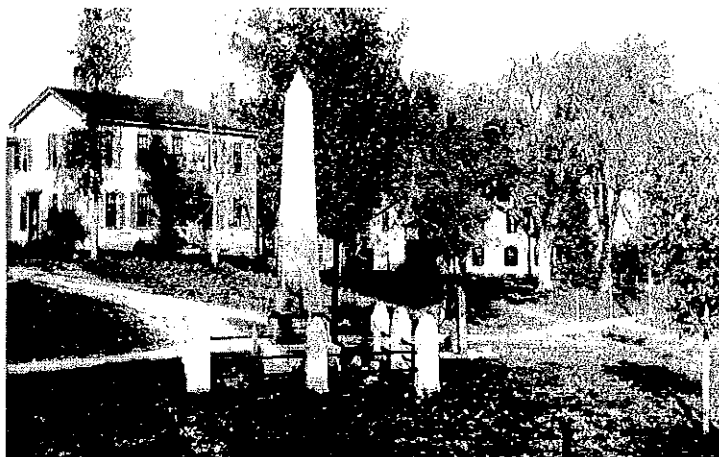
Areas of High Visual Quality

In Atkinson there are areas that are particularly high in visual quality. This survey differs from the identification of historic areas and areas of architectural significance. However, these areas do give a glimpse of "old" Atkinson. Many of these highly scenic areas are those that have been preserved for centuries. They include:

- Providence Hill.
- Jericho Road - North Broadway viewshed.
- Main Street - Sawyer Avenue section.
- Lower Maple Avenue.
- Lower East Road.
- Town Center - South.
- Town Center - North.
- Island Pond Road - Route 111 plain
- Island Pond environs



Main Street, circa 1900



Town Common, Circa 1900

Long distance vistas of significance have also been identified:

- Pine Knoll area.
- Maple Avenue - Bragg Hill section.
- Hogg Hill.
- Providence Hill - west.

CHANGES SINCE THE 1980 MASTER PLAN

Although development throughout the region slowed in the 1990's, there were some changes and impacts upon land use through amendments to the zoning ordinance, developments within town, and other changes in the physical and political landscape. While several of the amendments to the Zoning Ordinance have been regarded as 'housekeeping' measures, correcting confusing/vague language or clarifying intent, those listed below were intended to affect development. The land use regulations adopted between 1980 and 1990 (page II-2 of the 1990 Master Plan) are also presented, in a slightly different format, to provide the reader with an accurate history of change in Atkinson.

- 1980-90 In fulfillment of an earlier Land Use Plan, a commercial/office/industrial complex was developed in the northwest corner of Town, near Route 111.
- 1980-90 The departure of the single-family residential community to a community that utilizes the density approach, creating multi-family, condominium, and duplex-oriented developments.
- 1980-90 Plans to establish a "Town Center" area were initiated. The construction of the new Town Hall, and the planning for the relocation of the Highway Garage undertaken.
- 1980-90 Approximately 1,000 acres were re-zoned from RR-3 to TR-2 in the Providence Hill Road area, west of Geary Lane and Old Coach Road. When this change was carried out, there appeared to be little land-use planning to support it.
- 1980-90 Court mandated, and expanded by Town Meeting, was the granting of commercial-industrial expansions in the Town's northwest corner.
- 1980-90 Several minor zoning changes were adopted by Town Meeting, which were promulgated to carry out the intent of the original Master Plan to encourage development in the areas near community services and readily available transportation networks. This resulted (as of 1990) in the majority of development ($\approx 70\%$) occurring in the TR-2 District, with the remainder in the RR-2 and to a lesser degree in the RR-3 districts (i.e. Oak Ridge Development).

- 1992→ The Historic District commission and the Historic District was abolished. By Petition.
- 1994→ The 300 foot horizontal-distance wetland setback was eliminated, based upon the recommendation of the Conservation Commission and in support of State of NH guidelines.
- 1995→ Strengthened in-law apartment special exception criteria, including the expiration of the exception upon vacancy of the unit, requiring re-application for new occupancy.
- 1997→ Amendments to the Low-Moderate Housing Accommodation Incentive System, adopted in 1992, were adopted to ensure that the low-moderate income housing conforms to Federal guidelines.
- 1997→ Section 630 was deleted from the Ordinance. Originally adopted in 1990, this Section conflicted with Section 620, both of which related to the Sports Complex/Residential Sub-District. Amendments were also adopted to Section 620 which, among other things, will encourage that a portion of the residential units in this District are reserved for those who are aged 55 and older.
- 1998→ An amendment which established incentives to protect scenic vistas by allowing increased density for clustered developments which preserve these areas was adopted.
- 1998→ An amendment to the Wetland Ordinance was adopted which clarified the prior Ordinance to ensure that no buildings could be built within 100' of a wetland. Prior to the adoption of this amendment, it was unclear whether a garage could be built within the wetland setback.
- 1998→ The provisions of NHRSA §79-A: 25, II, were adopted, authorizing 100% of the Current Use Tax revenues to be paid into a conservation fund for future conservation land protection/purchase.

CONCLUSION:

The existing land use of Atkinson is very clear, single family dwellings far outweigh any other use and will likely continue in the future. Atkinson has not experienced substantial growth of multi-family, mobile homes and manufactured homes which has largely been a result of the market systems. Condominium development, however, has increased recently, and is proving to be beneficial to the Town. Predominantly, the condominiums being developed are expensive, and owned by people with few or no children. Although commercial expansion and

development is invited and anticipated by most towns, development in Atkinson may be difficult due to the large amount of land devoted to residential development.

Recommendations:

1. The Planning Board should encourage the updating of all maps for the Town, to include; roads, Town lands, wetlands, trails, historic sites, hydrogeology. Additionally, the Board should develop a plan to computerize all mapping on a coordinated system.
 2. To protect the Town and the taxpayers, it is suggested that a tri-town committee (Atkinson, Derry, Hampstead) be established to assess the area surrounding the Island Pond, analyze the associated problems, and develop regulatory solutions to ensure future protection of this important resource.
 3. The Planning Board, in conjunction with the Conservation Commission, should research ways to strengthen Atkinson's ordinances and regulations so that appropriate care is taken to preserve natural and environmental resources.
 4. The Planning Board should encourage long-term planning for the location of recreation facilities.
 5. The Planning Board should encourage a long-term plan for further development of the Town Trail System. All developments that potentially contain land usable as part of the town-wide trail system should be encouraged to provide adequate open space easements to allow for the interconnection of the trail system, thereby giving the residents access to the system while protecting areas for parks, recreation, and open spaces of adequate proportions.
 6. The Planning Board should continue to closely monitor the development of new Town roads in order to insure the harmonious development of the community, and avoid scattered and premature development.
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FUTURE LAND USE

One of the primary goals of preparing a master plan is to establish a guide for the future growth and development. The Future Land Use chapter is a synthesis of all other sections of the Master Plan and is the Planning Board's "vision" for the long-range development of Atkinson. It is a plan to encourage continued compatible development town-wide. The plan must be both general and specific. As a "policy document", the Master Plan must establish general policies and goals with which to guide development. As a "plan" it must go further and specify land areas that should be protected from development, areas where development should be limited, and areas where development should be encouraged. As discussed throughout the Master Plan, the capability of the land to support development is the primary factor used to guide development. Other important factors include existing development patterns, road layouts, site conditions, zoning, existing and anticipated municipal services, as well as community policies.

A review of this Master Plan, the three previous Master Plans, associated surveys and the Town's land-use regulations, collectively illustrate Atkinson's desire to remain a rural-residential community which cares for and protects its natural resources. While this Future Land Use Plan discusses factors which determine the suitability of land for development, Atkinson's Future land use patterns will likely be a reflection of the existing development pattern. Atkinson has made concerted efforts to follow the recommendations in its earlier Master Plans. As such, land-use decisions have generally been carefully considered. This present Master Plan sees the continuation of the same philosophy.

Development Suitability

Preferred locations for development are those areas where there are fewest natural resource constraints. In projecting where future land uses should take place, land suitability factors must be considered. Land may be classified by one of three categories: 1) land unsuitable for development; 2) land poorly suited for development; and 3) land generally suited for development. The elements of each category is explained below.

1. Land Unsuitable for Development

Land not suited for development includes wetlands and areas which have very low potential for the siting of septic systems (having poor soil and steep slopes). The significance of these areas is described as follows:

- a. **Wetlands:** The importance of preserving and protecting wetlands is well established in this Plan. In addition to the importance of preserving wetlands, it is equally important to prevent building in such areas because of the potential impact on water quality and public health. Septic system failures occurring in, or near, wetlands can readily cause groundwater contamination. Since a municipal sewer system is unlikely in Atkinson, all buildings requiring sewage disposal should be located at a safe minimum distance from wetlands, surface waters and groundwater.

Atkinson's existing Wetland Ordinance addresses many of these concerns. The Town's future development will continue to be guided by this ordinance.

- b. **Areas with Very Low Potential for Septic Systems:** The ability to adequately place a septic system on a parcel of land is the most important consideration for determining development suitability. The Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) has developed a system to indicate the relative potential of a soil for siting a septic system. This system objectively and scientifically rates a soils potential on a five level scale ranging from very high to very low.

The system judges soils that have a "very low" rating as economically unfeasible for development due to the existence of wetlands or severe slopes. Regardless of economic feasibility, it is clear that land classified as having very low potential is not suitable for development under any reasonable standard. The development of such land only invites hazards to public health.

In Atkinson, all wetland soils and steep slopes (greater than 25%) have very low potential for septic systems.

2. Land Poorly Suited for Development

Land which is poorly suited for development includes the following categories: 1) buffer areas around wetlands; 2) buffer areas along river corridors; 3) aquifer recharge zones; 4) 100-year flood hazard zones; and 5) areas with low potential for septic systems.

All of these areas are poorly suited for development. However, unlike those areas not suited for development, these areas do not pose serious enough environmental and public health problems to justify a prohibition on all construction. Rather, poorly-suited areas are considered problematic and are best suited for low density residential development. Carefully developed land use regulations are required to safely guide future development in these areas.

- a. **Buffer Areas Around Wetlands:** A wetlands ordinance which prohibits development in wetlands does not necessarily protect wetlands from harmful uses occurring immediately adjacent to them. Structures that are potentially harmful to wetlands, such as septic systems, waste storage areas and salt storage areas, should be excluded from buffer areas. Many wetland ordinances also restrict the placement of structures and impermeable surfaces within the buffer area. As much as possible, natural vegetation should be protected or restored in these areas to control erosion and sediment from contaminating Atkinson's wetlands.
- b. **Buffer Areas Along River Corridors:** For many of the same reasons as for wetlands, the establishment of buffers along rivers and streams is a common protection measure. These corridors serve as travel corridors for many types of wildlife. Protecting stream corridors will preserve wetlands, reduce flooding damage and preserve the scenic beauty of the river.

In 1991, the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act (NHRSA §483-B) was adopted by the State Legislature. The law requires that a 150 foot natural woodland buffer be maintained along public waters, but does allow buildings within 50 feet. Atkinson's Zoning Ordinance is more stringent, requiring a 100 foot building setback.

- c. **Aquifer Recharge Zones:** Aquifer recharge zones are poorly suited for many types of development due to the potential for contamination of large water supplies. Vulnerability to contamination is particularly high in land

overlying sand and gravel aquifers due to the high permeability of the associated soil types. Contaminants can spread rapidly into the aquifer and destroy it as a water supply.

- d. **100 Year Flood Hazard Zones:** Floodplains are undesirable locations for development because: 1) of the associated risks to life and property; 2) construction in the floodplains worsens flood hazards downstream; and 3) the inundation of subsurface sewage disposal systems can cause water pollution and a public health hazard.
- e. **Areas With Low Potential for Septic Systems:** These areas contain soils that have low potential for the successful siting of septic systems. The soils are limited due to one or more of the following factors: slope, shallow depth to bedrock, seasonal wetness or slow percolation rate. In most instances, these natural limitations can be overcome by modifying the site to comply with minimum State septic siting requirements, but only at high cost. These areas are suited for low density development only, with densities determined by the soil type lot size requirements.

3. Areas Generally Suited for Development

All other areas not specifically identified pose no unusual limitation to limit development. This does not mean that all land is equally suitable. A town-wide map cannot show in sufficient detail the location of all physical limitations described above. Conversely, developable land is likely to be found within areas shown as unsuitable for development.

Other factors must also be considered that are not related to land capability such as highway access, quality or capacity of access roads, compatibility with surrounding uses, the need for municipal services, and existing zoning regulations.

Future Land Use Analysis

While any analysis of future land use should include the desires of the community, consideration must also be given to the economic health of the community. The Town has to provide necessary services such as schools, police and fire protection, trash collection, and roads. These factors must be seriously considered in the preparation of any proposed zoning ordinance changes and the preparation of a Capital Improvement Plan. It is realized that economic considerations may conflict

with the desires of the community. However, the Planning Board needs to be aware of the conflict between what is desired and economic considerations when planning for Atkinson's future.

Over the years the Town has relied entirely on private on-site sewer system in its approach to land use regulation. The two acre minimum lot size requirement best exemplifies this. In the 5 to 10 year planning period of this Master Plan, the construction of a municipal sewerage treatment facility is neither foreseen nor desired, while development pressure in many sections of the Town is expected to continue.

Previous Master Plans and the resulting Zoning Ordinances have generally served the Town well, as noted throughout this Master Plan. Likewise, it is the recommendation of this Master Plan that these same policies be continued with minor modifications as recommended throughout this document.

Residential Land Uses: As stated in the previous master plan, Atkinson should continue to be a primarily residential community. The two acre minimum lot size requirement is based primarily on environmental limitations.

Commercial/Industrial Development: Commercial development in Atkinson is located at the southern boundary on Main Street, and in the northwest corner of Town. Additionally, Atkinson has a commercial/industrial and a commercial/professional zoning district in the northwest corner of Town.

A secondary commercial land use which the Master Plan recognizes is home occupations. Today's home occupations are much different than those envisioned years ago. Technological advances in computers, fax machines and telecommunications all make working at home more feasible. In addition there has been tremendous growth in the service, professional and administrative sectors of the economy. While zoning ordinances should be responsive to the existing white collar labor force and should provide the flexibility for home occupations to exist where they do not generate detrimental traffic, noise and pollution to residential areas, the Town should continue to take precautions so that these home occupations do not develop into commercial enterprises.

Town Land, Conservation and Recreation Uses: The Conservation Commission should continue their efforts at obtaining conservation land or easements. Protecting large areas of contiguous land should be a priority. Land adjacent to the Town forests should be reviewed to determine if it can be protected from development so that the area can be enlarged. Atkinson owns a number of vacant parcels of land

scattered throughout Town. Consideration should be given to developing a plan to consolidate and link town-owned land. The Town should periodically review the need for additional land for Town and recreational uses, in addition, consideration should be given to obtaining trail easements between town-owned parcels.

Objectives of the Land Use Plan

As in all local planning elements, the primary objective of the Future Land Use Plan is to provide for orderly growth. The Future Land Use Plan is designed to accomplish the objectives of controlled growth with foresight. Utilizing a plan, however, the community must now assume the responsibility of planning its own future.

A second objective is the realistic application of concerns expressed by the citizens as to the retention of rural characteristics and community atmosphere existing in Atkinson today.

As discussed throughout this chapter, and throughout this Master Plan, Atkinson's future land use pattern will closely resemble its existing land use pattern. This Future Land Use plan is unlike many other communities' plans, in that no modifications to the present zoning districts are recommended. Because Atkinson has implemented the Future Land Use recommendations made in its earlier Master Plans, the pattern of development Town-wide has been well established.

The Master Plan Committee recommended no future modifications to the established zoning districts for two main reasons:

1. Atkinson recognizes that it is primarily a residential community with limited, yet adequate commercially zoned land. Both the existing and future land use plans reflect this recognition; and
2. Atkinson's development pattern is well established; modifications to the zoning would likely cause hardships to property owners that purchased property with expectations based upon the applicable zoning ordinances regulating their property.

The matrix presented below does not represent the findings of a build-out analysis, but rather, is a quantification of Atkinson's present land use areas by zone.

Remaining Undeveloped Lands by Zoning District:

ZONING DISTRICT	TOTAL ACREAGE	REMAINING ACREAGE*
RR - 3	874 Acres	289 Acres
RR - 2	3440 Acres	842 Acres
TR - 2	2,404 Acres	513 Acres
TOWN CENTER	144 Acres	46 Acres
CI/CP	354 Acres	201 Acres
COMMERCIAL	42 Acres	5 Acres
SUB-TOTAL	7,258 Acres	
WATER	109 Acres	
TOTAL	7,367 Acres	

***EXCLUDES** Wetlands

The information presented above provides only a rough approximation of Atkinson's remaining lands; specific conclusions should not be drawn from this information. Soil suitability, site-specific wetlands, ownership and other characteristics of the remaining lands are not represented.

Lastly, the acreages presented were derived from NH GRANIT digital data, and do not represent a continuation of the information presented in Atkinson's earlier Master Plans.

Recommendations:

1. The Planning Board should carefully consider the effect of enlarging or establishing new zoning districts, and ensure that any zoning amendments are supported by this Master Plan.
 2. The town should encourage, and where necessary purchase, conservation and agricultural easements, in order to preserve its agricultural heritage.
 3. Atkinson should consider participating in the National Flood Insurance Program to insure that future development will not be subject to flood hazards and to protect existing development.
 4. The Town (Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen) should cooperatively study the feasibility of developing a Town-wide interconnected trail system on public and private lands, where necessary.
 5. The Planning Board should undertake the completion of a comprehensive build-out analysis in order to more accurately determine the acreage of undeveloped lands. The results of the build-out analysis should be evaluated by the Planning Board to determine the adequacy of Atkinson's land-use regulatory scheme.
 6. The Town should take steps to acquire land on Island Pond for use as a Town Beach, to include beach front, parking area, and a pavilion for changing and rest rooms.
 7. The Planning Board should consider an expansion of the impact fee ordinance that will ensure that burdens placed upon existing services and new services needed by particular developments are adequately provided by the developers who create the burden, rather than the taxpayers.
 8. The Town should research and investigate the necessity of a Growth Management Plan to accommodate the potential for future growth.
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COMMUNITY PROFILE

INTRODUCTION

The community profile is a collection of statistical information pertaining to general population, housing, income, and employment characteristics of the town. In the context of the master plan, a statistical profile is useful in two ways. First, it helps to place the town in context with other communities in the region. Second, important trends which may affect the future growth and development of the town can be identified and analyzed. As appropriate, this statistical information may be taken into account in making policy decisions.

Recognizing these intended uses, the statistical information presented here takes two principal forms. Most of the tables contain information for Atkinson and other surrounding communities that are geographically and socioeconomically proximate, as well as part of the Timberlane School District. Included also are totals for this region, Rockingham County, and the State of New Hampshire. These tables provide an expanding regional context for the data presented. Most of the remaining tables show data for Atkinson covering a period of years, from which important trends can be identified.

An analysis of the statistical information regarding the demographics of Atkinson's populations reveals certain trends that may be found throughout the Master Plan. These issues are important to the final analysis and recommendations made by this plan, and therefore must be based upon the statistical information presented in this Chapter. For instance, certain population characteristics may indicate a specific type of recreational facility used and/or needed. Also, depending on the age and makeup of the population, it may be apparent that certain specific land uses should be encouraged for the benefit of the town's citizens.

The information contained in this profile comes from a variety of sources. The most comprehensive and therefore most heavily used source is the U.S. Census. Although the 1990 Census results are now a few years old, they still allow for the making of comparisons among towns and the identification of trends, particularly when analyzed against the 1980 and 1970 US Census data. Once the 2000 Census is published these tables should be updated to show more current information. For projections and estimates, school district information, Office of State Planning computations, and various other sources are utilized to present anticipated conditions.

Population and Population Projections

Atkinson's 1996 population was estimated to be 5,794 persons and the town has an area of 10.8 square miles. This is equivalent to 536 persons per square mile, or approximately 1.2 acres per person. Although by urban standards this is not a high population density, considering the town's population history, it represents a considerable increase in density (see Table P-1). The earliest standardized population records for the town indicate that the population in 1767 was 476 persons, or 14.5 acres per person. There has been a ten-fold increase in population over 200 years. The most remarkable fact is that over 90% of this growth has occurred since 1960. Atkinson has experienced an average annual growth rate of 6.7% from 1970-1980, 1.7 % from 1980-1990, and 1.8 % from 1990-1995. Figure P-1 reflects the dramatic population growth which has occurred in Atkinson and surrounding towns. Since the 1940's, the Town's growth rate has been correlated with that of the region and county. Although generally lower than the region as a whole in the eighties, the growth in the seventies was dramatically higher than the first wave of growth experienced in New Hampshire at the time (See Table P-2: 2.2% average annual New Hampshire growth rate, 6.7% average annual growth - Atkinson). Atkinson's current average annual change is a slight amount higher than that of the immediate surrounding region (see Table P-3: 1.8% average annual growth for Atkinson, 1.3% growth for the surrounding region).

Atkinson's average annual population growth of 1.8% from 1990 to 1995 is comparable to Rockingham County's increase of 0.7%, as reflected in Table P-3. In 1995, the N.H. Office of State Planning projected Atkinson to grow 0.78% per year during 1990-2010. This is one of the lowest rates in the area, and is a smaller share of the projected County growth rate (0.94%) than Atkinson has had in the past. Population growth comparisons between Atkinson, Sandown, Danville, and Plaistow can be made by referencing Figure P-1.

As the developable land slowly disappears and the number of large tracts of undeveloped land diminish growth will slow in each town. Furthermore, the growth experienced by Atkinson is beginning to show in towns that lie to the north, such as Sandown and Danville. Issues regarding land use and population are more fully addressed in the Existing Land Use Chapter. However, Atkinson lies in a region of explosive growth, particularly involving the other towns in the Timberlane School District. Although population growth is not as explosive for Atkinson as it was in the 1970's, it remains a very important issue for the consideration for town planners in a regional context.

School Population Growth and Projections

Atkinson displays the greatest decline in students per 1000 population (see Figure P-3) over time. School year estimates provided by School Administrative Unit 55 (SAU 55) for 2009-10 predict Plaistow to have the lowest number of students per 100 population in that year. Danville will have the highest number of students on the projection year, followed by Sandown.

Figure P-4 displays the share of school attendance per town. It illustrates two towns (Plaistow and Atkinson) contributing a declining share of students the Timberlane Regional School District, while Sandown and Danville are contributing an increasing share. School year estimates for 2009-10 predict the declining trends of Atkinson and Plaistow to continue. Sandown is predicted to decrease its share in 2009-10 while Danville dramatically increases its share.

Table P-1.

POPULATION HISTORY
Town of Atkinson 1767-1996

Area of Town: 6912 Acres

Year	Population	Acres per Person	Average Annual Growth for Report Period
1767	476	14.5	---
1775	575	12.0	2.39%
1786	500	13.8	-1.26%
1790	479	14.4	-1.07%
1800	474	14.5	-0.10%
1810	556	12.4	1.61%
1820	563	12.3	0.13%
1830	554	12.4	-0.16%
1840	557	12.4	0.05%
1850	600	11.5	0.75%
1860	546	12.6	-0.94%
1870	488	14.1	-1.12%
1880	502	13.8	0.28%
1890	483	14.3	-0.39%
1900	442	15.6	-0.88%
1910	440	15.7	-0.05%
1920	413	16.7	-0.63%
1930	407	17.0	-0.15%
1940	433	15.9	0.62%
1950	492	14.0	1.29%
1960	1017	6.8	7.53%
1970	2291	3.0	8.46%
1980	4397	1.5	6.74%
1990	5188	1.3	1.67%
1996	5794	1.2	1.86%

Sources: 1767-1840 - Population of New Hampshire, Part One, N.H. State Planning and Development Commission, 1946.
 1950-1990 - U.S. Bureau of the Census.
 1996- N.H. Population Estimates for Cities and Towns, N.H. Office of State Planning, 8/1997.

Table P-2 Growth and Density 1970-1995									
		Population			Average Annual Change				
TOWN/AREA	1970	1980	1990	1995	1970-80	1980-90	1990-95	Area (Sq. Mile)	Persons/ Sq. Mi.
Atkinson	2,291	4,397	5,188	5,685	6.7%	1.7%	1.8%	10.8	526.4
Brentwood	1,468	2,004	2,590	2,836	3.2%	2.6%	1.8%	16.1	176.1
Danville	924	1,318	2,534	2,975	3.6%	6.8%	3.3%	11.5	258.7
East Kingston	838	1,135	1,352	1,566	3.1%	1.8%	3.0%	10.5	149.1
Epping	2,356	3,460	5,162	5,466	3.9%	4.1%	1.2%	24.8	220.4
Exeter	8,892	11,024	12,481	12,899	2.2%	1.2%	0.7%	20.4	632.3
Fremont	993	1,333	2,576	2,940	3.0%	6.8%	2.7%	17.4	169.0
Greenland	1,784	2,129	2,768	2,931	1.8%	2.7%	1.2%	11.5	254.9
Hampstead	2,401	3,785	6,732	7,262	4.7%	5.9%	1.5%	13.3	546.0
Hampton	8,011	10,493	12,278	12,792	2.7%	1.6%	0.8%	12.9	991.6
Hampton Falls	1,254	1,372	1,503	1,678	0.9%	0.9%	2.2%	12.3	136.4
Kensington	1,044	1,322	1,631	1,694	2.4%	2.1%	0.8%	11.2	151.3
Kingston	2,882	4,111	5,591	5,731	3.6%	3.1%	0.5%	19.8	289.4
New Castle	975	936	840	843	-0.4%	-1.1%	0.1%	0.8	1053.8
Newfields	843	817	888	1,088	-0.3%	0.8%	4.1%	6.6	164.8
Newington	798	716	990	721	-1.1%	3.3%	-6.1%	8.5	84.8
Newton	1,920	3,068	3,473	3,589	4.8%	1.2%	0.7%	9.7	370.0
North Hampton	3,259	3,425	3,637	3,871	0.5%	0.6%	1.3%	13.6	284.6
Plaistow	4,712	5,609	7,316	7,573	1.8%	2.7%	0.7%	9.9	764.9
Portsmouth	25,717	26,254	25,925	22,736	0.2%	-0.1%	-2.6%	16.4	1386.3
Rye	4,083	4,508	4,612	4,671	1.0%	0.2%	0.3%	13	359.3
Salem	20,142	24,124	25,746	26,788	1.8%	0.7%	0.8%	23	1164.7
Sandown	741	2,057	4,060	4,559	10.7%	7.0%	2.3%	13.6	335.2
Seabrook	3,053	5,917	6,503	6,740	6.8%	0.9%	0.7%	8.8	765.9
South Hampton	558	660	740	756	1.7%	1.2%	0.4%	7.5	100.8
Stratham	1,512	2,507	4,955	5,524	5.2%	7.1%	2.2%	14.3	386.3
Windham	3,008	5,664	9,000	9,408	6.5%	4.7%	0.9%	25.4	370.4
RPC Region	106,459	134,145	161,071	165,322	2.3%	1.8%	0.5%	364	454.7
Rock. County	138,951	190,345	245,845	254,721	3.2%	2.6%	0.7%	699	364.4
N.H.	737,681	920,475	847,108	1,148,000	2.2%	-0.8%	6.3%	8992	127.7
Sources:	U.S. Census 1970, 1980, 1990			: Office of State Planning: 1995 Estimates (8-15-96)					

POPULATION GROWTH

The following charts detail the population and growth over the last 25 years. The surrounding community is comprised of geographically proximate towns and the members of the Timberlane Regional School District, of which Atkinson is a member.

TABLE P-3									
Population, Growth, and Density									
Atkinson Surrounding Communities									
1970 - 1995									
US Census					Average Annual % Change				
				OSP Est.				Area	Person
TOWN/AREA	1970	1980	1990	1995	1970-80	1980-90	1990-95¹	Sq. Mi.	Sq. Mi.
Atkinson	2,291	4,397	5,188	5,685	6.7%	1.7%	1.8%	10.8	526.4
Danville	924	1,318	2,534	2,975	3.6%	6.8%	3.3%	11.5	258.7
Hampstead	2,401	3,785	6,732	7,262	4.7%	5.9%	1.5%	13.3	546.0
Plaistow	4,712	5,609	7,316	7,573	1.8%	2.7%	0.7%	9.9	764.9
Salem	20,142	24,124	25,746	27,092	1.8%	0.7%	1.0%	9.9	2736.6
Sandown	741	2,057	4,060	4,559	10.7%	7.0%	2.3%	13.6	335.2
Region	31,211	41,290	51,576	55,146	2.8%	2.2%	1.3%	69.0	799.2
Rockingham County	138,951	190,345	245,845	254,721	3.2%	2.6%	0.7%	699.0	364.4
State	737,681	920,475	1,109,252	1,148,000	2.2%	1.9%	0.7%	8992	127.7
Sources:	U.S. Census 1970, 1980, 1990								
	Office of State Planning: 1995 Estimates (8-15-96)								
							¹ Based on OSP estimate		

PROJECTED GROWTH AND GROWTH RATES

The following charts display data for projected growth in persons, and growth rates in average annual percentage growth rates for the reported periods.

Table P-4

	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	1990-2000	1990-2005	1990-2010	1990-2015
Atkinson	5188	5547	5842	6063	6408	0.67	0.79	0.78	0.85
Danville	2534	3682	4188	4617	4849	3.81	3.41	3.05	2.63
Hampstead	6732	9380	10581	11556	12139	3.37	3.06	2.74	3.46
Plaistow	7316	7834	8251	8564	9051	0.69	0.81	0.79	0.85
Salem	25746	26053	26443	26697	27667	0.12	0.10	0.05	0.14
Sandown	4060	5967	6818	7498	7876	3.93	3.52	3.11	1.12
Region	53566	60463	64128	67005	70005	1.22	0.39	0.22	0.18
County	245,845	266,218	282,972	296,418	312,103	0.80	0.94	0.94	0.80
State	1,109,252	1,175,262	1,233,157	1,281,541	1,335,817	0.58	0.71	0.72	0.64

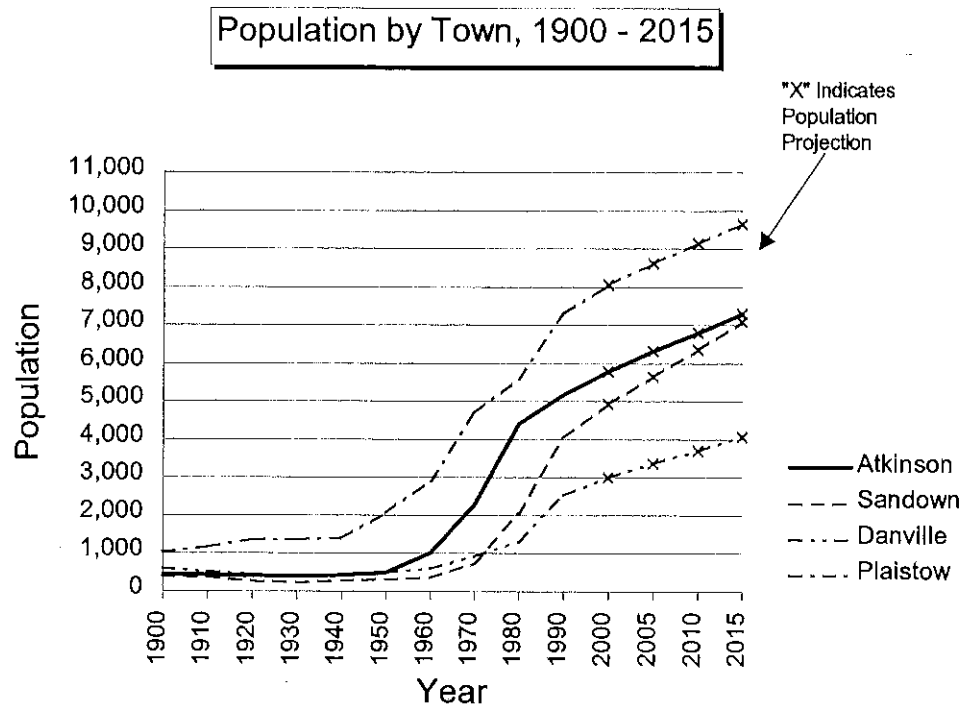
Source: Office of State Planning Growth Projections - 1997

Population: Historical and Projected for the Towns of Atkinson, Danville, Sandown, and Plaistow

TOWN	YEAR										Projections			
	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015
Atkinson	442	440	413	407	434	492	1,017	2,291	4,397	5,188	5,788	6,318	6,806	7,304
Sandown	400	380	280	229	292	315	366	741	2,057	4,060	4,940	5,661	6,356	7,095
Danville	615	517	463	406	457	508	605	924	1,318	2,534	3,007	3,369	3,712	4,070
Plaistow	1,027	1,173	1,368	1,366	1,414	2,082	2,915	4,712	5,609	7,316	8,060	8,628	9,141	9,656

Source: N.H. Population Projections - Total Population For Cities And Towns 1990-2015
 Salem-Plaistow-Windham MPO Transportation Plan 1995-1997, January 1994
 U.S. Census Bureau - 1900-1990; N.H. Office of State Planning Population Estimates, 1993

Figure P-1.



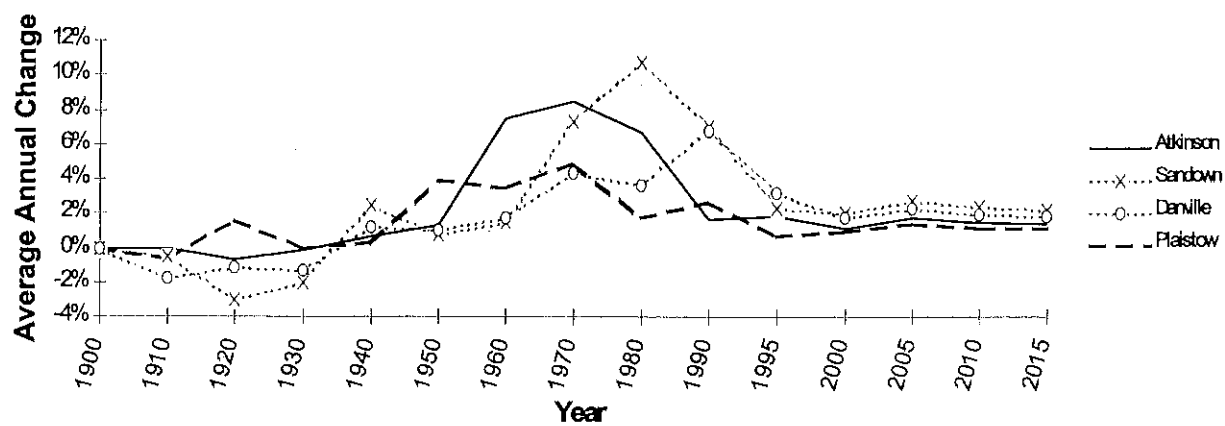
****Note:** 1996 population numbers for Atkinson (5,794 persons) has already exceeded OSP year 2005 projections (5,773 persons)**

Average Annual Population Change

TOWN	YEAR											Projections			
	-1900	-1910	-1920	-1930	-1940	-1950	-1960	-1970	-1980	-1990	-1995	-2000	-2005	-2010	-2015
Atkinson	NA	0.0%	-0.6%	-0.1%	0.6%	1.3%	7.5%	8.5%	6.7%	1.7%	1.8%	1.1%	1.8%	1.5%	1.4%
Sandown	NA	-0.5%	-3.0%	-2.0%	2.5%	0.8%	1.5%	7.3%	10.7%	7.0%	2.3%	2.0%	2.8%	2.3%	2.2%
Danville	NA	-1.7%	-1.1%	-1.3%	1.2%	1.1%	1.8%	4.3%	3.6%	6.8%	3.2%	1.7%	2.3%	2.0%	1.9%
Hastow	NA	-0.7%	1.5%	0.0%	0.3%	3.9%	3.4%	4.9%	1.8%	2.7%	0.7%	1.0%	1.4%	1.2%	1.1%

Figure P-2.

Per Town Average Annual Population Change



SCHOOL POPULATION GROWTH

The following charts and tables detail the school population and growth over the last 20 years. All subject communities are members of the Timberlane Regional School District, of which Atkinson is a member. The graphs on the following page illustrate the number of students for every 1000 persons in the each town (figure P-3) as well as a historical perspective of each community's share of students in the Timberlane Regional School District (figure P-4).

Timberlane Regional School District School Enrollment per Town, Grades K-12

Town	School Year 19--																			
	79-80	80-81	81-82	82-83	83-84	84-85	85-86	86-87	87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97	02-03	09-10
Atkinson	1000	994	976	947	939	941	927	891	886	855	813	802	804	828	836	826	821	833	921	1058
Danville	288	272	266	249	277	301	304	330	359	355	372	397	419	444	478	474	490	529	998	1649
Plaistow	1334	1256	1212	1131	1111	1130	1151	1147	1120	1102	1140	1132	1148	1144	1171	1209	1210	1297	1364	1480
Sandow	383	383	402	408	445	497	553	581	628	666	693	728	730	795	840	892	973	960	1160	1393
Total	3005	2905	2846	2735	2772	2869	2935	2949	2993	2978	3018	3059	3101	3211	3324	3401	3494	3619	4441	5480

Source: School Administrative Unit 55 (SAU 55), Timberlane Regional School District Years 1979 - 1996

Town Population 1979- 1996

Town	Year 19--																			
	79-80	80-81	81-82	82-83	83-84	84-85	85-86	86-87	87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97	02-03	09-10
Atkinson	4181	4397	4637	4583	4664	4810	4923	4782	4815	5144	5217	5188	5269	5358	5460	5595	5885	5794	N/A	5988
Danville	1282	1318	1319	1430	1468	1670	1933	1913	2097	2188	2297	2534	2629	2675	2766	2865	2975	3188	N/A	4446
Plaistow	5764	5809	5638	5687	5693	5889	6141	6730	6807	7290	7341	7316	7269	7260	7384	7504	7573	7664	N/A	8448
Sandow	1995	2057	2150	2277	2389	2472	2801	3017	3305	3584	3769	4060	4097	4105	4228	4403	4559	4648	N/A	7233
Total	13222	13381	13744	13957	14214	14841	15798	16422	17025	18206	18624	19098	19264	19398	19838	20367	20792	21294		

Source: New Hampshire Office of State Planning Population estimates years 1979 - 1996

Student Enrollment per 1000 Population per Town by Year (see figure P-4)

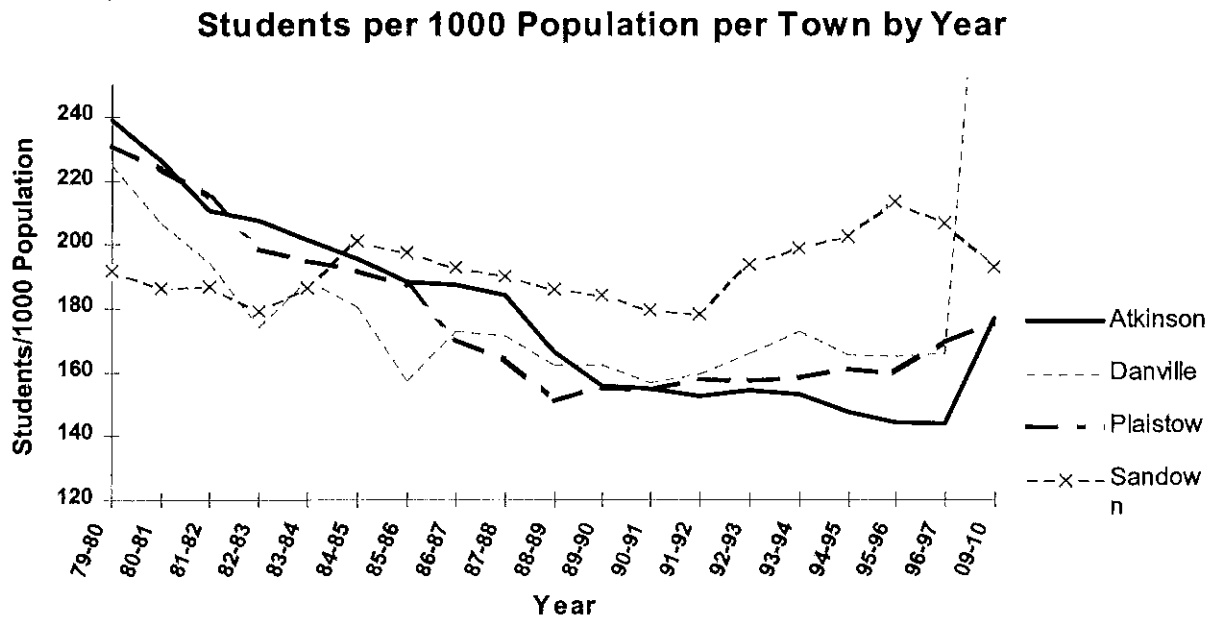
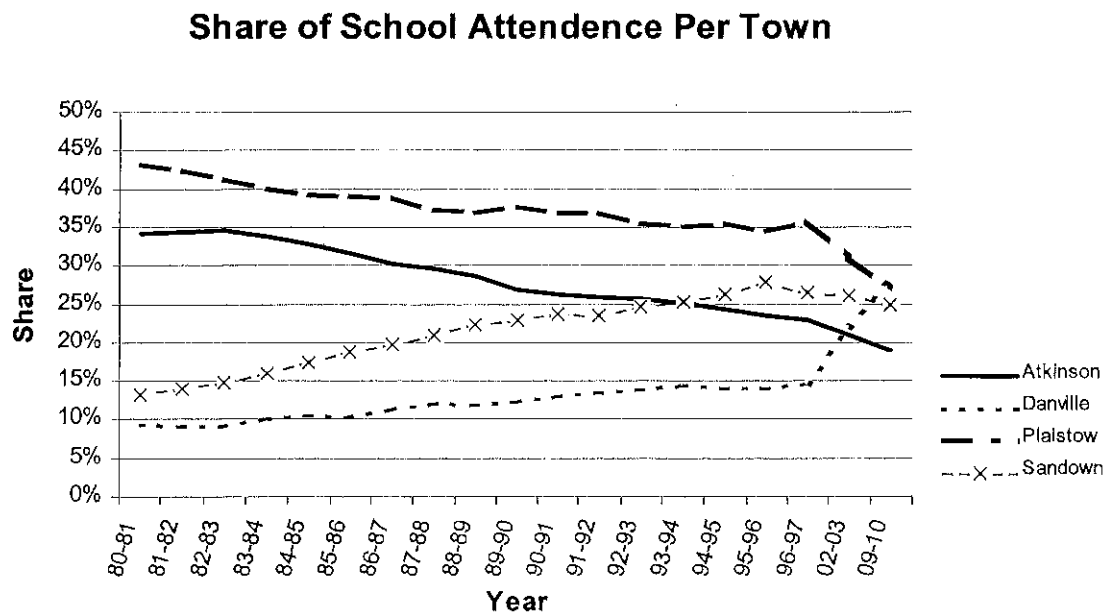
Town	Year																			
	79-80	80-81	81-82	82-83	83-84	84-85	85-86	86-87	87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97	09-10	
Atkinson	239	226	210	208	201	196	189	187	184	166	156	155	153	155	153	148	144	144	177	
Danville	225	206	194	174	189	180	157	173	171	162	162	157	159	166	173	165	165	166	348	
Plaistow	231	224	215	199	195	192	187	170	165	161	155	155	158	158	159	161	160	169	175	
Sandow	192	186	187	179	186	201	197	193	190	186	184	179	178	194	199	203	213	207	193	

Percent Change in Student Enrollment per Town by Year

Town	Year																
	80-81	81-82	82-83	83-84	84-85	85-86	86-87	87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97
Atkinson	-5%	-7%	-1%	-3%	-3%	-4%	-1%	-2%	-10%	-6%	-1%	-1%	1%	-1%	-3%	-2%	0%
Danville	-8%	-6%	-10%	8%	-4%	-13%	10%	-1%	-5%	0%	-3%	2%	4%	4%	-4%	0%	1%
Plaistow	-3%	-4%	-7%	-2%	-2%	-2%	-9%	-3%	-8%	3%	0%	2%	0%	1%	2%	-1%	8%
Sandow	-3%	0%	-4%	4%	8%	-2%	-2%	-1%	-2%	-1%	-2%	-1%	9%	3%	2%	5%	-3%

Share of Town School Enrollment per Town (see figure P-5)

Town	Year																		
	80-81	81-82	82-83	83-84	84-85	85-86	86-87	87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97	02-03	09-10
Atkinson	34%	34%	35%	34%	33%	32%	30%	30%	29%	27%	26%	26%	26%	25%	24%	23%	23%	21%	19%
Danville	9%	9%	9%	10%	10%	10%	11%	12%	12%	12%	13%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	15%	22%	28%
Plaistow	43%	43%	41%	40%	39%	39%	39%	37%	37%	38%	37%	37%	36%	35%	36%	35%	36%	31%	27%
Sandow	13%	14%	15%	16%	17%	19%	20%	21%	22%	23%	24%	24%	25%	25%	26%	28%	27%	26%	25%

Figure P-3.**Figure P-4**

Recommendations:

1. Upon the completion of the 2000 Census the information in this section should be updated.
2. This information must be monitored carefully in terms of impacts of growth.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

HOUSING ELEMENT

Overview

Atkinson's population has grown at a significant rate over the last three decades, with an average annual population increase from 1970-1980 of 6.7% compared to 2.2% for the state, 2.3% for the region and 5.7% for the Timberlane Regional School District¹. For the period 1980-1990 this change was 1.7%, 1.9% and 4.1% respectively (see Table H-1).

This population increase has brought with it a large increase in housing units. Over this period, Atkinson's housing has grown 25.9%, shown in table H-2², which is below the regional, state and school district averages (79.1%, 84.6%, and 72.6% respectively). In 1996, the Office of State Planning estimated that Atkinson will continue to grow at a rate of approximately 0.67% annually between 1990 and 2000, while the state and the Timberlane School District will grow at annual rates of 2.9% and 1.9% respectively. Based on growth and development activity between 1990 and today (1998), we believe this estimate to be low. This growth in population and housing suggests Atkinson is growing faster than predicted by the state.

Table H-2 Housing Units

TOWN/ AREA	1980	1990	Annual Average % Change
<i>ATKINSON</i>	1,428	1,798	2.3%
Danville	439	960	8.1%
Sandown	736	1,433	6.9%
Plaistow	1,827	2,304	2.3%

Source: U.S. Census, NHHFA, and NH Office of State Planning

In looking at housing growth, Atkinson must be evaluated based on its ability to accommodate the projected demand that will be placed on the community. By the year 2000, the Office of State Planning projects Atkinson's population to reach 5547. By extrapolating the state projections and assuming that the 1990 occupancy rate (2.75 persons per unit) will remain constant, or decrease slightly. Given the current surge of growth the more likely projection for year 2000 population is closer to 5,900 persons, requiring approximately 325 new units, or a 17.2% increase.

Table H-1 Population

TOWN/ AREA	1980	1990	Average Annual % Change
<i>ATKINSON</i>	4,397	5,188	1.7%
Brentwood	2,004	2,590	2.6%
Danville	1,318	2,534	6.8%
East Kingston	1,135	1,352	1.8%
Epping	3,460	5,162	4.1%
Exeter	11,024	12,481	1.2%
Fremont	1,333	2,576	6.8%
Greenland	2,129	2,768	2.7%
Hampstead	3,785	6,732	5.9%
Hampton	10,493	12,278	1.6%
Hampton Falls	1,372	1,503	0.9%
Kensington	1,322	1,631	2.1%
Kingston	4,111	5,591	3.1%
New Castle	936	840	-1.1%
Newfields	817	888	0.8%
Newington	716	990	3.3%
Newton	3,068	3,473	1.2%
North Hampton	3,425	3,637	0.6%
Plaistow	5,609	7,316	2.7%
Portsmouth	26,254	25,925	-0.1%
Rye	4,083	4,508	1.0%
Salem	20,142	24,124	1.8%
Sandown	741	2,057	10.7%
Seabrook	3,053	5,917	6.8%
South Hampton	558	660	1.7%
Stratham	1,512	2,507	5.2%
Windham	3,008	5,664	6.5%
Timberlane School District	13,381	19,098	3.6%
State of New Hampshire	920,475	1,109,117	1.9%
<i>Source: U.S. Census</i>			

Atkinson, however, appears to have begun accommodating this projected demand of housing units. Figures obtained from Atkinson indicate that the town has added 399 housing units between 1990 and 1996, a 21.1% increase in 6 years (2.5% annually). Atkinson has exceeded the 325 new housing units projected, which also reinforces the proposition that the OSP projections are slightly lower than reality. Be that as it may, the Town of Atkinson has demonstrated that they are well within the parameters of meeting the true projected need.

Atkinson's place in the region in terms of providing housing should also be evaluated in light of interpretations provided by the Courts. The New Hampshire Courts of Law have come to suggest that towns are responsible not only for accepting a fair share of population growth and housing, but also for providing opportunities for a variety of housing types to be built. The town's performance in terms of providing housing for its residents can best be analyzed by examining the types of housing and the economic status of Atkinson residents. Table H-3 lists the number of residential units recently approved by the Planning Board.

Table H-3 Residential Developments Approved Since 1994

Project Name/Location/Date Approved	Approved Units	Constructed Units
Brushwood Estates-Jericho Road-4/19/96	12, 4 BR SFD	7 Completed
Butler Estates-Providence Hill Road-8/16/95	12, 4 BR SFD	9 Completed
The Commons-Westside Drive-1/19/94	25, 4 BR SFD	24 Completed
Carriage Chase Estates-Little Rob Rd.-1/10/96	21, 16-4 BR/5-3BR L/M SFD	0
Birdsall/Khalkhali-Maple Ave.-11/20/96	3 SFD	2 Completed
Settler's Ridge-Pope Road-No Date Avail.	25-4 BR-26 Senior-1 Group home-48 2 BR Condominium	Under Const.
Rockwell-East Road-No Date Avail.	5-4 BR SFD	Under Const.
Fieldstone Village-Fieldstone Lane-1/14/98	24 SFD	0
Emerson Estates-Murray Drive-2/25/98	7 SFD	0
Powers Builders-Salem Road- Not Final	2 SFD	0
Mill Stream Crossing-Westside Drive-1/14/98	19-4 BR, 5-2 BR L/M SFD	0
Child's-Jasimine Drive-11/22/97	3 SFD	0
Atkinson Woods-Lakeside Drive-10/18/95	56-2 BR/12 ARE L/M	2 Completed
Centerview Hollow-Meditation Lane-7/2/97	52-2BR/11 ARE L/M	0

Housing Types

Atkinson's zoning ordinance provides for a range of housing types. Table H-4 illustrates Atkinson's housing stock relative to the Timberlane School District and the state. Atkinson provides a greater percentage of single-family homes than the state and a higher percentage of single-family homes than the other towns in the towns in the Timberlane School District. Furthermore, Atkinson also provides for a higher percentage of multi-family units than does Sandown and Danville. This is as much a function of the developer's and landowner's personal choice, as it is a result of market conditions.

Table H-4 Area Housing Stock

Housing Type	Atkinson	Danville	Sandown	Plaistow	State
Single Family (detached)	1653 (80.7%)	712 (61.6%)	1356 (86%)	1605 (67.1%)	311,036 (62.5%)
Multi-family & Condominiums	383 (18.7%)	58 (5.5%)	119 (7.6%)	707 (29.5%)	142,951 (28.7%)
Mobile/Modular Homes	13 (0.6%)	294 (27.6%)	101 (6.4%)	81 (3.4%)	43,301 (8.7%)
Total	2049	1064	1576	2393	497,288

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Source: NH Office of State Planning, 1990.

Although Atkinson was the subject of an exclusionary zoning decision, significant changes have taken place to present an increase in variable housing types. Upholding the master's ruling regarding the changes subsequent to the initial challenge that satisfied the requirements of the Constitution, the New Hampshire Supreme Court stated:

"The town of Atkinson adopted a zoning ordinance which a master found to be unconstitutional. Subsequent to that finding, the town amended its ordinance. The same master reviewed the amendment and found that it was not unconstitutional as amended."

Soares v. Town of Atkinson, 129 N.H. 313 (N.H. 1987).

These changes were recommended in the 1985 update to the Master Plan, by William Hoffman, and include the incentive program followed currently. Between 1980 and 1990, the growth rate for single family, multi-family, and mobile homes

in Atkinson was 27.3% and 57.0%, respectively.³ These rates were much greater than those for the state which were 1.8% and 23.9% respectively. The table above shows that Atkinson is providing more than its fair share of multi-family units relative to the other towns in the area, especially considering the rate of that growth. Additionally, it is believed that there are a number of single-family homes that have been converted to multi-family units without appropriate permits or approvals. Although these units are sometimes found during property valuations, not all are accounted for in the above statistical analysis. Furthermore, the town simply does not have the fiscal or personnel resources to police this situation. Therefore, the multi-family unit count, as presented above, is likely to be significantly lower than reality.

Atkinson shows a positive approach toward providing for a variety of types of housing by supporting 18.7% of its 1990 residents in multi-family units and 0.6% of its 1990 residents in mobile/modular home housing. In this regard, Atkinson's multi-family housing is actively approaching the level of the state (28.7%). In providing opportunities for a variety of housing types, Atkinson has succeeded in the rapid implementation of accepting its fair share of the regional need (see Table H-4).

Economic Status

One test to evaluate whether Atkinson's current land use controls are actually increasing housing values is to examine the current housing values for owner-occupied housing and the rental costs of renter-occupied housing. From Table H-5, it is clear that housing costs have increased in Atkinson. However, during the 1980's housing costs increased dramatically throughout the region. Atkinson's increase in housing costs of 173% over that 10 year period exceeds the state average of 104.3%. Although Atkinson's 1990 median value of \$177,900 is higher than those of Sandown and Plaistow which have 1990 median values of \$143,200 and \$149,900 the growth in percentage compared to Danville is lower; Danville's growth in median value for the same 10 year period was 207%.⁴

³Source: Atkinson Master Plan, 1998, NH Office of State Planning, and 1990 Census.

⁴Source: Danville Master Plan, 1997, Tables 9 and 11, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Population and Housing Characteristics, Bureau of the Census.

Table H-5 Median Housing Values and Rents

	1980	1990
Median Housing Value	\$65,200	\$177,900
Median Rent Per Month	\$199	\$416

Source: Atkinson Master Plan (1998) and 1990 Census

During that same 10 year period, rents in Atkinson went up 110.7% to reach \$416/month. This is lower than rents in Danville at \$454 per month and much lower than rents in Sandown and Plaistow which average \$652 and \$646 per month respectively.⁵

It should also be noted that the value of housing in Atkinson fell in the early 1990s as did the values of houses in the region as a whole. However, there is no reason to believe that the housing values in Atkinson fell disproportionately to those of the surrounding towns. Therefore, a comparison of the 1990 figures still provides an adequate picture of Atkinson's housing values compared to the surrounding towns. Atkinson residents have higher than average median family incomes than the other three towns in the Timberlane School District. Atkinson's median family income in 1990 was \$62,473 compared to \$46,875 in Danville, \$50,335 in Sandown, and \$45,711 in Plaistow.⁶

Overall, Atkinson performs well in providing a broad cross-section of housing types within its town limits.

⁵Source: Tables 9 and 11, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Population and Housing Characteristics, Bureau of the Census.

⁶Source: 1980/1990 STF3A, U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Affordable Housing Needs

RSA 674:2 requires that the housing chapter of all town Master Plan's include a discussion of affordable housing based on the regional housing needs assessment performed by the regional planning committee. This section is intended to satisfy that requirement.

In 1989, the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) prepared a Regional Housing Needs Assessment as a component of its regional master plan in accordance with RSA 36:47 which mandates that all regional planning commissions prepare a regional housing needs assessment which "...shall include an assessment of the regional need for housing for persons and families of all levels of income". In 1993, the RPC updated this Regional Housing Needs Assessment to include data from the 1990 US census. It is this 1993 RPC Housing Needs Assessment that forms the basis of the section.

The purpose of the RPC Needs Assessment, in addition to complying with State Law, is to quantify the size and distribution of the need for affordable housing in the region, and to provide communities with the information needed for their own affordable housing needs assessments. The RPC assessment includes a calculation of each town's "fair share" of the region's affordable housing needs. However, the assessment clearly states that this information is meant to be used only as a general indicator of the distribution of housing needs in the region, not as a prescription of units needed in a particular town.

The RPC Regional Housing Needs Assessment is developed using the following four steps:

1. Quantify need for affordable housing: Called "indigenous" housing; This is defined as the number of renter households earning less than 80% of the region's median income who spend more than 30% of their gross income on rent. In 1989, Rockingham County's median family income was \$46,942⁷. Therefore, 80% of that number would be \$37,554.
2. Identify "Excess Need": Excess need occurs when the number of units identified for a specific town as indigenous need exceeds the community's proportionate share of that need based on existing housing units.
3. Distribute "Excess Need": A calculation is done using the following five factors is combined with the town's indigenous need to determine a town's fair share distribution of affordable housing:

⁷ Source: 1990 STF3A, U.S. Bureau of the Census.

- Employment In Community - Jobs create a demand for housing
 - Equalized Assessed Value - This is a measure of a town's ability to absorb low valued housing without undue impact on the tax rate.
 - Vacant Developable Land - This is a measure of the town's physical limitations to develop affordable housing based on the land area available for development.
 - Income - This is a measure of a town's balance, or imbalance, of income groups.
 - Housing Units - Larger communities can be expected to absorb larger numbers of new affordable housing units.
4. Adjust For Housing Credits: The final step is to subtract "credits" from the fair share allocation for communities in which affordable housing units have been added since the 1990 US census. Credits include home building permits, units rehabilitated for rent assisted housing, and units rehabilitated under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Between 1990 and 1993 (the year the Regional Housing Needs Assessment was conducted), Atkinson did not qualify for such credit.

The following table shows the percentage of owner and renter households in Atkinson which spend more than 30% of their household income on gross rent or monthly home-owner costs:

**Table H-6 Percentage of Households at Various Incomes
Spending in Excess of
30% for Rent or Owner Costs**

Income Level	Percent Paying in Excess of 30% of Income on Rent/Ownership Costs	
	Renter	Owner
Less Than \$10,000	75%	100%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	63%	24%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	.7%	39%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	0%	32%
\$50,000 and above	0%	17%

Source: 1990 STF3A U.S. Bureau of the Census

The following table documents the results of the 1993 RPC Fair Share Housing Needs Assessment:

Table H-7 1993 Fair Share Housing Needs Apportionment Prepared by the Rockingham Planning Commission per RSA 36:47

Community	Indigenous Housing Need	Year Round Occupied Dwelling Units	Housing Need if Equal Distribution	Excess Need	Fair Share Factor Average**	Excess Units Allocated	Fair Share	Credits	Total Fair Share	Fair Share as % of 1990 Housing Units
Atkinson	62	1774	159	-	0.037	47	109	0	109	6.2%
Brentwood	28	755	68	-	0.032	40	68	1	67	8.9%
Danville	24	895	80	-	0.027	35	59	1	58	6.5
E. Kingston	15	463	42	-	0.024	30	45	6	39	8.5%
Epping	114	1846	166	-	0.043	55	169	5	164	8.9%
Exeter	615	4975	447	168	-	0	447	0	447	9.0%
Fremont	36	865	78	-	0.031	40	76	4	72	8.3%
Greenland	85	1010	91	-	0.041	52	137	0	137	13.6%
Hampstead	107	359	212	-	0.041	53	160	3	157	6.6%
Hampton	621	5046	453	168	-	0	453	0	453	9.0%
Hmpt Falls	6	53	48	-	0.035	45	51	0	51	9.6%
Kensington	13	559	50	-	0.028	35	48	0	48	8.7%
Kingston	65	1911	172	-	0.042	54	119	1	118	6.2%
Newcastle	25	345	31	-	0.031	40	65	0	65	18.8%
Newfields	11	312	28	-	0.028	36	47	0	47	15.2%
Newington	23	296	27	-	0.087	111	134	0	134	45.4%
Newton	81	1198	108	-	0.027	34	115	0	115	9.6%
N. Hampton	74	1387	125	-	0.041	52	126	0	126	9.1%
Plaistow	220	2601	234	-	0.052	66	286	0	286	11.0%
Portsmouth	1771	10329	928	843	-	0	928	52	876	8.5%
Rye	143	1905	171	-	0.041	53	196	0	196	10.3%
Salem	652	9185	825	-	0.157	201	853	0	853	9.3%
Sandown	60	1304	117	-	0.032	41	101	2	99	7.6%
Seabrook	355	2808	252	103	-	0	252	10	242	8.6%
S. Hampton	2	257	23	-	0.025	31	33	0	33	13.0%S
Stratham	70	1812	163	-	0.044	56	126	18	108	6.0%
Windham	72	2830	254	-	0.057	73	145	0	145	5.1%
Total (Average)	5350	59560	5350	1282	1.000	1282	5350	103	5247	8.8%

**The "fair share factor average" includes relative measures for five factors: employment, equalized assessed valuation, vacant developable land, median income, and total housing units valuation.

NOTE: This Housing Needs Apportionment is intended for use as part of an overall Regional Housing Needs Assessment as required by RSA 36:47. The Rockingham Planning Commission does not support the use of this table to identify specific housing needs units to individual communities due to the inherent imprecision of any such apportionment method. It should be used only as a general indicator of housing needs within a region and as a reference in the preparation of local housing needs analysis.

Source: Rockingham Planning Commission Regional Housing Needs Assessment, table H, page 3-17.

The results of the RPC Fair Share Assessment shows that Atkinson is one of many communities in the region with additional needs. The data shows that Atkinson would need to add 109 additional units to meet its fair share assessment.

This results appears to be inconsistent with the housing and income demographics which indicate that Atkinson is presently providing more than its share of existing lower cost housing in the region. Atkinson's high percentage of multi-family dwellings and low rental costs compared to the region attest to this. This does not mean, however, that there is no additional need for affordable housing in Atkinson. As stated earlier, Atkinson does have a relatively small percentage of manufactured dwellings which tend to provide affordable housing. The Atkinson Planning Board should continue to consider the affordable housing needs of the region when reviewing development requests.

EFFECT OF ZONING, THE PLANNING BOARD AND THE INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Section 610 of the Atkinson Zoning Ordinance lays out the Low-Moderate Income Housing Accommodation Incentive System. Upon review of the Town Reports the Town's attitude and this system has initiated developments resulting in a number of affordable housing units. When the 2000 Census is released, the needs assessment should be completed again to quantify the true effect. However, upon review of the Town Reports the following indicates strong advancements by Atkinson to meet the diverse needs of its citizens.

1991 Annual Report

- The Planning Board Report states that although activity generally was low, an affordable housing project was presented and approved by the Board.
- Furthermore, the Planning Board presented numerous articles to further assist in the incentive program, these amendments clarified confusing portions of the ordinance, and simplified the process to insure that such efforts within the Town of Atkinson continue.

1992 Annual Report

- The Planning Board Report stated: "...two affordable projects before the town...are close to approval."
- More zoning changes were proposed to clarify and encourage the affordable housing incentive program.

1993 Annual Report

- The projects started in 1992 were approved and were started.

1994 Annual Report

- There is no Planning Board Report in the 1994 Annual Report.

1995 Annual Report

- There was a significant increase in activity reported with the following affordable units approved as part of the Planning Board's activities:
 - Dearborn Estates - 3 of 11 units set aside for low/moderate use.
 - Carriage Chase Estates - 21 homes with 5 units set aside for low/moderate use.
 - The Woodlands - 56 units with 12 units set aside for low/moderate use.

1996 Annual Report

- There were only 12 lots as part of 4 subdivisions (5, 3, 2, and 2) approved during 1996. None of these approvals contained any low/moderate income units.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are designed to continue Atkinson's good position of providing needed housing, promoting community goals, improving local housing controls, and ensuring compliance with relevant state and federal legislation. Every effort should be made to ensure that Atkinson continues to provide a range of housing opportunities for its citizens.

1. Atkinson should continue to monitor the incentive program for any appropriate changes. However, overall Atkinson seems to be making great strides in providing a diverse housing offering.
2. Consideration should be given to the establishment of an Elderly Housing Authority to review the adequacy of existing elderly housing, evaluate the [future] need for additional elderly housing, extended care facilities and investigate financing options for the development of these type of facilities.

TRANSPORTATION

Introduction

Understanding Atkinson's transportation system requires an awareness of its residents and its road infrastructure. Atkinson is predominantly a residential community in which its residents commute out of town for employment. Route 93 to the west in Salem/Windham and Route 495 in Haverhill, MA are the two most relied upon highway systems for Atkinson residents. Access to these highways are primarily via Routes 111 and 121, respectively. Increasing congestion on these highways can be attributed not only to the commuting patterns of Atkinson's residents, but also to the travel patterns of motorists from outside Atkinson. Route 111, in particular, has experienced an increased level of congestion caused by its use as an east/west corridor.

The reliance of Atkinson's residents on the automobile for full-length (home to work) commuting is easily understood. Mass transit service adequate for commuting purposes is not available in Atkinson. While the NHDOT provides three park and ride lots (which were constructed to facilitate carpooling) within a short distance of Atkinson in Windham, Londonderry and Plaistow, there is minimal use of these lots by Atkinson residents. Increased usage of the existing park and ride lots would have little or no effect on the transportation system in Atkinson, as resident's would still be reliant on their automobiles to get to these lots.

From a regional perspective, Atkinson suffers the pitfalls of being a community with no direct interstate access, no formal local park and ride lots, and no mass transit system.

Atkinson's geographic location within a rapidly growing region, coupled with generous accessibility to streets and highways have been the most significant element in shaping today's community patterns. They have not only been responsible for the rapid growth, but they also have been responsible for the location and size of developments that have taken place in the community. Inasmuch as they are a prime determination in development patterns in a community, they must be considered as part of the Master Planning effort.

Notwithstanding the transportation function our roads serve, they also establish the setting from which we view the Town. The views from the roads in Town, views of scenic vistas, pronounced landscapes as well as the places people work and live form the visual impressions of the community.

The predominant southerly development pressures in Atkinson are a direct result of the highway accessibility to the south and nearby employment centers in Massachusetts. Salem Road, Broadway and Route 121 which link the southern portion of the community to Haverhill contribute to the development patterns of Atkinson.

While the primary function of our transportation system is to facilitate the movement of people, goods and services into, out-of and throughout town, it is also the framework upon which Atkinson is built. The existing roads not only provide direct access to private properties, but also provide opportunities for connection to new roads.

Admittedly, Atkinson's dominant traffic patterns reveal a strong north/south orientation which is heavily reliant on Main Street, Maple Avenue, East Road, Providence Hill and North Broadway.

Street and Highway Classifications

In Atkinson, there is merit to evaluating the local functions of highways including all Class V highways. In addition to Routes 111 and 121, the town has within its jurisdictional responsibilities major collector highways consisting of the following:

Maple Avenue and East Road as the primary north/south connectors.

Westside Drive, Academy Avenue, Sawyer Avenue and Providence Hill Road as the primary east/west connectors.

Although never intended or designed for such use, other roads are evolving into collector roads, including Bryant Woods, Indian Ridge, Robie Lane, Sawmill Road, and Line Brook Road.

In addition to the major collectors, there are primary service roads which consist of Meditation Lane, Salem Road and Island Pond Road. The remainder of the road network can be identified as service roads catering mostly to abutting properties.

Town Responsibilities

The Town of Atkinson is responsible for approximately 78% of the total road mileage within its bounds. While the initial construction of new roads within the community is the primary responsibility of developers, it is the community's responsibility to make major improvements on the town road network and maintain

the same. As the adjacent table indicates, the Town of Atkinson has approximately 154 persons per linear mile of town road responsibility. Comparatively, Salem has 179 persons per linear mile. However, consideration must be given to the fact that 26,475 people live in Salem compared to Atkinson's 5,595 residents.

The purpose of providing the above statistics is not meant to criticize or suggest regulatory changes are needed in Atkinson, but rather to quantify other communities density/road maintenance relationships within the region. Assuredly, if the Planning Board makes the determination that the zoning ordinance or subdivision regulations are having the effect of creating excessive road construction, corrective amendments could be made thereto.

In exercising the responsibility for road maintenance, the Town of Atkinson has provided the minimum level of maintenance necessary to sustain the heavy traffic pattern on local streets. In areas where roads were recently improved, the standards are quite high, while older roads, such as Maple Avenue, West Side Drive, portions of Main Street, Providence Hill Road and Sawyer Avenue, are roads of long standing in the community. Some of these roads go through land too wet for road construction, resulting in maintenance difficulty. Yet, in most instances, Atkinson has maintained an adequate and sound street and highway network which, with some minor improvements, will continue to serve the community well.

The local responsibility of streets and highways must be viewed in light of not only present but future demands, and there are instances where highway improvements will be recommended and should be receiving consideration as part of the continued operating budget for improvements and capital reconstruction to assure safer highways, particularly on collector streets.

COMPARATIVE ROAD MILEAGE AND POPULATION: ATKINSON AND AREA TOWNS

Town	Class I	Class II	Class IV	Class V	Class VI	Total	Town Roads*	1990 Population	Persons per Road Mile
ATKINSON	0	9.43	0	36.262	.510	46.202	36.262	5,595	154
Danville	0	6.711	0	20.504	5.336	32.551	20.504	2,534	124
Hampstead	0	15.344	0	46.758	2.033	64.135	46.758	7,128	152
Plaistow	2.045	14.702	0	30.490	.372	30.490	59.42	7,504	126
Salem	9.372	7.530	96.299	51.492	2.013	166.666	147.791	26,475	179
Sandown	0	6.811	0	36.853	5.828	49.492	36.853	4,060	110

State Classification of Highways:

- Class I: Highways on the primary State highway system, excluding all portions of such highways within the compact sections of towns and cities of 7,500 inhabitants and over. The State assumes full control and pays cost of construction, reconstruction and maintenance of its sections; the portions in compact areas controlled by the towns and cities under Class IV highways.
- Class II: Highways on the secondary State highway system, excluding all portions of such highways within the compact sections of towns and cities of 7,500 inhabitants and over. All sections improved to the satisfaction of the Commissioner are maintained and reconstructed by the State. All unimproved sections, where no state and local funds have been expended, must be maintained by the town or city in which they are located until improved to the satisfaction of the Commissioner.
- Class III: Recreational roads which consist of all roads leading to, and within, State Reservation designated by the Legislature. The State Highway Department maintains full control of reconstruction and maintenance of such roads.
- Class IV: Town and city streets which consist of all highways within the compact sections of towns and cities of 7,500 inhabitants and over. Extensions of Class I and II highways through these areas are included in this classification.
- Class V: Rural highways which consist of all other traveled highways which the town or city has the duty to regularly maintain.
- Class VI: Unmaintained highways including all other public ways, including highways discontinued as open highways, highways closed subject to gates and bars, and highways not publicly maintained in suitable condition for travel for five years or more.

* Town Road total does not include Class VI Highways

Sources: New Hampshire Department of Transportation
1994 NH Office of State Planning

Traffic Counts

The following counts of traffic in Atkinson, conducted by the New Hampshire Department of Public Works and Highways, were for annual average daily traffic (AADT) and do not reflect peak hour or peak days in Atkinson's traffic pattern.

The count in Atkinson on Route 121 at the Plaistow town line has increased from 6,200 in 1977 to 10,000 in 1995.

Traffic counts at the Hampstead town line on Route 121 reveal growth considerably higher than at the Plaistow town line. In 1978, 2,800 cars were counted, while in 1995, the number rose to 7,100 vehicles, translating into an annual rate of increase of 5.6%.

In comparison, on East Road the traffic has increased from 2,200 vehicles per day in 1978 at the Plaistow town line to 4,600 in 1994, an annual increase of 4.7%.

Atkinson's growth and traffic volumes indicate that the traffic in Atkinson is not all locally generated and is, at least partially the result of increased through traffic within the community.

Traffic Projections:

Projecting future traffic trends relies on population and employment projections, assumes that traffic patterns remain consistent and that vehicle mile trips will continue increasing at historical rates. It should be obvious that projecting future traffic is anything but an exact science. Factors influencing peoples travel patterns include a plethora of factors including, but not limited to; congestion levels, automobile alternatives, fuel prices, and employment options and locations.

Notwithstanding these factors, reasonable projections can be made for the Town of Atkinson, provided that the basis of the projections are clearly understood. For the purpose of this Master Plan, population and employment opportunities will be the foundation of the projections.

POPULATION HISTORY AND PROJECTIONS

TOWN	1970	1980	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE 1990-
ATKINSON	2,291	4,397	5,188	5,272	5,788	6,318	6,806	7,304	1.38%
Danville	924	1,318	2,534	2,663	3,007	3,369	3,712	4,070	1.91%
Hampstead	2,401	3,785	6,732	7,044	7,830	8,646	9,407	10,191	1.67%
Plaistow	4,212	5,609	7,316	7,497	8,060	8,628	9,141	9,656	1.12%
Salem	20,142	24,142	25,746	25,918	27,410	28,887	30,205	31,510	0.81%
Sandown	741	2,057	4,060	4,272	4,940	5,661	6,356	7,095	2.26%

The population history and projections contained in the table above project an annual growth rate of 1.34% between 1990 and 2015 for Atkinson and the five surrounding towns listed. This growth rate translates into an additional 19,380 residents by the year 2015. The fastest growth rates of the communities in the region include Hampstead and Windham; the largest population increases are projected to occur in Salem, Windham and Hampstead, respectively.

AREA EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

Town	1980	1990	Average annual growth rate 1980-90
ATKINSON	238	458	6.8%
Danville	58	115	7.1%
Hampstead	512	1,148	8.4%
Plaistow	2,090	3,218	4.4%
Salem	8,150	14,755	6.1%
Sandown	32	104	12.5%

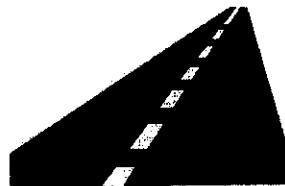
The table above presents data from the New Hampshire Department of Employment Security on employment for Atkinson and surrounding towns for the period 1980 to 1990. According to these estimates, employment opportunities in these towns increased by approximately 40% over the last decade. The majority of the employment growth was concentrated in the urbanized towns of Salem, Plaistow and Windham, most noticeably in Salem.

The interrelationship between population growth, employment patterns and growth ultimately affect transportation patterns and vehicle miles driven. Nationwide, vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled have increased at rates far greater than either population or housing growth. The relatively low cost of vehicles and fuel coupled with highly accessible road networks have fostered this trend. A review of the population and employment projections provided herein clearly indicates that continued growth is inevitable. Perhaps the most telling conclusion that can be drawn from these projections is that relatively rapid growth is occurring in the communities surrounding Atkinson. While this is not surprising, it does reinforce assumptions made elsewhere in this Master Plan.

Street Construction Program

While the Road Agent has prepared a ten-year road reconstruction plan, the Town recognizes the necessity to increase its road reconstruction planning effort. Future planning efforts should be considerate of the present and future travel patterns of Atkinson's residents and non-residents alike. Road maintenance and reconstruction projects undertaken by the Town should likewise be considerate of present and projected levels of traffic, in order that roads are reconstructed or maintained to an appropriate standard.

By improving these situations the town, through its road agent and the Board of Selectmen, may apply for state participation in any of these improvements. This is suggested because of the availability of state funds on a matching basis, thereby stretching local dollars and creating a safer and better road network in the town.



Along with these improvements, it is suggested that the town seek redesignation of Providence Hill Road and Sawyer Avenue in order to make them part of the state's secondary highway system and/or eligible for Federal Aid. This is urged because of the regional traffic resulting from Route 121 traffic traveling to the Island Pond Road section in the Town of Salem.

Land Use and Transportation

One of the most compelling components in land use planning of late is the study and understanding of the relationship between land use planning and transportation planning. In the recent past these two disciplines have become less and less connected despite the great impact each has upon the other. With the passage of the federal transportation authorization legislation of 1991 the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), and the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) of 1990 the land use/transportation planning link has become a practical means for curbing the adverse affects of urban sprawl and over-reliance upon single-occupant automobiles that have become trademarks of American society.

Recent interest in the impacts of these two planning disciplines upon one another has resulted in a number of policies that can be adopted by municipalities to attempt to improve air quality and reduce unnecessary trips by automobiles within a community. A number of these policies are included here for the potential use by the Town of Atkinson in addressing these concerns.

- A. The Town should explore the feasibility of the construction of sidewalks in the areas near schools which are not serviced by buses, as well as other areas which may be appropriate.
- B. Adopt town level regulations for subdivision and site plan review that encourage pedestrian and bicycle traffic. If amenities for this kind of transportation are provided in town, individuals are given alternatives to automobile trips.
- C. Encourage development design that incorporates amenities for public transportation in the development regulations that would serve to make public transit service an alternative to the automobile.
- D. The Town should take a pro-active approach in securing federal funding for transportation improvements. Federal funds are available to communities for projects ranging from intersection improvements to bicycle and pedestrian amenities.
- E. The Town should review its municipal procedures to insure that adequate attention is given to the siting of driveways for residential and commercial activities to insure the future integrity of heavily traveled transportation corridors.

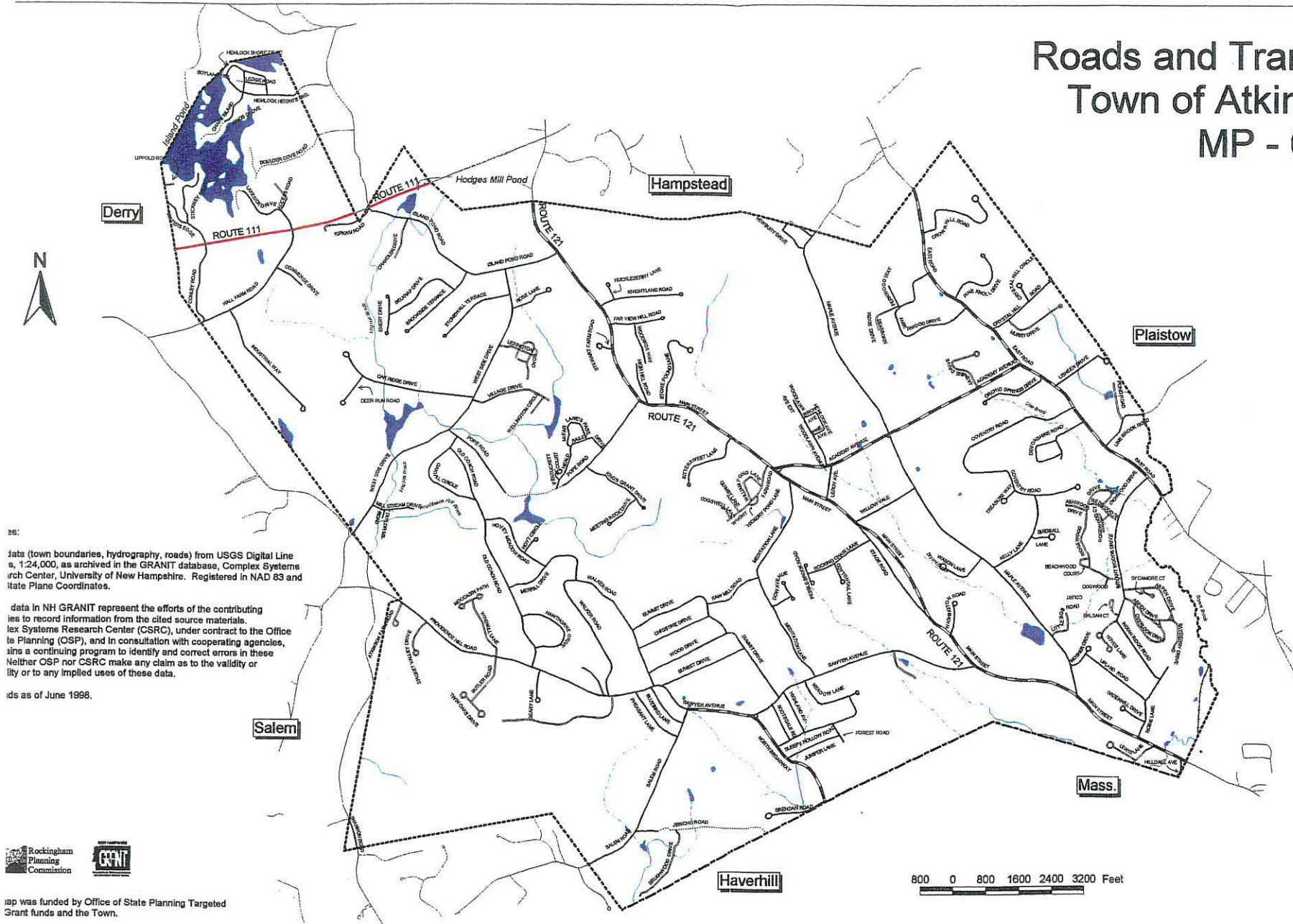
Recommendations:

1. The Planning Board, in cooperation with the Board of Selectmen, Road Agent and Highway Safety Committee should develop a comprehensive ten-year road reconstruction plan, and update the CIP to incorporate the forecasted expenditures.
2. The Planning Board, in cooperation with the Board of Selectmen, should take a more pro-active role in resolving regional traffic problems such as the traffic congestion problem along Route 125 in Haverhill, MA.
3. The Planning Board in cooperation with the Board of Selectmen, Road Agent and Highway Safety Committee should consider the construction of sidewalks in the areas near schools which are not serviced by buses, as well as other areas which are may be appropriate, and update the CIP to incorporate these forecasted expenditures.
4. Considering the different uses of various roads, street construction specifications reflecting these usages should be considered.
5. Road construction standards should be amended based upon American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) recommendations.
6. Road construction standards should be considerate of long-term maintenance operations and costs.
7. The Planning Board should strive to require adherence to the Town's road construction standards.
8. Consider providing (locally or regionally funded) adequate transportation opportunities for Atkinson's senior citizens.
9. Provide a municipal parking lot which can be used for bus riders and carpoolers at the Community Center.
10. Provide bus stops at the Community Center and elsewhere, if appropriate.
11. The Planning Board should study the long-term effect that cul-de-sac developments are having on Atkinson's traffic patterns.

12. The Road Standards should be amended to encourage road layouts which facilitate several points of access while not encouraging through traffic.

[illegible]

Roads and Transportation Town of Atkinson, NH MP - 6

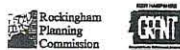


BS:

data (town boundaries, hydrography, roads) from USGS Digital Line 1:24,000, as archived in the GRANIT database, Complex Systems Research Center, University of New Hampshire. Registered in NAD 83 and State Plane Coordinates.

data in NH GRANIT represent the efforts of the contributing agencies to record information from the cited source materials. Complex Systems Research Center (CSRC), under contract to the Office of State Planning (OSP), and in consultation with cooperating agencies, maintains a continuing program to identify and correct errors in these data. Neither OSP nor CSRC make any claim as to the validity or reliability of these data.

as of June 1998.



map was funded by Office of State Planning Targeted Grant funds and the Town.

Prepared by the
Rockingham Planning Commission
February 10, 1998 DRA

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AND BUDGET **AS AN IMPLEMENTATION TOOL**

Introduction

NHRSA §674:5 enables the Planning Board to prepare a CIP as follows:

In a municipality where the planning board has adopted a master plan, the local legislative body may authorize the planning board to prepare and amend a recommended program of municipal capital improvement projects projected over a period of at least six years. The capital improvements program may encompass major projects being currently undertaken or future projects to be undertaken with federal, state, county and other public funds. The sole purpose and effect of the capital improvements program shall be to aid the mayor and the budget committee in their consideration of the annual budget.

Atkinson's Capital Improvement Program was adopted by the Planning Board as an integral component of the 1990 Master Plan.

The CIP is a comprehensive schedule of all major Town improvements to be made within a minimum of six years. When adopted and fully utilized, the CIP serves to ensure that facilities are improved in accordance with the needs and within the financial capabilities of the Town. The scheduling of capital expenditures in a rational planning and budgeting process is an important management tool for use in allocating tax dollars.

The adoption and implementation of a CIP offers many advantages:

1. **Stabilizes year to year variations in capital outlays.** By examining projected operating expenditures and revenues over the six-year period, available funding can be evaluated and capital projects prioritized and scheduled to temper tax impacts.
2. **Substantiates the need for development impact fees.** The costs of providing municipal services and infrastructure to new developments which would otherwise not have required Town expenditures can be reasonably passed on to developers as development impact fees.

3. **Makes pre-emptive acquisitions more feasible and defensible.** Anticipating and scheduling land purchases for Municipal use, recreation, preservation, etc. will help ensure that opportunities are taken if they arise.
4. **Supports growth control and impact fee ordinances.** A current Master Plan and CIP are statutory prerequisites for these regulations.
5. **Facilitates implementation of the Master Plan.** Prioritizing and scheduling of proposed projects over time can eliminate duplication and a random approach to expenditures.
6. **Provides a total picture of Atkinson's major needs.** Large expenditures will be viewed in the context of other projects, rather than in isolated instances as the needs arise. In this way, activities of municipal departments can be coordinated and piecemeal expenditures discouraged.
7. **Establishes a rational and defensible project schedule.** Needs are evaluated and prioritized in light of anticipated revenues.
8. **Serves as a public information tool.** The CIP is prepared in a public forum and provides sound information on the Town's plans for major expenditures.

The CIP provides Atkinson with an opportunity to schedule future capital expenditures necessary to support the existing and forecasted population. At the same time the Capital Program Budget process is a means of providing input into the Budget Committee Hearings process and Town Meetings, effectively implementing the Master Plan. A Capital Improvement Program and Budget is utilized to realistically measure public expenditure needs to implement programs provided for in the Master Plan and relate them to the Town's growth, then provide for the scheduling for such improvement.

The Capital Budgeting process affords the ability to stabilize the tax rate by spacing programs and payments gradually over a period of time, thus avoiding peaks and valleys in the appropriations necessary, thus stabilizing the tax rate. It is becoming increasingly important, particularly as state and federal funding programs become less and less available to local communities, that alternate sources of funding are sought and utilized.

A CIP can assist Atkinson's measurement of capital expenditures required by proposed developments (even though in conformance with the Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision Regulations) against the Town's ability to provide means necessary

to support such new developments. It is through this process that a Planning Board may require off-site improvements in support of development rather than placing burdens of public improvements on the general public. This is especially true when the only beneficiary will be the developer who is proposing the development and those ultimately living in such development.

It is this process also that makes the Town realize that Capital expenditures necessary for new development and expansions of old ones are creating a burden on the public funding process. New developments can be reasonably assessed for their fair share of capital facility needs.

For Atkinson to provide services without unduly burdening its financial capability, the Town should use a managed growth process. State Statutes require that a community, before exercising growth management, adopt a Master Plan and a Capital Improvement Program. The CIP must not merely indicate a community's inability to provide for rapid growth, but also indicate how financial planning can meet needs arising from future community growth.

Once the Planning Board has adopted Capital Improvement Program and Capital Budget, Growth Management must be related to such a process. The Planning Board measures new and proposed development, determining its inappropriateness in a schedule of timing, or its appropriateness in keeping with the community's ability to provide services, as well as its relationship to growing physical development.

It is through these means that the Planning Board can measure the need for off-site improvements such as road and traffic safety, can assess the impact of a proposed development, and can provide for orderly development of the community and implementation of the Master Plan.

While Atkinson has demonstrated a commitment to wise land-use planning through the implementation of its Master Plans and resulting regulations, the Planning Board must continue its effort to manage its rate of growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As noted in the Introduction Chapter of this Master Plan, the recommendations made in each individual chapter have been replicated and consolidated in this chapter to assist those Town Officials responsible for the implementation of this Master Plan. The recommendations are listed under their respective chapter headings, and are consecutively numbered. It was the goal of the 1998 Master Plan Committee to develop a format for the Master Plan which would promote and ease continual updating of the document. To this end, as recommendations are implemented, or are deemed unnecessary, or as new recommendations are developed, this Chapter can be easily amended.

Goals, Objectives and Policies:

1. The Board of Selectmen, with input from the Planning Board should establish the necessary committee(s) to ensure that the recommendations made in this Master Plan are properly implemented.

Historical and Cultural Resources:

2. The resources identified in this report should be considered with the other elements in the planning process such as soils, transportation, public services, etc.
3. Modifications to the existing zoning ordinance should take into consideration the sites and areas identified by this inventory.
4. The school system should be encouraged to use the information in this Chapter to teach the history of Atkinson.
5. The survey should be updated periodically to indicate changes to buildings that have occurred. Included are such changes as remodeling, fire or demolition. Changes in surrounding environment should also be noted and mapped.

Community Facilities:

6. The Town should maintain Zoning Ordinances that will protect itself from incurring the expense of constructing public sewer or public water facilities.

7. The Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board should work cooperatively to assure that there is a committee for the on-going planning of community facilities (this function is presently served by the Building Needs Committee).
8. The Town should establish a committee to develop the Master Plan for the Town Center. Within the Town Center, provisions should ultimately be adopted to allow for community services and facilities of a specialty retail nature and civic function as well as professional services. The Town should maintain functional and design control over the District to create a community focal point that is psychologically and visually functional.

Natural Resources:

9. The Planning Board should continue to review and carefully consider resource information pertaining to soil, slope, wetlands, floodplains, and other natural resource information as part of its planning and development review.
10. The Planning Board should continue to require site specific research, analysis and mitigation of specific environmental concerns whenever a proposed development appears to impact environmentally sensitive areas.
11. The Conservation Commission should continue to review, evaluate and provide recommendations regarding all development proposals affecting the Town's natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas. They should communicate their concerns and recommendations to the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Board of Selectmen, N.H. Wetlands Council or other body as appropriate.
12. The Planning Board should consider ways to increase the amount of non-hydric open space set aside in residential development and make adjustments to Site Plan Review Regulations as appropriate.
13. The Town should support and participate in regional efforts to identify and protect open space and trail networks and wildlife corridors, including efforts by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and the Rockingham Land Trust.
14. The Conservation Commission should develop a strategy to acquire additional open space in the Town.

15. The Conservation Commission should complete the Town-wide wetlands inventory using professional consultants, if necessary.
16. Upon the completion of the Wetlands Inventory, the Planning Board should evaluate the adequacy of the regulatory buffer requirements around the wetlands identified in the Inventory.

Existing Land Use:

17. The Planning Board should encourage the updating of all maps for the Town, to include; roads, Town lands, wetlands, trails, historic sites, hydrogeology. Additionally, the Board should develop a plan to computerize all mapping on a coordinated system.
18. To protect the Town and the taxpayers, it is suggested that a tri-town committee (Atkinson, Derry, Hampstead) be established to assess the area surrounding the Island Pond, analyze the associated problems, and develop regulatory solutions to ensure future protection of this important resource.
19. The Planning Board, in conjunction with the Conservation Commission, should research ways to strengthen Atkinson's ordinances and regulations so that appropriate care is taken to preserve natural and environmental resources.
20. The Planning Board should encourage long-term planning for the location of recreation facilities.
21. The Planning Board should encourage a long-term plan for further development of the Town Trail System. All developments that potentially contain land usable as part of the town-wide trail system should be encouraged to provide adequate open space easements to allow for the interconnection of the trail system, thereby giving the residents access to the system while protecting areas for parks, recreation, and open spaces of adequate proportions.
22. The Planning Board should continue to closely monitor the development of new Town roads in order to insure the harmonious development of the community, and avoid scattered and premature development.

Future Land Use:

23. The Planning Board should carefully consider the effect of enlarging or establishing new zoning districts, and ensure that any zoning amendments are supported by this Master Plan.
24. The town should encourage, and where necessary purchase, conservation and agricultural easements, in order to preserve its agricultural heritage.
25. Atkinson should consider participating in the National Flood Insurance Program to insure that future development will not be subject to flood hazards and to protect existing development.
26. The Town (Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen) should cooperatively study the feasibility of developing a Town-wide interconnected trail system on public and private lands, where necessary.
27. The Planning Board should undertake the completion of a comprehensive build-out analysis in order to more accurately determine the acreage of undeveloped lands. The results of the build-out analysis should be evaluated by the Planning Board to determine the adequacy of Atkinson's land-use regulatory scheme.
28. The Town should take steps to acquire land on Island Pond for use as a Town Beach, to include beach front, parking area, and a pavilion for changing and rest rooms.
29. The Planning Board should consider an expansion of the impact fee ordinance that will ensure that burdens placed upon existing services and new services needed by particular developments are adequately provided by the developers who create the burden, rather than the taxpayers.
30. The Town should research and investigate the necessity of a Growth Management Plan to accommodate the potential for future growth.

Community Profile:

31. Upon the completion of the 2000 Census the information in this section should be updated.

32. This information contained in this chapter must be monitored carefully in terms of impacts of growth.

Housing:

33. Atkinson should continue to monitor the incentive program for any appropriate changes. However, overall Atkinson seems to be making great strides in providing a diverse housing offering.
34. Consideration should be given to the establishment of an Elderly Housing Authority to review the adequacy of existing elderly housing, evaluate the [future] need for additional elderly housing, extended care facilities, and investigate financing options for the development of these type of facilities.

Transportation:

35. The Planning Board, in cooperation with the Board of Selectmen, Road Agent and Highway Safety Committee should develop a comprehensive ten-year road reconstruction plan, and update the CIP to incorporate the forecasted expenditures.
36. The Planning Board, in cooperation with the Board of Selectmen, should take a more pro-active role in resolving regional traffic problems such as the traffic congestion problem along Route 125 in Haverhill, MA.
37. The Planning Board in cooperation with the Board of Selectmen, Road Agent and Highway Safety Committee should consider the construction of sidewalks in the areas near schools which are not serviced by buses, as well as other areas which are may be appropriate, and update the CIP to incorporate these forecasted expenditures.
38. Considering the different uses of various roads, street construction specifications reflecting these usages should be considered.
39. Road construction standards should be amended based upon American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) recommendations. Road geometry standards should be considerate of Average Daily Traffic (ADT) such that less traveled roads may be slightly more narrow, curvy and hilly than well traveled roads.
40. Road construction standards should be considerate of long-term maintenance operations and costs.

41. The Planning Board should strive to require adherence to the Town's road construction standards.
42. Consider providing (locally or regionally funded) adequate transportation opportunities for Atkinson's senior citizens.
43. Provide a municipal parking lot which can be used for bus riders and carpoolers at the Community Center.
44. Provide bus stops at the Community Center and elsewhere, if appropriate.
45. The Planning Board should study the long-term effect that cul-de-sac developments are having on Atkinson's traffic patterns.
46. The Road Standards should be amended to encourage road layouts which facilitate several points of access while not encouraging through traffic.

Capital Improvement Program

47. The Planning Board in cooperation with all Town officials should prepare a current CIP, and commit to updating the Program annually;
48. The Town should continue to seek outside funding sources for required capital expenditures to reduce the impact on Atkinson's taxpayers.

[illegible]

MASTER PLAN QUESTIONNAIRE - MARCH 1998

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

A. Town Character and Land Use

1. The rural character of the Town should be preserved and protected. _____
2. Agriculture and forestry should be encouraged. _____
3. Natural areas (forest & fields) should be preserved and protected from degradation. _____
4. Recreational areas and facilities should be provided in the Town. _____
5. Historic and cultural sites should be preserved and restored. _____
6. Existing Town land should be well marked and access provided. _____
7. The Town should acquire additional open land for conservation. _____
8. Other _____

A8: Other**Community Center**

- Supervised, safe, smoke-free, drug-free community center for 14-18 year olds
- Town pool, community center events improved

Conservation:

- Preservation of open areas and open space should not be done for their own sake. This would be the prerogative of the land owner. Rather, this should be done on a scientific and realistic (cost effective) manner to preserve the ground water and leaching ability of the land.
- We might as well live in Everett Mass. the way we are going. SAVE OPEN SPACE AND WETLANDS
- Conservation land should be accessible for outdoor activities including hunting
- Strong wetlands protection
- Don't circumvent wet land ordinances.
- Preservation of water quality
- We have enough conservation land now

Recreation:

- The Town has provided recreational areas and facilities and should keep them safe and properly maintained
- Engage Boy Scouts in working on woodland trails such as Trinity and Town conservation land at Sawyer.
- Buy land before it is all developed and we all live in Salem NH
- Bike and walking trails
- Bike path added from Windham through Atkinson
- Trail systems should be acquired, managed and maintained

Roads:

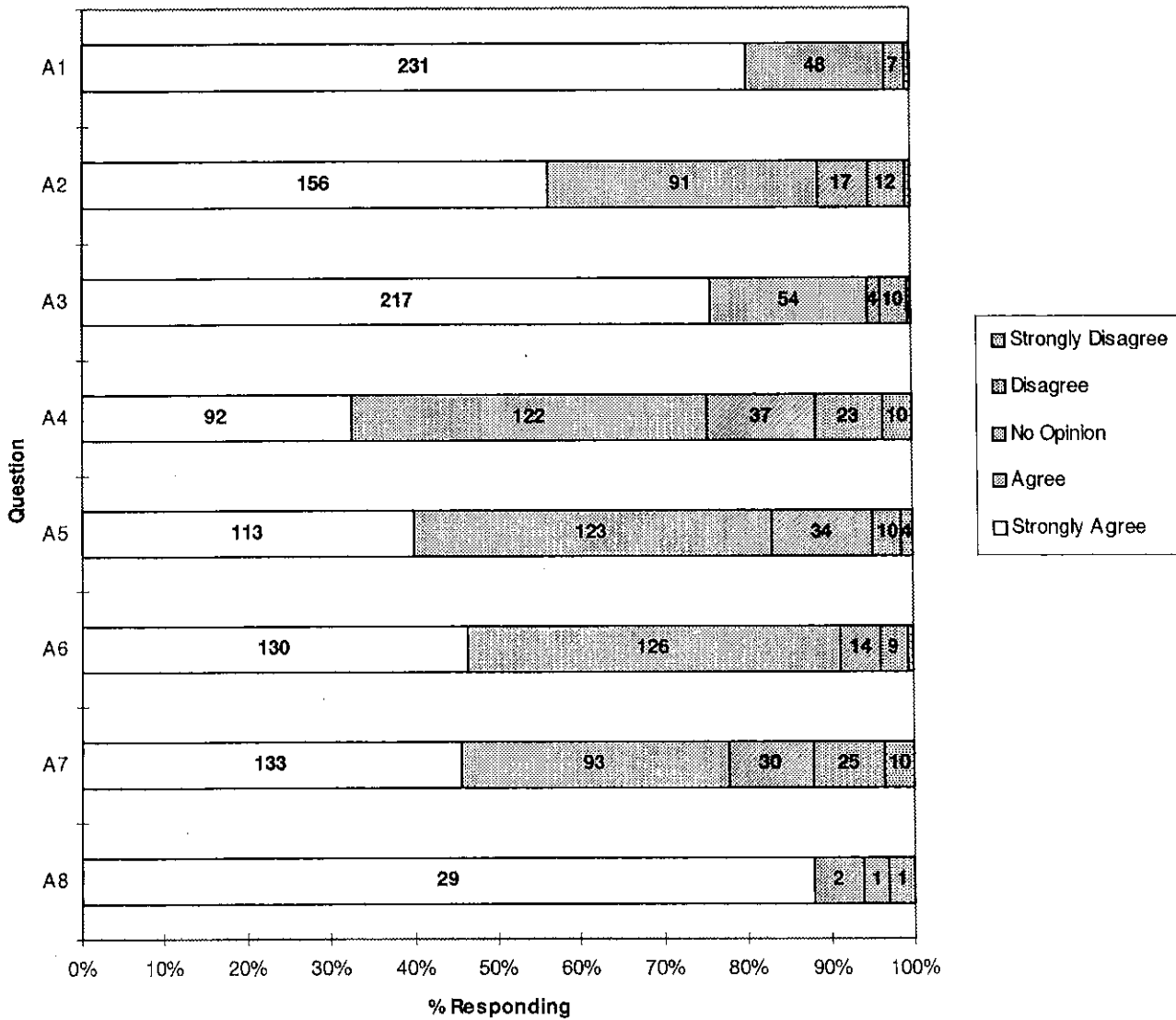
- Sidewalks should be provided in densely population sections for safety and recreation i.e. Town areas, subdivisions
- Better roads with sidewalks. Streets such as Amberwood should be repaired
- Consider sidewalks
- Existing town streets and roads should be well marked with street signs
- The town should start building sidewalks
- Narrow roads tend to keep speeds down

Zoning:

- A historical district designated and marked for public knowledge. A pretty Town common/library area to indicate a quality community to live in.
- Land acquisition should not be done by eminent domain rules

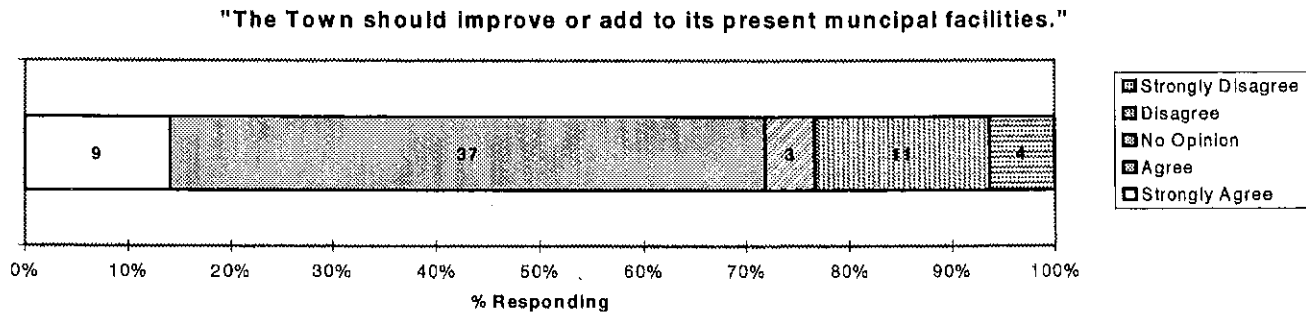
- Agree to the extent that it is practical and affordable
- Let the town take a natural area with no rules and regulations required
- Keep progress slow, keep old flavor of town
- Force the two "EYESORE - DUMPS" on Academy Ave. to clean up their property!
- Need shopping area with specialty stores.
- Acre zoning
- Slow down home building. Limit houses per year.
- "Moratorium" on building!!!!
- Prohibit hunting in all areas of Atkinson
- Think about 5 year and 10 year plan and work toward those goals
- Limit development of new homes
- Adhere to zoning regulations
- Decrease high impact zoning like multi-family and benefits for low-income. It is being misused
- Should not allow cluster zoning. Protect wet lands
- Town should limit new buildings (home sites)
- Bring back snob zoning

TOWN CHARACTER AND LAND USE



B. Town Facilities and Services

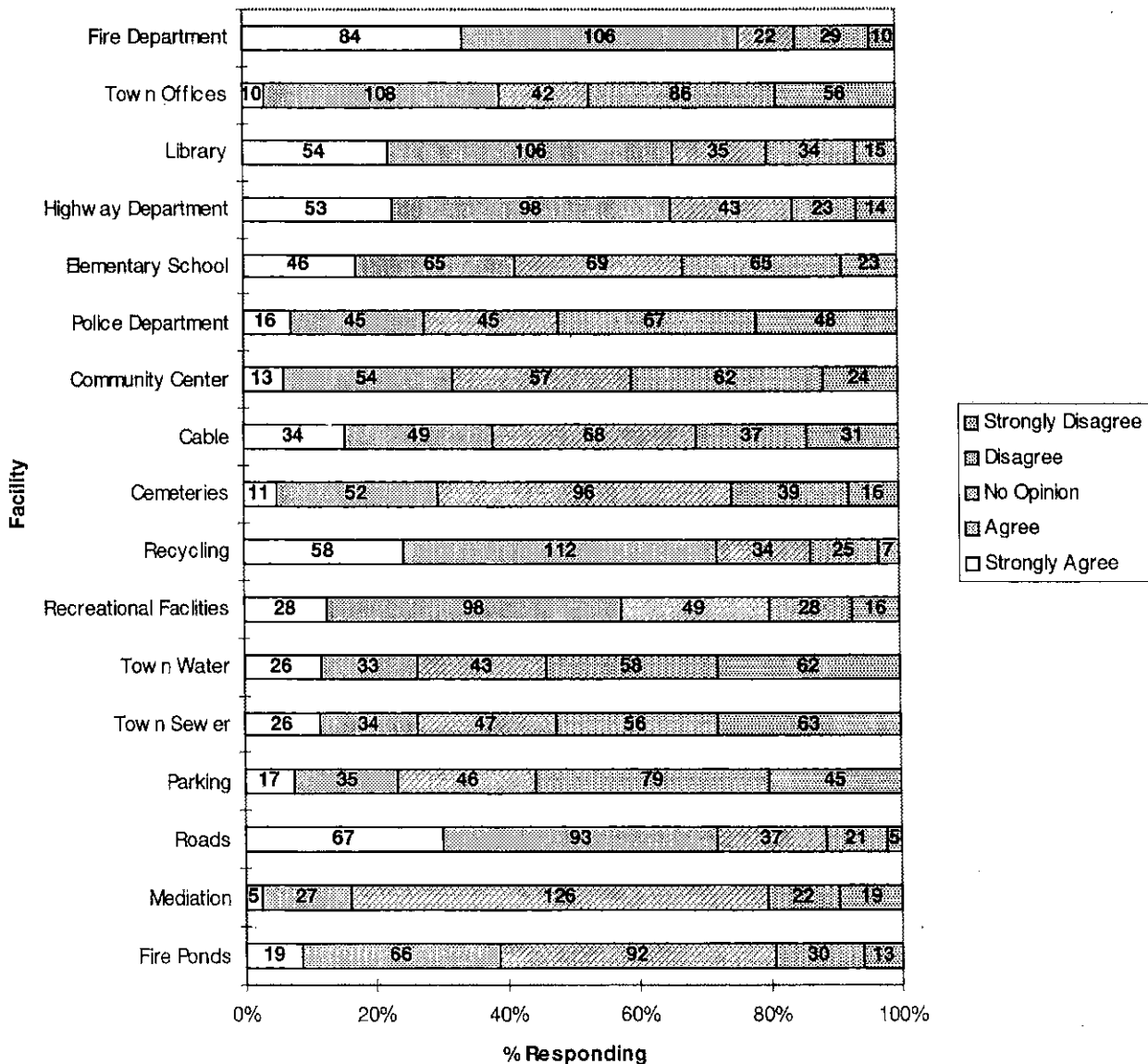
1. The Town should improve or add to its present municipal facilities.

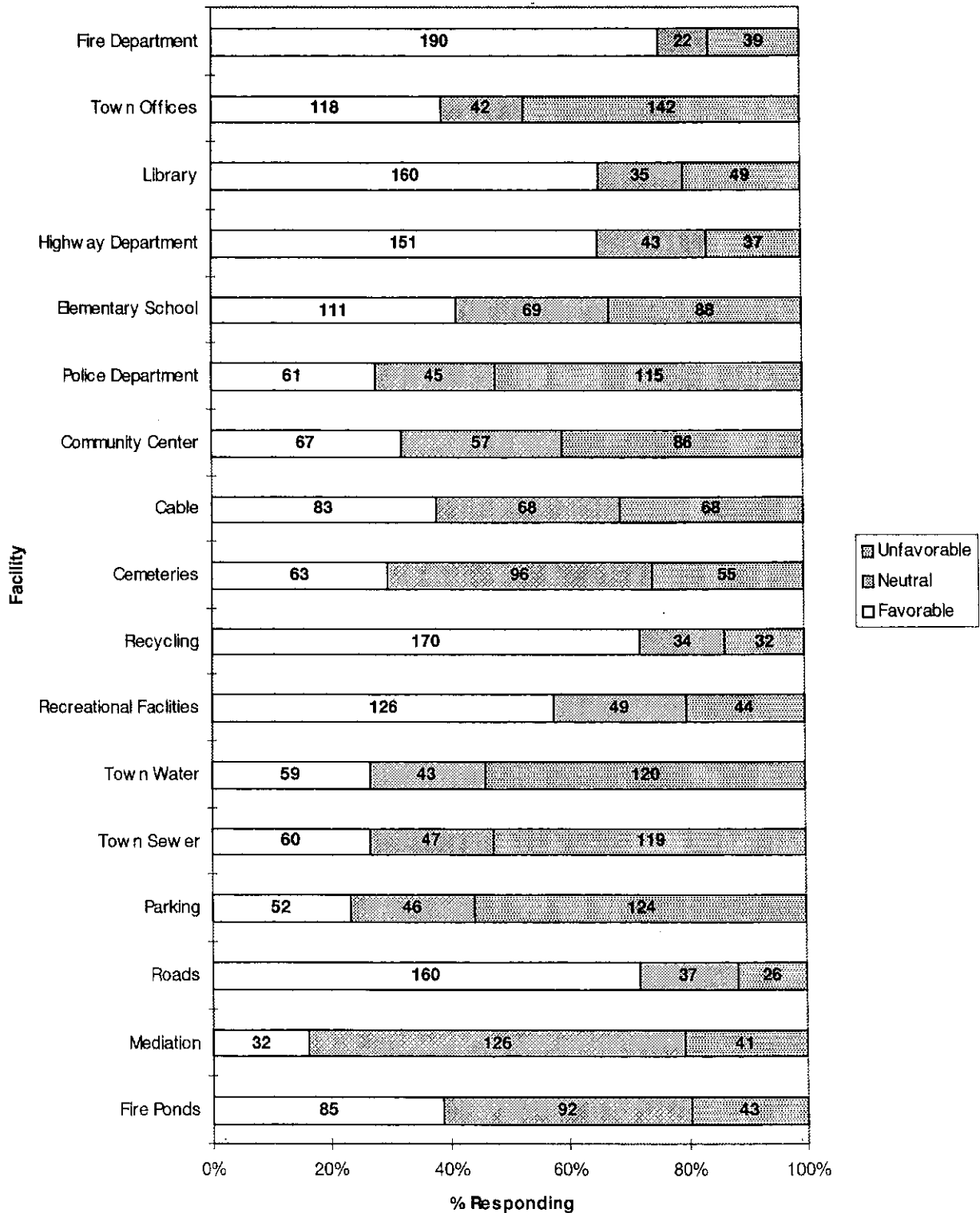


Improved facilities are needed for:

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------|
| a.) Fire Department | _____ | i.) Cemeteries | _____ |
| b.) Town Offices | _____ | j.) Recycling | _____ |
| c.) Library | _____ | k.) Recreational Facilities | _____ |
| d.) Highway Department | _____ | l.) Town Water | _____ |
| e.) Elementary School | _____ | m.) Town Sewer | _____ |
| f.) Police Department | _____ | n.) Parking (at Town Hall) | _____ |
| g.) Community Center | _____ | o.) Roads | _____ |
| h.) Cable | _____ | p.) Mediation | _____ |
| | | q.) Fire Ponds | _____ |

"Improved facilities are needed for:"



"Improved facilities are needed for:"

- If it ain't broke stop trying to fix it.
- Fire Department - sorely in need of a new facility. I hope the Planning Board will become involved in urging the Town passage in 1999.
- Town Offices - There is need for expansion to accommodate professional workspace such as auditors, Treasurer, assessors and eventually a Town Administrator/Manager.
- Library - Should be modified to accommodate the handicapped, group programs and to provide access to computers, Internet and other technological advances to those who may not have these facilities at home. The amount of space for books and periodicals seems adequate when combined with the resources of the Academy and High School as well as surrounding libraries.
- Highway Department - I hope the governing body insists that the Highway Supervisor take better care of the new facility than being allowed to deteriorate as in the past. There is minimal need for a Public Works facility with a Highway Supervisor.
- Elementary School - The Timberlane Administration should make this determination. Care should be given to the historic value of the building and its placement when any modifications are made.
- Police Department - The Rockwell Building should adequately serve the Town's Police Department needs for quite some time. It has more than tripled the space formerly available.
- Community Center - There is a need for custodial staff at this facility.
- Cable - There is a serious need for more staffing to provide additional local programming. When this need is met, a facility will be needed.
- Should not be forced to use Harron Communications - do not feel they give us the best service. Harron requires converter boxes for a fee whereas the Plaistow cable system does not. Personally we are not interested in having all the buyer channels which we are getting.
- Cemeteries - Should be constantly maintained out of respect.
- Recreational Facilities - These are adequate for now but should be constantly maintained.
- Town Water - Where would the supply come from? You can't have Town water until there is a Town sewer system to support it. (see below)
- Town Sewer - Where in Town are you planning to locate the treatment plant?
- Town Hall Parking - Adequate when combined with the space at the Atkinson Academy under the agreement with the Timberlane School District. Sharing is all right.
- Roads- The roads have been largely neglected, or just superficially repaired
- Mediation - Seems to be working
- Fire Ponds - Develop as needed. The standard was to have one every two miles.
- New house sprinkling - 5.

2. The Town should provide more services than it currently offers.

Please describe which services should be added:

Cable:

- Cable.
- Choice of cable companies
- Media 1 cable - not Harron.
- Televise all town meetings etc. Provide and improve electric power.
- Change cable company for better service.
- Other cable companies.

Conservation:

- Buy as much conservation land as possible and keep Atkinson a "small town" and don't drain the swamps to allow more building. People love the rural atmosphere.
- Sizeable pieces of construction land should be purchased each year in order to preserve the rural character of the town and help keep down long term tax rates. This could be funded by a small increase in the property tax rate.
- Town-owned open land poorly managed/utilized

Community Center:

- 14-8 year olds need their own community center to offset their after school boredom e.g. amateur performances, soda and snacks bar, sign-ups for town volunteer services, from ski, hiking and outdoor group trips in NH, show PG-13 movies on large screen, etc
- Services for adolescents, youth groups (moderated), activities similar to the Teen Center at the Upper Room in Derry.
- Teen recreation dances.
- More activities @ Community Center for 13-18 yr olds

Recycling:

- Curbside recycling
- More hours at brush dump possibly open Wed afternoon
- Curb recycling pick-up - every week
- Frequent hazard waste collection.
- Curbside recycling for glass, plastic (pick-up service).
- There should be more access to the recycling area other than just a Saturday.
- Encourage recycling by either improving the current area or by curb-side pick up of recycleables.
- Recycling pick up
- Curbside recycling
- A) Curbside Recycling or a facility in the commercial/ industrial zone to bring recycleables. B) Move brush dump away from Pope Field Rec. Area. Commercial/industrial zone a suggestion.
- Recycling needs vast improvement. Suggest you look at Program in Lisbonfalls, ME.
- Curbside recycling or at least some signage to distinguish glass colors etc. at center.

Recreation:

- Recreation for children, i.e. Town pool instead of paying to use Hampstead Beach which is bacteria infested.
- Summer Rec. program @ Pope.
- Instruction classes for adults and children i.e. tennis like Hampstead
- Recreational activities for teens.

Roads:

- Paving of roads.
- The town should provide snow plowing at Wright Farm, and at all places where taxes are being paid. We're not asking that the driveways should be plowed, only the streets.
- Providence Hill is a DISGRACE to the town also should be 26 feet width.

- Side walks (see above A8)
- The increase in traffic is making it more and more dangerous for adults and children who walk. We need sidewalks!
- Repair roads that are accepted town roads. It would not hurt to keep up all roads citizens pay taxes on this property.

Seniors:

- Seniors
- Services and facilities for the elderly.
- Seniors Bus Service.
- Elderly Transportation
- Senior services: E .G. Meals on Wheels.
- Elderly help in more ways - lower taxes.
- Some services for the needy elderly homebound and young families.
- Handicap van rides to Dr.'s, recreational sites, etc.

Other:

- Need for moderately priced public transportation for all.
- Only through services staffed by volunteers.
- No added town services are needed.
- Current services adequate.
- At the library should have a deposit area for tapes like most libraries after hours. It is very difficult to plan video dropoffs the way it is set up now.
- Every new service means more new taxes.
- Town water and sewer. Curbside recycling, proper maintenance of trees over power and telephone lines.
- O.K.
- No; leave as is.
- More youth activities; library open every morning.
- I am concerned about the 911 system. I fear it is not efficient enough to provide life-saving capability if needed.
- Encourage utility development water and natural gas.
- Services are fine. Slow down town growth.
- Town Sewerage/Town water. This is badly needed!
- None.
- It is a small town. Try to keep it that way and this doesn't mean to hinder progress, i.e. a town manager is good idea. He or she could save Atkinson a lot in reference to state grant money.
- Landscaping of sides of roads. The town looks shabby. Landscaping , planting of decorative flower, shrubs at designated spots on our Main Rd. through town. Beautifying common, library, Community Center, school, etc. This town should look as though people who live here take pride in it. The main objective should not always be - How can we live the least expensively as is possible. You get what you pay for !
- 0
- I'm very satisfied with town services.
- A town administration is essential, not a town manager.
- None
- Strongly disagree level of service just right.
- No
- Services are fine.
- Happy with services provided.
- No
- No
- We don't need any town services.
- None
- Increase veteran's tax exemption
- More flexible hours at town hall.
- Why invite free loaders?
- Medical facilities and doctors offices.

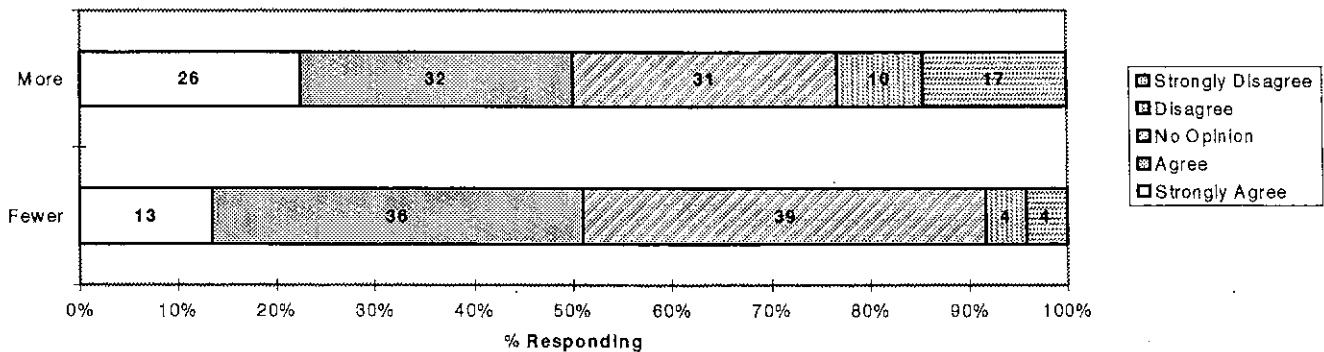
- No more services
- Town Sewerage to improve quality of land and eliminate septage.

3. The Town should provide fewer services.

Please describe which services should be dropped:

-
-
- None
 - No opinion
 - Disagree- services just right
 - Services provided are adequate
 - Police cars taking residents shopping, errands, appointments
 - Recreational facilities, sports fields
 - No
 - Cable; community center
 - None
 - None
 - Is recycling really cost effective
 - A.
 - Community center should have a small user fee to help pay for improvements
 - Community center
 - None
 - None
 - (see above)
 - Get rid of driveway and fence and woodstove inspectors
 - School busing - appears there are enough moms picking up kids after school to car pool
 - Is having pick up for recycling newspapers cost effective?
 - Just improve on what we have
 - None
 - Leave as is.
 - None
 - None
 - Cable
 - Not aware of any at this time.

"The Town should provide more/fewer services than it currently provides."

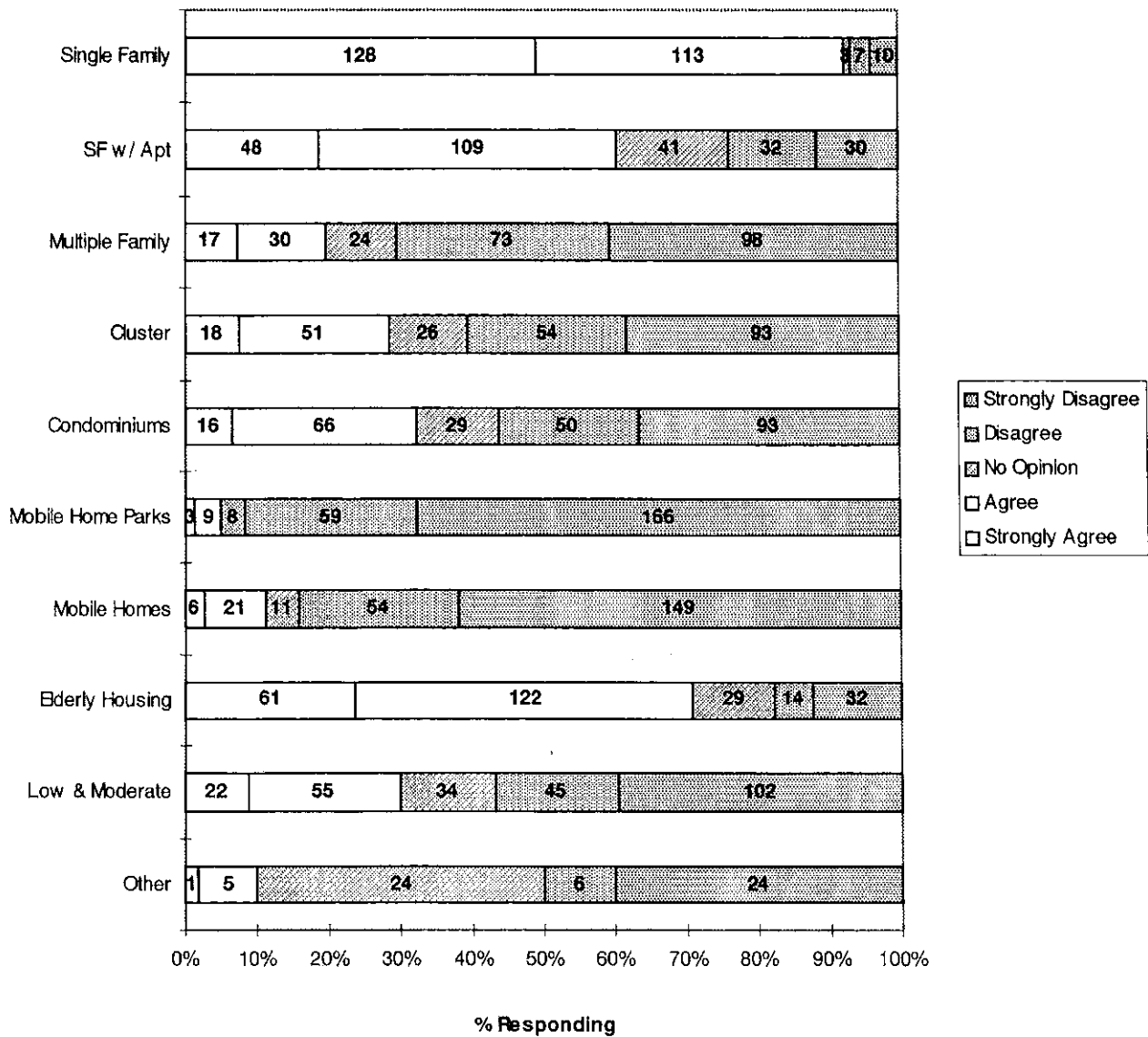


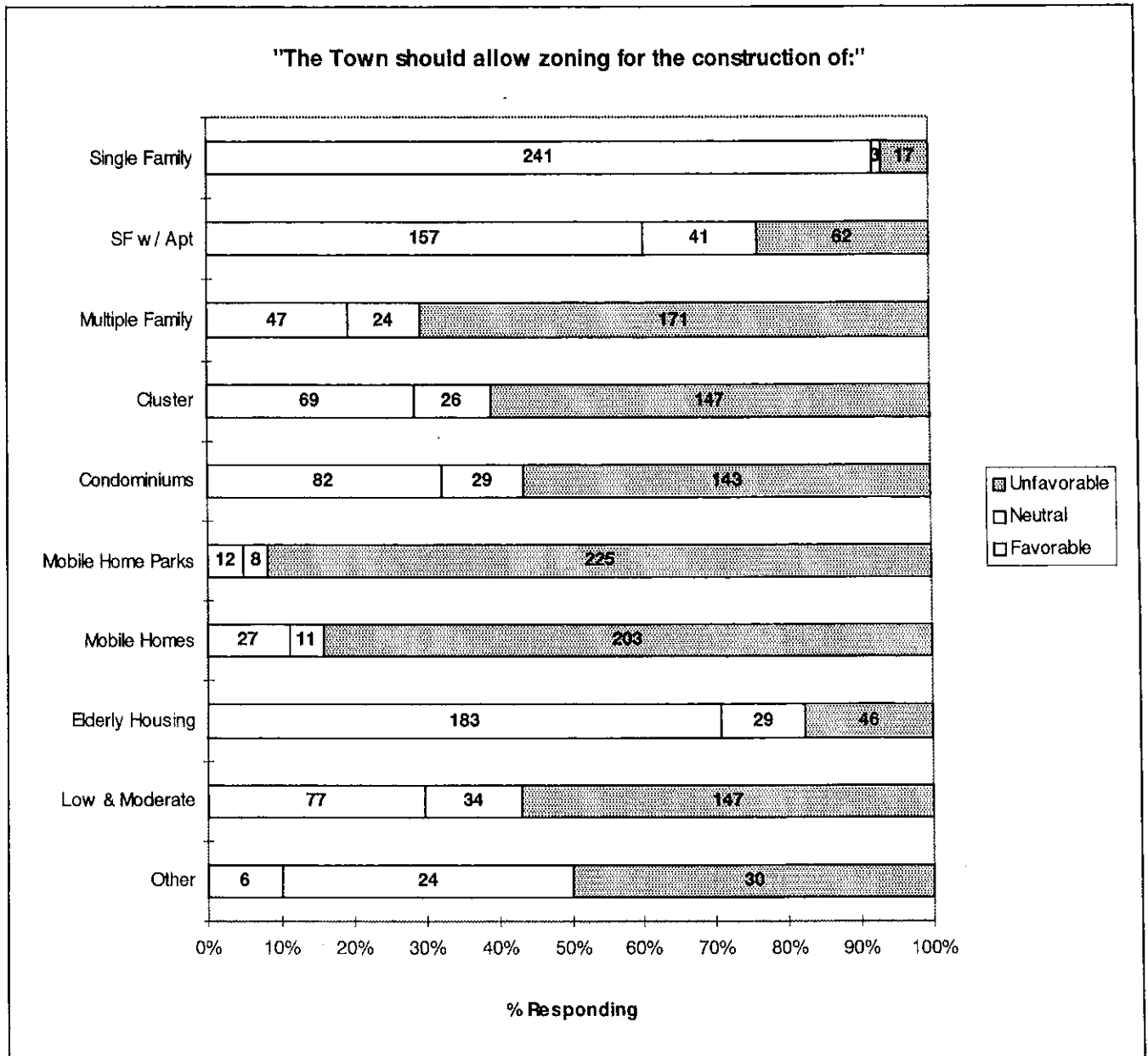
C. Housing

The Town should allow zoning for the construction of:

- a.) Single Family _____
- b.) Single Family w/ Accessory
Apartment _____
- c.) Multiple Family Homes _____
- d.) Cluster Housing _____
- e.) Condominiums _____
- f.) Mobile Home Parks _____
- g.) Mobile Homes _____
- h.) Elderly Housing _____
- i.) Low & Moderate Income Housing _____
- j.) Other Housing (specify) _____

"The Town should allow zoning for the construction of:"

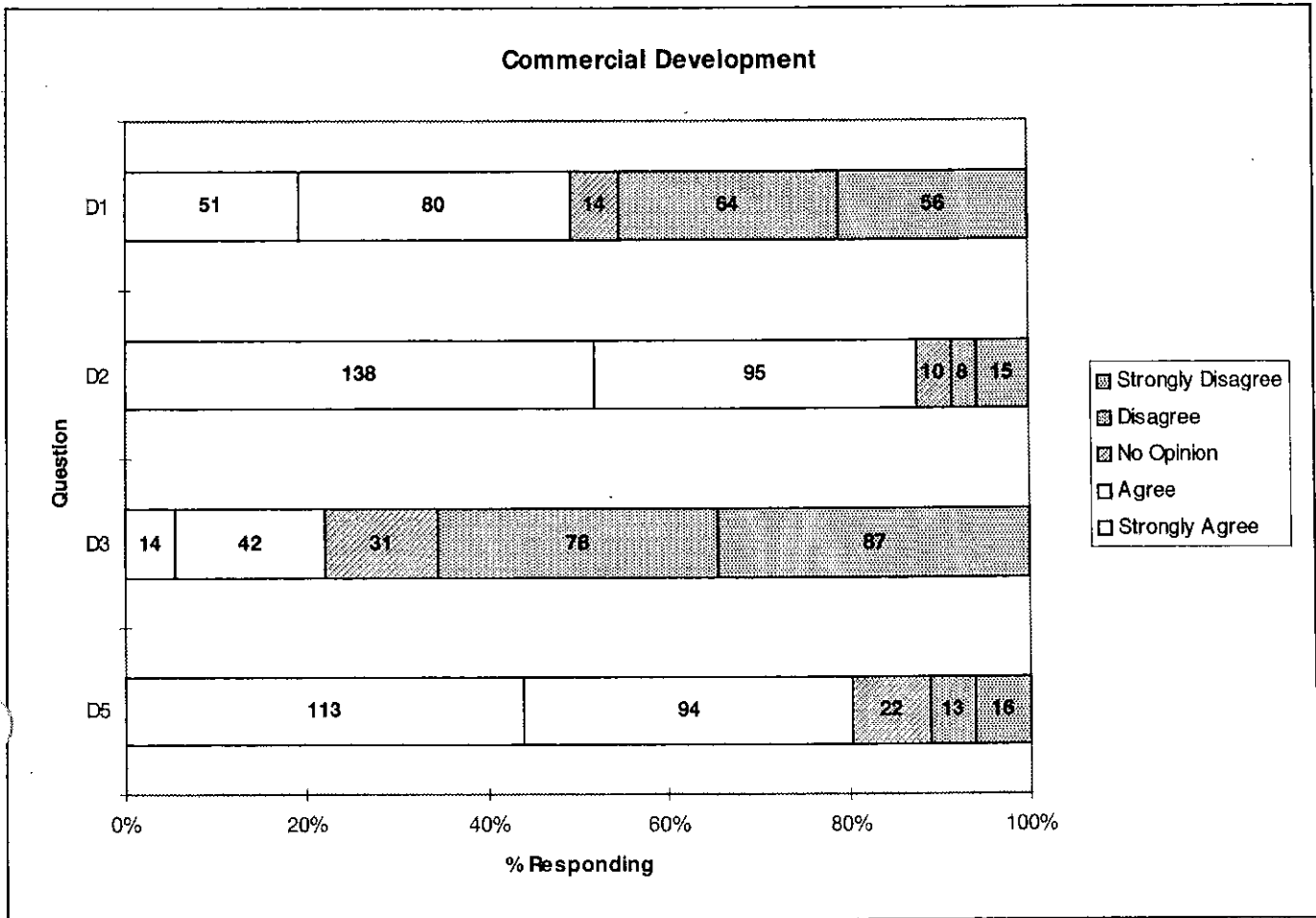




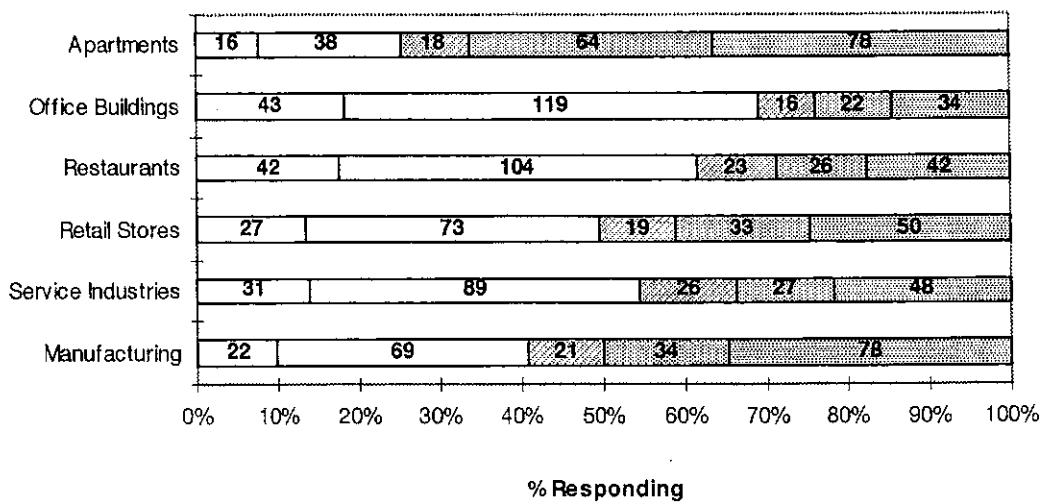
- Multiple family homes should be in a cluster environment
- Prefer - less use of land - provides open space privately owned.
- Condominiums -Right type.
- But recognize density allotment and use existing pre-built housing to meet criteria.

D. Commercial Development

1. The Town should try to attract new businesses _____
2. Commercial and industrial development should remain concentrated within centralized districts. _____
3. There should be more commercially zoned land. _____
4. Commercial zoning should support:
 - a.) Apartments _____
 - b.) Office Buildings _____
 - c.) Restaurants _____
 - d.) Retail Stores _____
 - e.) Service Industries _____
 - f.) Manufacturing _____
- No outdoor open storage (mini-storage) or junk type vehicles.
- Would like to have a "bank" located on route 121. When Family Bank was located near the post office it was very convenient for all.
5. Zoning ordinances should regulate the architectural appearance and landscaping of future commercial/industrial development. _____



"Commercial zoning should support:"

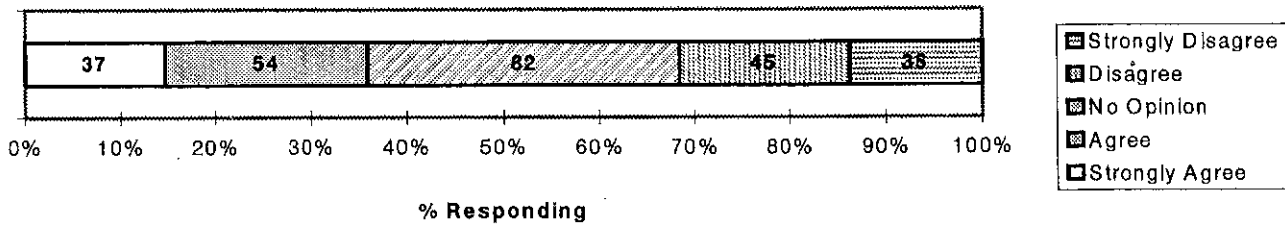


F. School

The present elementary school facility is adequate to meet the needs of the Town for the foreseeable future.

Comments: _____

"The present elementary school facility is adequate to meet the needs of the Town for the foreseeable future."



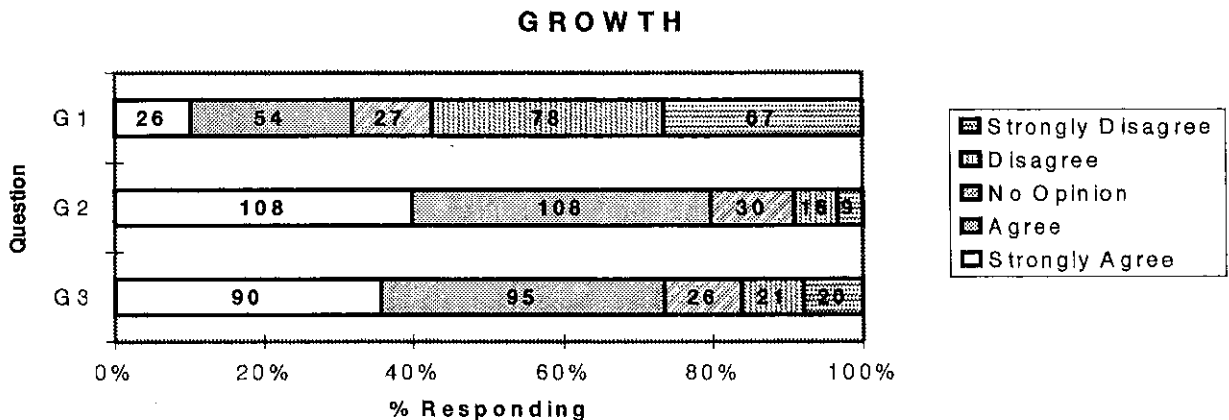
- I have no children in public schools
- Every year the population increases , therefore so does the schooling needs and the schools need to expand or rebuild in order to place all those students
- Fix it while it cost less! Every year the price will go up!!!
- Guess so - don't know
- Excellent! Residents with kids bear the cost of school expansion
- Don't know
- You will see a drop in school population in year 2000
- Space will not accommodate enrollment projections.
- It is deplorable
- Our schools need help! They are becoming inadequate. Also Better schools make higher property values in town and that equals a better more desirable place to be.
- Planning board is too lenient on builders.
- Most every prediction of growth is very exaggerated
- None
- More data required to make a judgement
- It isn't adequate now. Lack of rooms. Even something as basic as desks are in terrible shape . No place for kids to put coats in the café. Everything ends up on the floor. No computers available.
- Voucher system - to public and private
- With more young families - need more classrooms, etc.
- Kindergarten should be finally available. Up grade current facilities. Consider Atkinson providing its own school system out of Timberlane
- Are you stating a fact?
- For this town
- Not adequate now. Sub-standard for the future. Very old facility
- Only if you want the kids in tents!
- Too crowded . Student/teacher ratio too high
- We cannot allow significant development , if the funds are not provided for school expansion
- Only the school committee knows that you can't stop growth. You can only slow it down
- Over crowdedness in classrooms is a growing concern
- Needs more room for now and the future
- Not based on enrollment

- We encourage alternative education - charter schools, home-schooling, etc.
- Use casino gambling to pay for school! Not property tax!!!!
- The more we allow to add to our growing population, the more it will cost us. Keep status quo to rid us of more newcomers. It will deter them.
- I support the 4-town plan currently being voted on , but I am concerned about the lack of a plan for public kindergarten.
- Needs computers, media room, new technology
- The drop-off/pick-up area is a disgrace and should be hot topped. I've been stuck in the mud several times.
- It would be if growth was slowed down!
- I don't know
- Not meeting needs now - school district issue
- I don't know. I don't have kids in the schools here.
- Is it really?
- I am particularly concerned about water/sewer/heating/ventilation system
- This can only be controlled by building restrictions
- Have not heard or read of arguments for or against
- No children
- Not aware as we don't have children there yet!
- Must have more space to provide for growing number of children.
- Certainly not
- More homes and empty-nesters selling = more kids which requires more space and equipment/supplies
- population - overcrowding
- Present facilities are inadequate in terms of space, heating/ventilation - asbestos is a problem - parking
- Needs additional classrooms, gym/auditorium, and staff spaces NOW!
- Limit building of housing with 3+ bedrooms.
- I don't have adequate information to answer.

G. Growth

Atkinson today has a population of approximately 6000:

1. Any amount of growth consistent with the zoning ordinances should be allowed. _____
2. Growth should be limited, consistent with earlier Master Plans. _____
3. Part of the cost of growth should be financed by impact fees. _____



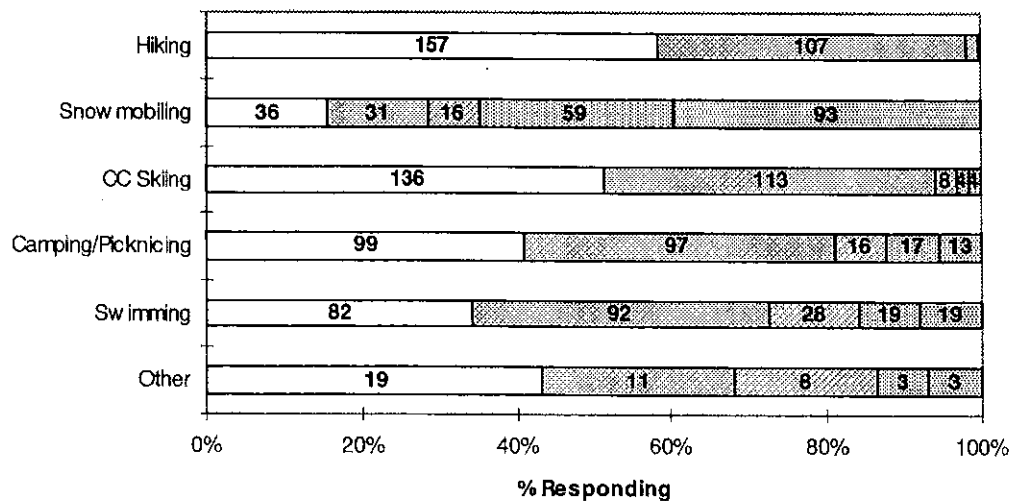
- Any development should take into consideration future impacts on town and school district services before starting or help offset problems caused by increased population.
- If the district isn't going to support new schools we can't increase building starts.
- While there was a Growth Control ordinance in place under the old Master Plan, there was never a need to implement it as growth slowed on its own with proper planning. We never hit the maximum number of building permits to trigger the ordinance. There is no indication that there is any immediate need for growth control today, only for planning.
- Impact fees are all right if the Town has someone to administer them and assure that the Town contributes its necessary share.
- This would be consistent with "snob zoning."

H. Conservation and Recreation

1. Conservation land should be used for:

- a.) Hiking _____
- b.) Snowmobiling/Off _____
- Roading _____
- c.) Cross Country Skiing _____
- d.) Camping/Picnicking _____
- e.) Swimming _____
- f.) Other (specify) _____

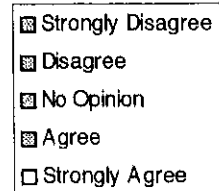
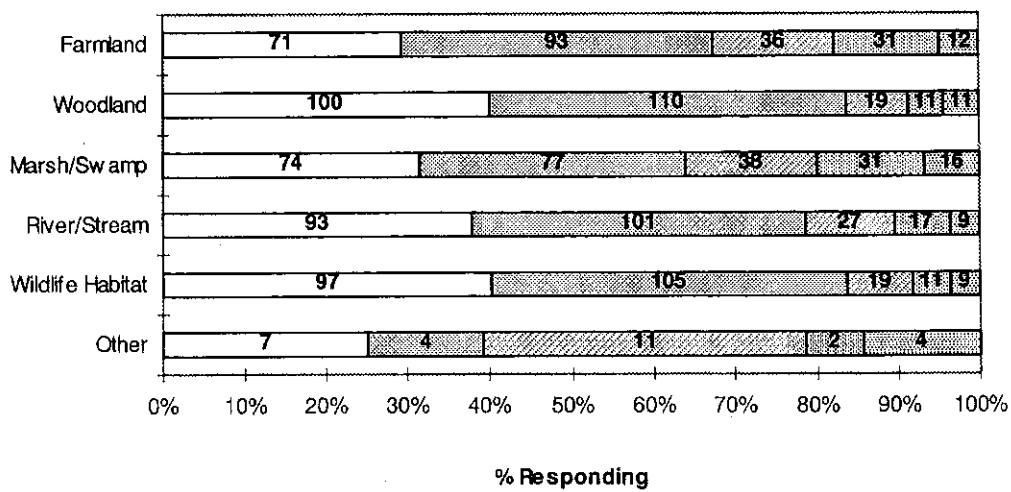
"Conservation land should be used for:"



- Swimming - Where?
- Boating - allow Big Island Pond access.

2. The Town should acquire the following types of land:

- a.) Farmland _____
- b.) Woodland _____
- c.) Marsh/Swamp, Bog _____
- d.) River/Stream _____
- e.) Wildlife Habitat _____
- f.) Other (specify) _____

"The Town should acquire the following types of land:"

3. The facilities at Pope Field are adequate for: _____

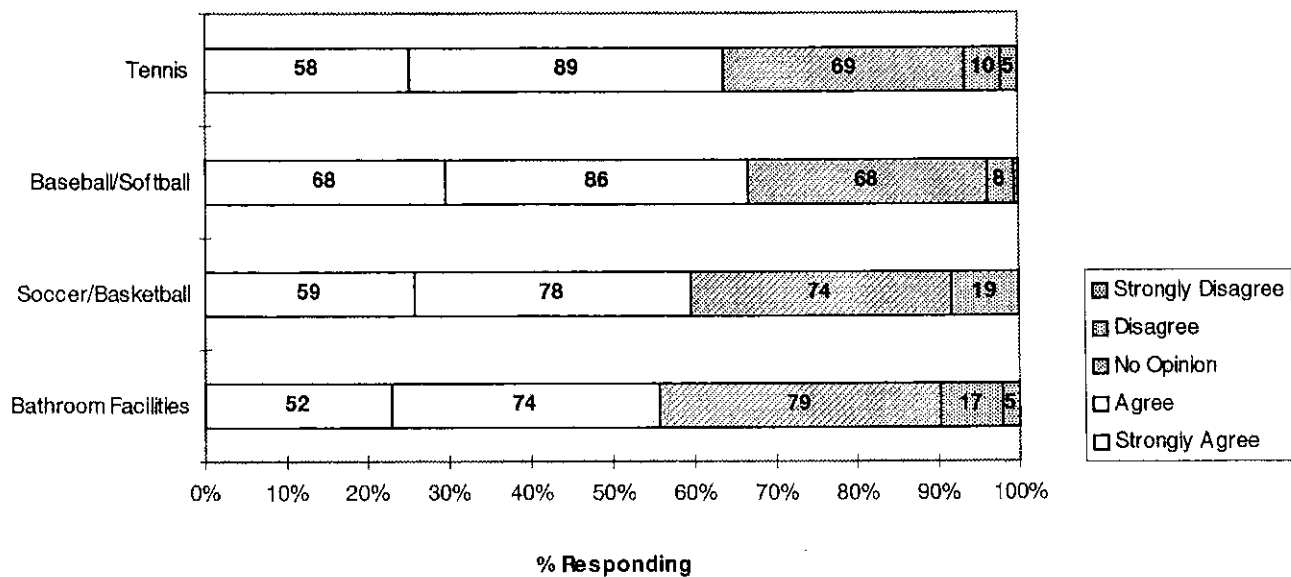
a.) Tennis _____

b.) Baseball/Softball _____

c.) Soccer/Basketball _____

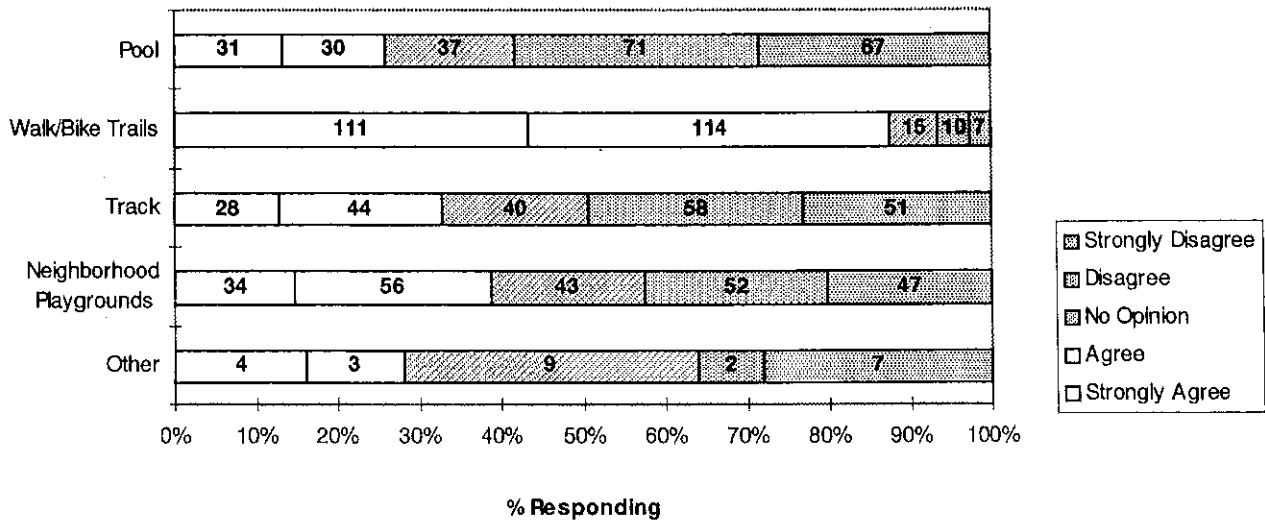
d.) Bathroom Facilities _____

"The facilities at Pope Field are adequate for:"



4. Additional recreational opportunities Atkinson should work towards:

- a.) Pool _____
 b.) Walk/Bike Trails _____
 c.) Track _____
 d.) Neighbor Playgrounds _____
 e.) Other (specify) _____

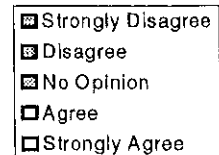
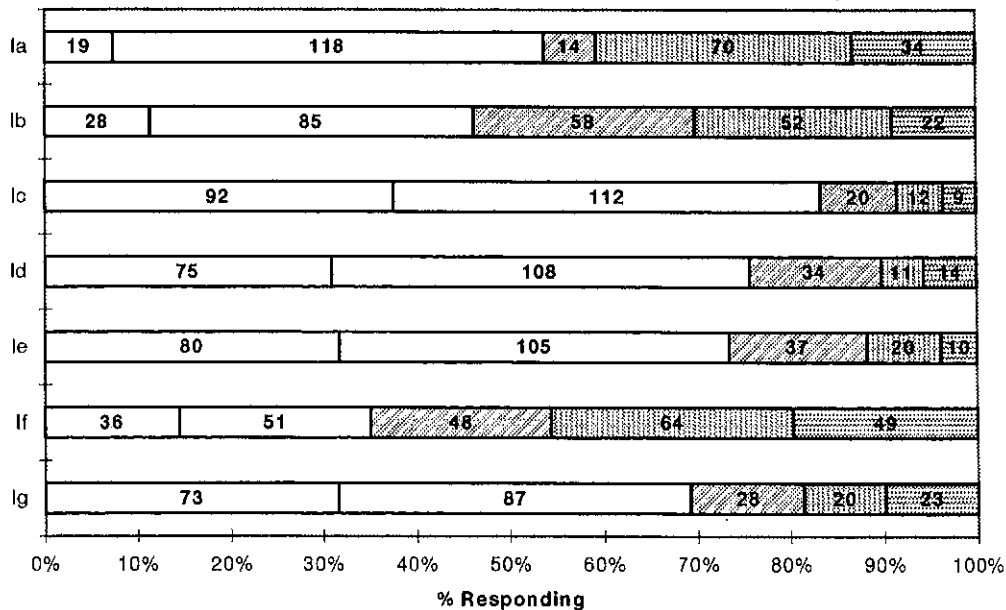
"Additional recreational Opportunities Atkinson should work towards:"

I. Roads and Transportation

- a.) The road system in Atkinson is adequate and properly maintained.
- b.) Atkinson is getting value for its money in terms of roads.
- c.) There needs to be a long term plan for road development.
- d.) Zoning should provide for minimum road standards.
- e.) Atkinson should continue its policy allowing development on cul-de-sacs, rather than creating through streets.
- f.) Atkinson should provide a "park and ride" lot for commuters.
- g.) Atkinson should play an active role in finding a solution for the Route 125 traffic problems.

- The road system requires more east-west carrier roads. The roads we have are repaired only superficially and frequently repairs last only a couple of years. A more extensive program is required.
- Except Providence Hill and Sawyer intersection.
- Repairs are penny-wise and pound foolish.
- An independent appraisal of all the town roads was done several years ago. No one seemed interested in insisting that the Highway Agent follow it. It is time for another independent evaluation of our road system.
- Maintenance?
- There should be minimum road standards governed by existing technology for the area, and these standards should be enforced for the Town as well.
- Road widths should vary depending on amount of use, i.e. Providence Hill a major thoroughfare - Old Coach not. 22 Wide except for access roads.

ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

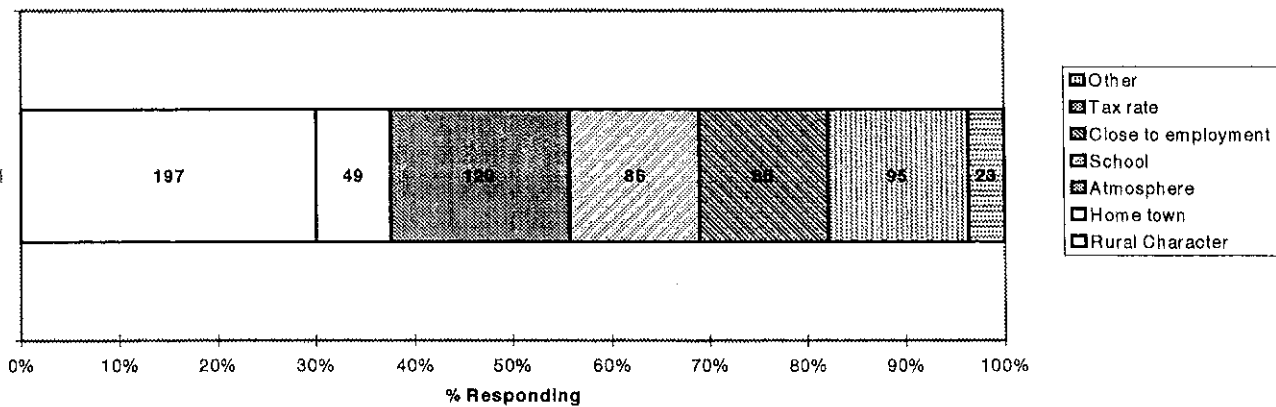


J. Other

1. Why have you chosen to live in Atkinson? (Check the 3 most important)

- a.) Rural character _____
 b.) Home town _____
 c.) Community Atmosphere _____
 d.) Quality of school _____
 e.) Close to employment _____
 f.) Property Tax rate _____
 g.) Other please (specify): _____

"Why have you chosen to live in Atkinson?"



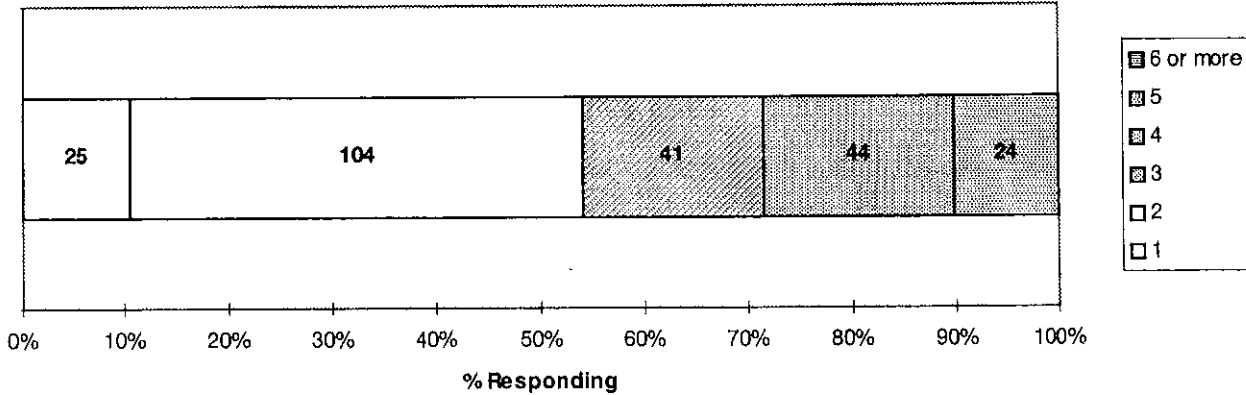
- Seemed like a nice community in which to raise a family.
- I'm needed here
- Close to schools, shopping and Boston's area
- Value of property. Conservative Administration, excellent Police Dept.
- Location, Location - Close to Rt. 495, 93, 95, etc.
- Proximity to Mass border
- No state tax
- Competitive with Mass (taxes, home prices)
- Good retirement town
- Quiet
- Central location for our lifestyle
- Condominium built to last - value for investment
- Real estate cost
- years ago tax rate was great. Now it's climbing.
- Access to town offices in the evening. This is great! 2. Proximity to commuter rail
- Close to daughter and her family
- The incredible response from the Fire Dept. and the Police Dept. True professionals with great understanding and compassion
- Safe environment

- Open spaces and tough zoning regulations.
- Wanted out of Mass (Taxachusetts)
- Peaceful atmosphere and convenient to family and other activities
- We felt Atkinson provided a good quality of life which was very affordable; However, we are concerned about the overdevelopment which is occurring.
- Safety for children and adults
- Not in Mass
- Safety
- Proximity to larger cities/towns w/retail business. I use frequently: grocery stores , mall, etc.
- It was a picture perfect postcard rural area and wanted this atmosphere for our retirement years!
- Originally this was important, but you get what you pay for and it would not be a consideration for us now.
- Quiet
- Near city and near mountains
- It's not in MASS!
- Good quality reputation
- Small town atmosphere
- Church
- Convenient access to major shopping areas and interstate highways
- Keep it low. Good location for resale
- Activities available
- Low population
- When I bought my house it was what I could afford and get.
- Up scale housing/proximity to major cities
- Liked neighborhood. This was a nice community until a few have tried taking over from outside recently and don't allow freedom of speech from citizens who disagree with them, e.g. petitions on warrant as submitted.
- If quality of schools doesn't remain high (as high/middle) property values will go down due to overcrowding.

2. Please indicate the number of people that live in your household:

1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6 or more ____

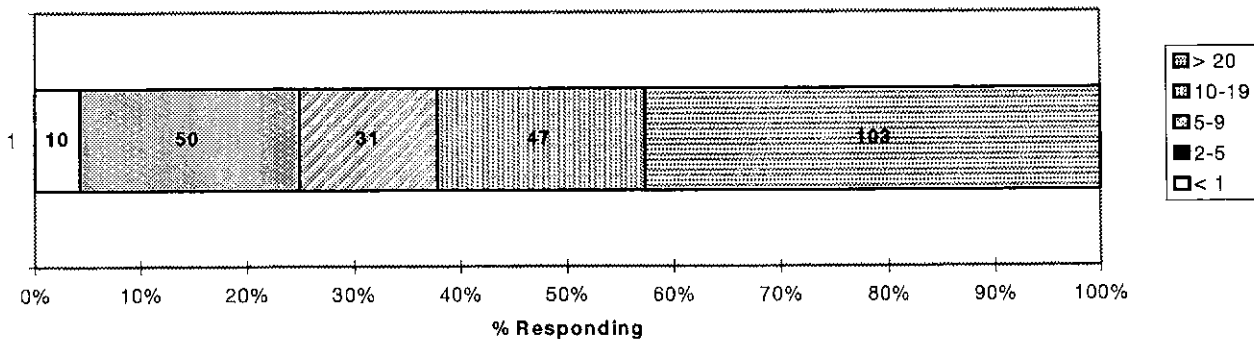
"Please indicate the number of people that live in your household:"



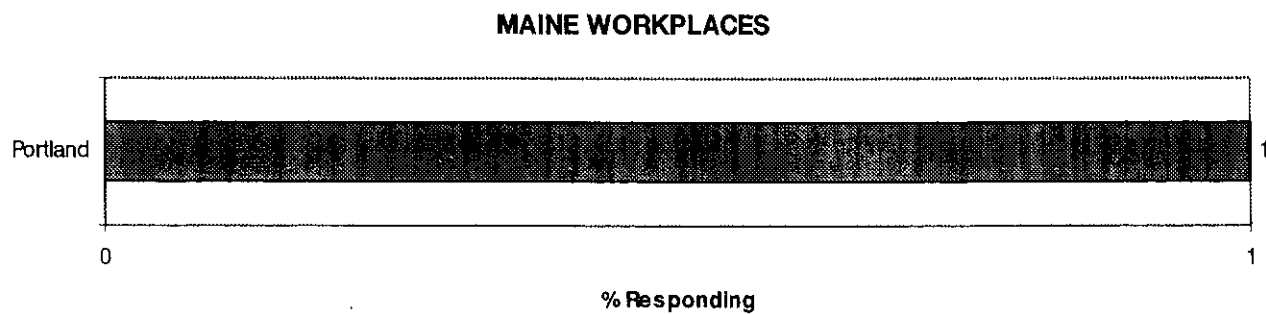
3. How many years have you lived in Atkinson?

Less than 1 ____ 2-5 ____ 5-9 ____ 10-19 ____ 20 or more ____

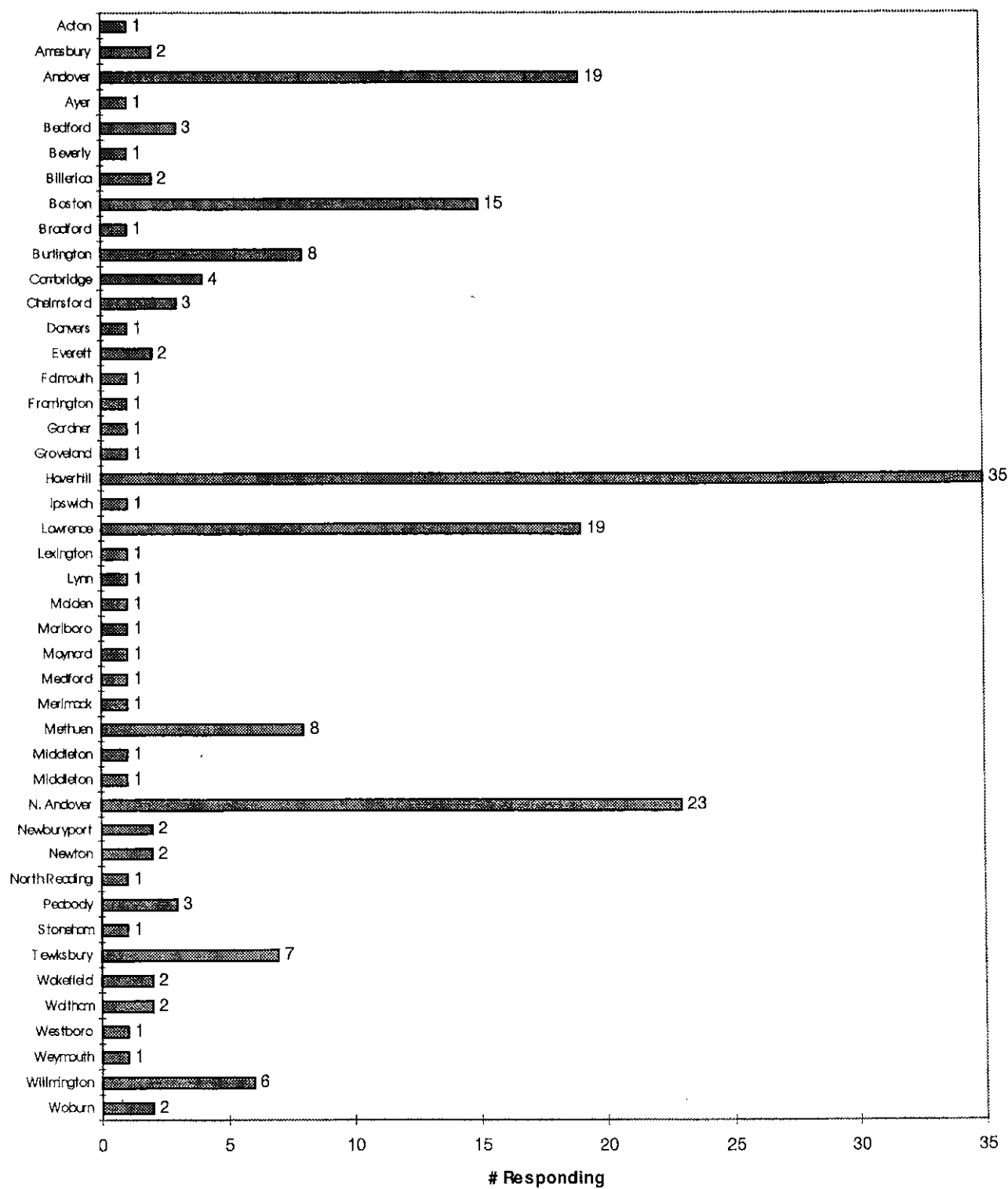
"How many years have you lived in Atkinson?"



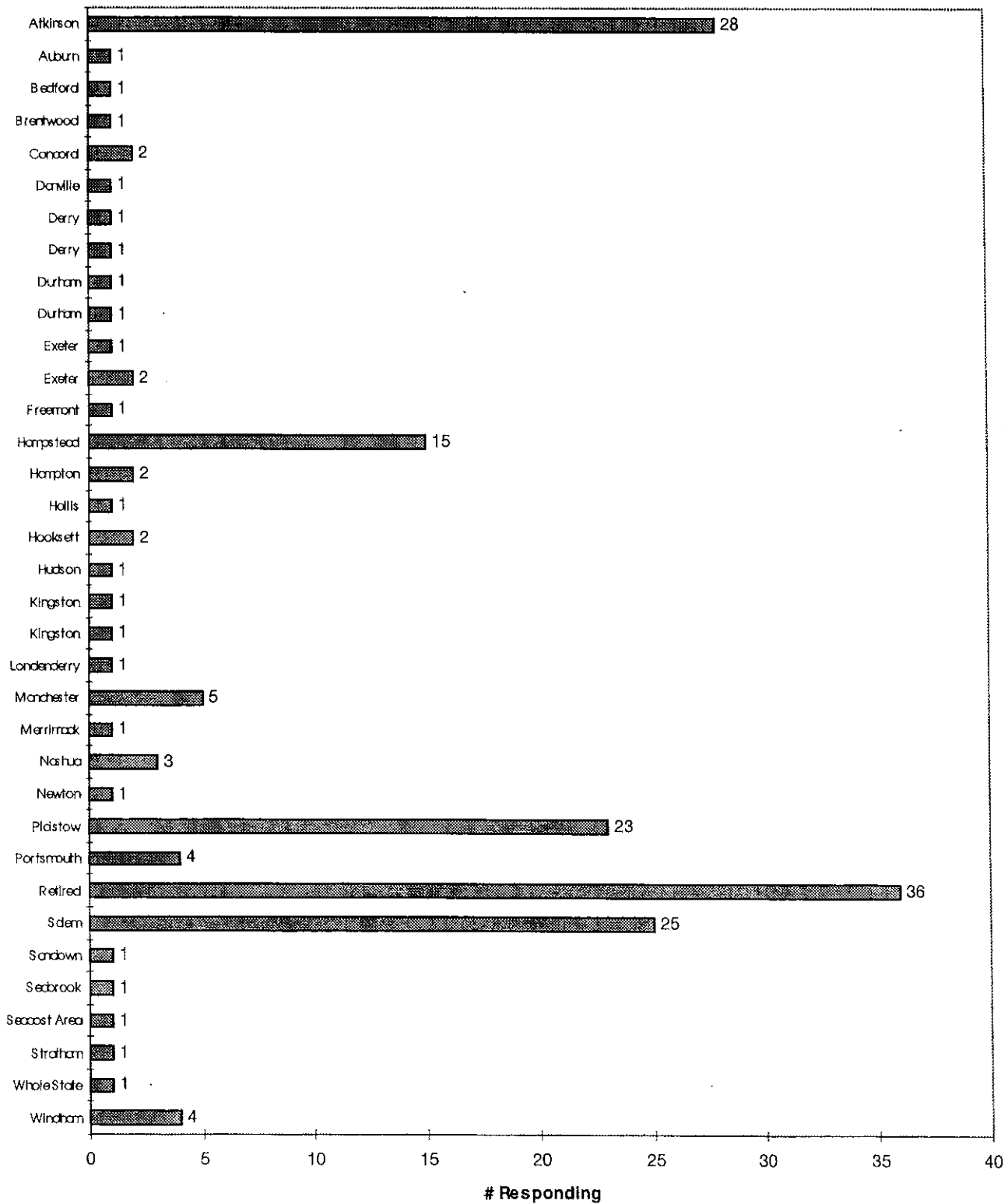
4. List the Towns/Cities in which your household members work:



MASSACHUSETTS WORKPLACES



NEW HAMPSHIRE WORKPLACES



K.

Please identify below any other issues or topics about Atkinson that you feel should be addressed by the Planning Board, Selectmen or any other Town Department or Board.

Cable:

- Cable too limited. Needs more diverse information and advertising to pay for it.
- Very unhappy with Harron Cable's policies, such as requiring converter boxes for each TV.
- Better cable, although Disney is great.
- Harron Cable. They do careless work and do not respect a person's property.
- Cable TV options stink.
- Planning Board meetings should be on TV. 1st priority . Harron Cable should work on reducing rates not adding channels!
- Cable companies that don't have converter boxes - Media One for example
- Televisé all meetings and maintain all minutes of meetings on file.
- Freeze on cable fees - better choice of Pay Per View movies.

Conservation:

- Have evening adult programs at the community center, such as: - Learning Sessions - Lectures of interest -"How To" Programs - Small Home Repairs-Quilt Making -Travel- etc.
- We three residents feel very strongly that Atkinson needs an alternative center for teens so they can enjoy their music, dance, "hang out" and keep off pointless circulation on the area streets.
- I feel a town center is needed especially for the older teens.

Community Center:

- Have evening adult programs at the community center, such as: - Learning Sessions - Lectures of interest -"How To" Programs - Small Home Repairs-Quilt Making -Travel- etc.
- We three residents feel very strongly that Atkinson needs an alternative center for teens so they can enjoy their music, dance, "hang out" and keep off pointless circulation on the area streets.
- I feel a town center is needful especially for the older teens.
- After school activities for Academy students.

Recycling:

- I am in favor of curb-side recycling. Why are we the only town locally that does not have it?
- The recycle program needs more dumpsters.
- I would recycle if we did. Regular pick-up of recyclable material.
- Build a better recycling facility and staff it! Make sure recycling fees come back to the town Look at program in Lisbonfalls, ME. It's GREAT! They make money for the town.
- Recycling should be more organized - not necessarily curbside either - will it be voted on?
- Curbside recycling.
- Curbside recycling
- General recycling roadside pickup.

Recreation:

- Bike path for families! Great for walking, rollerblading, x-c skiing, and biking. Thanks for asking.
- Stop building costly public lavatories anywhere in this town. Very costly to maintain. Easily blighted or vandalized. Attracts vandals. Costly extra policing. Focus on woodland purchasing and leaving them in their natural state. Graveled soccer fields were a costly mistake.
- Stop public facilities and building soccer and baseball fields. Creates needless extra expense for policing and also acts as a magnet for vandals. We have more than enough facilities.

Roads:

- I am very disappointed by the lack of response received from the selectmen and road agent regarding acknowledged water problems at our home created when the road was redone. The problem was addressed and plans were made to correct them but this has yet to happen. This is not what I would expect from a "community town."
- Pope Road is it a town road? If it is why is it gated?
- Maintenance and improvement of state roads within the town.
- No through trucking on West Side Drive. Merrell Trucking from Salem is ruining the road with his overloaded trucks and not paying any of our taxes for use.
- Widen roads and provide adequate shoulders for walkers and drainage.
- Roads are becoming deplorable!
- Fix Academy and 121 intersection.
- Dow commons is okay - we don't need to change it.
- Condition of Sawyer Ave. Very disappointed at the amount of litter on Town roadsides.
- Snow removal has been poor. Road maintenance is also poor. Highway department should be responsible for damage to mailboxes or property.
- The road agent should cut brush several feet from the edge of all the roads. We shouldn't rely on phone and electric companies to do the job.
- Catch basins on the street to eliminate the flow of the rain water coming onto the owners property and damaging lawns and driveways.
- Splitting of roads (large cracks) on newer roads. Providence Hill needs attention.
- Far too much money and attention goes to playing fields that belong in the road maintenance budget. Our roads are falling apart. That is dereliction of duty.
- The dangerously deteriorated state of WEST SIDE DRIVE. It is UNSAFE!
- Town road maintenance \$ should be taken off the ballot and put in the hands of a neutral party with an annual budget for all road maintenance @ 22 feet wide..
- Too much traffic on West Side Drive.
- Too much truck traffic on Academy Ave.
- Route 125 Bypass
- PLEASE consider sidewalks. Busy roads like Providence Hill have many bikes and walkers in the road. The road is also curvy. This makes it dangerous to be a pedestrian.
- Sidewalks at least on the most dangerous roads like Academy Ave and Meditation Lane
- Improve the lower part of Maple Ave. Rebuild that portion of the road to a nice smooth surface. Put in a nearby lake for the public to swim in and even bathe in. No boating (motor boats though). And add some picturesque features and spots.
- Better repair of roads
- Clearing roadsides of poison ivy - so people could walk. Spraying against mosquitoes so we can enjoy the outdoors.
- Repave the roads
- Roads, gutters, and trees (along roads)
- Correct problems created by road reconstruction!

Seniors:

- That the elderly affairs department should be separate from the police department. I don't feel police officers should be used as an everyday delivery service. One retired person could handle this job, if a schedule of times was available for the elderly.
- Please - as an older person with eye problems. It is difficult to read printing on dark paper. Ivory-white is great, (even beige)
- Senior Housing.
- Senior citizen's who have spent most of their lives trying to acquire a home, may find themselves living on a limited income such as social security, their older homes, older septic systems, etc. need repair and they can not afford the cost of new septic systems and new wells. Therefore sewage and water are and really needed and could solve the problem of pollution.
- For people living on a retirement income taxes should be frozen at age 65 - most retirees have already paid for five generations of schools.

