

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Bedford Planning Board

Jon Levenstein Kelleigh Murphy Harold Newberry Rick Sawyer Jeff Foote Priscilla Malcolm Bill Duschatko Mac McMahan Charles Fairman Matthew Sullivan John Quintal Phil Greazzo Steven Clough Matthew Nichols John Nelson

Bedford Town Council

David Gilbert Denise Ricciardi Bill Duschatko Melissa Stevens Phil Greazzo William Carter Lori Radke Sue Thomas Kelleigh Murphy

Town Staff

Rick Sawyer, Town Manager Becky Hebert, AICP, Planning Director Mark Connors, AICP, Assistant Planning Director Karin Elmer, Planner I Christine Szostak, Land Use Executive Assistant Jillian Harris, Assistant Planning Director Kathleen Ports, Associate Planner

.....

Think Tank Members

Andre Garron Barbara Salvatore Beth Evarts Bob MacPhereson Chris Bandazian Fred Matuszewski Jon Levenstein Karen McGinley Kelleigh Murphy Lindsey Valliere Matthew Sullivan Susan Burns

Consultants

Town Planning & Urban Design Collaborative LLC (TPUDC) City Explained, Inc DuBois & King, Inc Arnett Muldrow & Associates Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) FIREHORSE Creative, LLC

Special Thanks to the following businesses for

their contributions to the Plan: Bedford Village Inn Manchester Country Club Noah's Event Venue Great New Hampshire Restaurants Harvest Market Wal-Mart

Image Credits: Unless otherwise indicated, all images are courtesy of the Town of Bedford; Town Planning & Urban Design Collaborative, LLC; or Google Earth/Google Map Aerials.



"Bedford...looking ahead to tomorrow."

Table of Contents

Introduction 07

- The Value of a Master Plan 8
- What Influences Change? 11
- State & Regional Context 12
- **Guiding Principles** 14
- A User's Guide 16

The Process 19

- **Public Outreach** 20
- 21 Marketing
- 22 Age-Friendly Survey
- **Community Events** 23
- 24 Master Plan Events
- 26 Art Contest
- 27 **Community Input**

Bedford Yesterday 29

- 30 Bedford History
- **Bedford Through the Years** 32

35 **Bedford Today!**

- Population & Demographics 36
- Housing Stock and Market 43
- 48 Community Character & Development
- 62 Economy

4

- 74 Municipal Services & Infrastructure
- 92 **Open Space & Natural Resources**
- 102 Transportation Patterns: Moving Around & Through the Town

121 Conservation & Development Framework

- 122 **Conservation and Development Approach**
- Organization of the Map 124

129 Next Steps for Tomorrow's Bedford

130	Maintain Bedford as an Outstanding
-----	------------------------------------

- Foster a Healthy, Active, Multi-Generational Community 134
- 139
- 141 Conserve the Natural Environment and Manage Change
- 145
- Advance Transportation & Infrastructure Connections 149

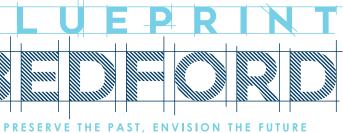
154 Implementation Plan



g Community Preserve Open Spaces, Rural and Historic Character, and Existing Neighborhoods Support Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and a Vibrant & Dynamic Regional Economy



Introduction



Bedford Town Hall Photography By Madonna

The Value of a Master Plan

Every New Hampshire community seeking to regulate the use and development of land is required to develop and have in place a master plan describing the community's vision for the future. NH state law requires the adoption of a master plan in order to exercise basic land use controls, including to adopt a zoning ordinance (NH RSA 674:18) and the continued and consistent updating of the master plan is best practice to ensure that the community is responsive to current conditions. Bedford has a long history of land use planning, with its first Master Plan adopted in 1962. Since then, several comprehensive planning efforts have been undertaken and completed, including four community master plans. These planning efforts have helped shape the Town's current character and general form.

The 2021 Master Plan is a continuation of earlier efforts. The process brought together residents, members of the business community, volunteers and community organizations, and elected officials to have their views heard and ideas presented. The Plan represents a blueprint for long-term, responsible land development and preservation in Bedford.



Bedford Presbyterian Church

The Master Plan seeks to address change in order to both protect and enhance the community's high quality of life and leverage its many assets. To achieve this goal, the Plan embraces a sustainable approach to land development that reflects Bedford's unique character and local values. The Plan is intended as a framework to guide future modifications to the Zoning Ordinance and Site and Subdivision Regulations, the Capital Improvement Plan and future short and long range plans. As such it becomes a valuable tool for evaluating development applications, amending ordinances as necessary and recognition of the need for, as well as control of future capital expenditures, and helps to ensure that choices are consistent with achievable future goals.



8

Bedford Village Common

Bedford Yesterday Bedford Today! Plan Framework

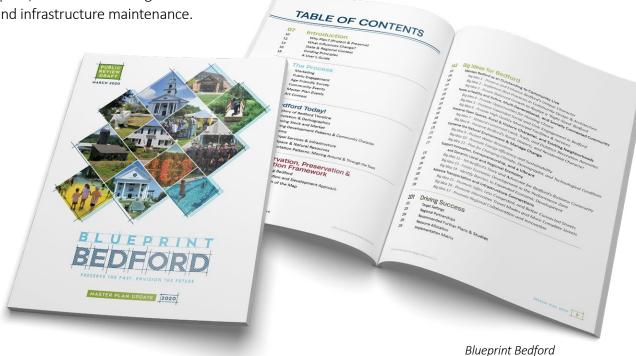


Since 2010, when Bedford's Master Plan was last updated, the community has seen development and redevelopment, particularly along the Route 101 and South River Road corridors. Several other planning documents have also been developed in the past decade, including the Pedestrian & Bicycle Connectivity Plan (2014), the Open Space Plan (2009), and the Hazard Mitigation Plan. These studies supplement this updated Master Plan.

Since 1970, Bedford's population has increased nearly fourfold from 5,589 to 23,233 in 2020. Although population growth rates have declined significantly from those experienced prior to 2000. The annual population growth has averaged approximately 1% per year over the past decade and has numerically reached growth levels not experienced since 1960. Although population growth has stabilized, Bedford continues to enjoy a vibrant housing market and demand for all categories of housing in Bedford exceeds visible supply. Today's challenges include increased pressure on the Town's transportation infrastructure, increased demand for housing and declining affordability, loss of agricultural lands and open space, and an increasing cost of services and infrastructure maintenance.

Bedford's growth has also generated a variety of positive outcomes: better access to amenities and services, additional jobs available for residents, a large selection of attractive and desirable residential neighborhoods, and a larger and more diversified tax base to support the School District and other Town services. This Plan will be an important tool for land use planning in Bedford and maintaining its positive qualities. While only a small amount of land in the Town remains undeveloped and available for new building, changes on some of these sites could greatly impact adjacent neighborhoods or the character of Bedford. Redevelopment opportunities also represent an important consideration.

It is important for the community to visualize how Bedford could evolve. What will Bedford look like in ten to twenty years? What will Bedford feel like? What will define Bedford's identity as a community? The Plan analyzes existing conditions and has gathered input from all sections of the community to form recommendations for guiding the Town's future development and redevelopment.



What Influences Change?

This Plan is only one factor among many that influence whether development takes place and what form it takes. Different development patterns and intensities found in the region are driven mostly by three general growth factors: (1) Market demand, available capital, and developer interests; (2) The local economy and growth outlook; and (3) Government regulation and infrastructure.



Market demand, available capital, and developer interests

Nearly all development in Bedford is pursued by developers and private parties, who decide when and where to pursue a project based on their own interests, market demand, financing considerations, and the likelihood of its success. Banks and other State and Federal institutions, who establish minimum lending criteria, finance most forms of private land development. Lenders are normally cautious in providing developer financing and base their decisions on their confidence that there is market support for the proposed product in a community.



Local economy and growth outlook

The strength and resilience of the local and regional economies also helps influence where and how intensely development occurs in an area. The private sector will consider projected employment, population forecasts, and the general demographics of an area before investing in land development.



Government Regulation and Infrastructure

Government policies and regulations are used both to promote and restrict development in line with Bedford's community vision, including through zoning and land use controls, environmental protections, architectural and design standards, and oversight by local land use boards. Government regulation and zoning impacts permitted uses on a site, and maximum development densities. Although government plays a key role in development, its role is limited and it cannot restrict or promote projects beyond established ordinances, regulations and laws.

10

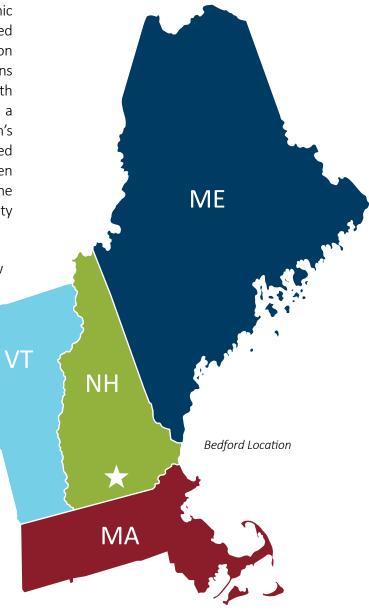
State & Regional Context

Located in Southern New Hampshire at the crossroads of several major routes and bordering the state's largest city of Manchester, Bedford is a vibrant and prosperous community. Originally settled as a self-sustaining agricultural community, Bedford is perhaps most well known as a suburban bedroom community of single-family homes set on larger lots. Bedford borders Manchester, Merrimack, Amherst, Goffstown and New Boston and is part of the Southern NH Planning Commission region and the pending Central/Southern Economic Development District. The Town's highly ranked school system and its geographic location adjacent to major commuting destinations attracts a large population of families with children. Spanning 35 square miles with a population of approximately 22,500, the Town's lower density neighborhoods, heavily wooded landscapes and open spaces have proven popular with residents and helped advance the Town's reputation as a sought after community in which to live.

However, for a suburban community in New Hampshire, Bedford includes a diverse collection of land use forms. The Pines neighborhood, located along the Boynton and Donald Street corridors near the Manchester border, includes more traditional mid-century era neighborhoods with smaller homes set on smaller lots. The South River Road corridor includes a large supply of both commercial and residential development, at a mix of scales and intensities. More than two dozen multifamily and senior housing developments are located in the community. Over time, the demographics of Bedford have changed

as well, in line with the aging trend of the state and national populations. Today, approximately 30 percent of Town residents are over the age of 54.

Despite the Town's suburban reputation, Bedford is a dynamic employment center in its own right. As of the first quarter of 2020, approximately 17,500 jobs were based in the community, making Bedford the fourth largest



employment center in Hillsborough County Commission area. Route 101, the state's most and one of the 10 largest in the state. With heavily traveled east-west highway as well as the F.E. Everett Turnpike and Interstate over 1,000 employers, the Town's economy is reasonably diversified with significant 293 traverse through Bedford providing very footprints in retail, healthcare, manufacturing, convenient access to surrounding areas. finance, and biotechnology. The Town is home Most recently, several very visible changes to a vibrant business community, and several in Bedford have spurred more discussion popular national retailers from Whole Foods regarding Bedford and its future. The widening and Trader Joe's to Target and Kohls.

of Route 101 through the center of the Ironically Bedford's growth as a residential community and growing developer interest in destination, was preceded by the establishment multi-family housing, in a community known of one of the first free standing retail department for its single-family residential character, have stores in the country. This immediately led to the presented important questions regarding building of the areas first enclosed multi-store future development in Bedford. How should shopping mall and rapidly Bedford became a Bedford evolve and develop moving forward? retail shopping destination. The establishment What features of the community are most of the Wayfarer Hotel and Convention Center important to preserve and reinforce? increased the overall popularity of Bedford

as both a meeting and business location and has been followed by the development of modern office, medical and dental offices, professional service companies as well as industrial firms.

Bedford is considered both a suburb to Manchester as well as to Boston and its surrounding areas. Bedford is approximately 55 miles from Boston and within a 45-minute drive of major job centers within the Metropolitan area, including those along the Route 128 and Interstate 495 corridors. Bedford shares borders with Goffstown, New Boston, Merrimack, Amherst and Manchester and falls within the Southern New Hampshire Planning

The

Process

A home in Bedford Town Center

Bedford Today!

Plan Framework



Guiding Principles

The community worked together during the Blueprint Bedford planning process to identify a set of enduring Guiding Principles critical to Bedford's current and future guality of life and economic prosperity. The Principles embody the core philosophy and Town vision expressed by the community. Though local context or specific approaches for achieving these Principles may change over time, the Principles themselves should endure for generations.



A public outreach event for the Master Plan



Maintain Bedford as an outstanding community to live, work and play

Thanks to dedicated citizens, careful governance, and thoughtful planning, Bedford is already a wonderful community. The community will work to preserve and enhance those features that make Bedford, well Bedford, including its high quality services, educational and cultural resources, manageable tax rate, and valued neighborhoods and natural areas.



connected community

Bedford is a healthy, welcoming, and inclusive community both for longtime residents and newcomers. The Town promotes a spirit of voluntarism and public service to help advance community goals. Bedford provides opportunities for all residents, regardless of socioeconomic status, to participate fully in community discussions and decision-making. Cultural and recreation opportunities are high quality and abundant. Housing opportunities are available for residents of all generations and household sizes.



neighborhoods

Bedford will work to preserve its rural landscapes, open spaces, and historic resources. The community will maintain its existing residential neighborhoods while providing opportunities for development in appropriate areas.



A pristine natural environment and a growing economy are not mutually exclusive goals in Bedford. Local government, residents, and businesses are careful stewards of the environment. Bedford supports growth in areas where it is appropriate, including areas where infrastructure is available, and in a manner that is minimally impactful to the environment. The Town works with residents and the private sector to realize environmental goals, including clean air and water and energy conservation. The community is prepared for a changing and dynamic environment, including extreme weather events.



Support innovation, entrepreneurship, and a vibrant and dynamic local and regional economy

Bedford provides opportunities for entrepreneurs to enter the marketplace and thrive. The community supports both a thriving small business community and a strong base of national and international employers. Bedford is a trusted partner to support regional initiatives, including education and workforce training programs and works cooperatively with peer communities to advance the region's economy. Bedford leads by example by embracing technological and economic change to deliver higher quality, streamlined and more cost-effective services.

Introduction

The

Process

Bedford Yesterday

14

Foster a healthy and active, multi-generational, and socially

Preserve open spaces, rural and historic character, and existing

Conserve the natural environment and manage change

Advance transportation and infrastructure connections

Bedford is an accessible and connected community. The Town supports a safe, innovative, and efficient transportation network and leverages opportunities to enhance connectivity for all travel users, including drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders. Where appropriate, the community pursues opportunities, at both the local and regional level, to expand technology and infrastructure connections to support the community's quality of life.

A User's Guide

Think Big Picture

Above all else, this Plan seeks to preserve and protect the qualities of Bedford that make the community so special. The Plan also seeks to capitalize on Bedford's assets to ensure a stronger community resilient to change and external impacts. It offers strategies for addressing potential challenges, and seeks to ensure that all residents enjoy opportunities to prosper and participate fully in community discussions and decisions. Through careful planning and community involvement, Bedford can ensure it remains vital and vibrant for this generation and future ones.

Two primary sources formed the foundations of the recommendations offered in this Plan:

- The public input offered by residents and community members; and,
- A detailed review of existing conditions in Bedford.

Bedford residents, business owners, community leaders and Town officials all generously offered their time to express their opinions and concerns regarding the future of Bedford. For their involvement and for their dedication to Bedford, the planners behind this effort are indebted. Readers will not agree with every recommendation or conclusion in this Plan. The community offered a broad range of opinions and many differing perspectives regarding the Town's future and preferred development. On some issues, no clear consensus emerged.

The Plan underscores and emphasizes those areas of consensus within the community. While

many residents expressed concern regarding increased development in the community, few recommended closing the doors of Bedford to new residents. While some residents welcomed growth, few advocated for uncontrolled or outof-character new development. On subjects where community consensus did not emerge, a review of existing and projected conditions helped form recommendations.

The nation's 35th president once noted that "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past and present are certain to miss the future." (June 25, 1963, Public Papers of the Presidents: John F. Kennedy, 1963). History is full of communities that have suffered because they were too slow to respond to changing conditions. The Covid-19 pandemic is a stark reminder of how quickly daily life can change and how inter-connected Bedford is with the world around it. Bedford is changing and will continue to change. While the Town's values and institutions remain durable, it is important to recognize and respond to changes occurring in and around the community.

To help meet the challenges and opportunities of the future and to tell a fuller story of Bedford, planners analyzed a multitude of demographic, economic, and development data. This analysis, in tandem with the public input received from the community, also helped guide the recommendations of this Plan. The aging of the population, societal changes in household composition and size, rapid technological advances, and changing weather patterns are all developments occurring in Bedford and the world that merit analysis.



The Master Plan is part of a library of plans developed by the Town to guide future growth and development. It is intended to relate to all other Town plans, policies and ordinances in place or currently underway and provide guidance to other government agencies preparing plans or programming projects that may affect the Town's planning efforts. This Plan does not signal the end of dialogue on the important topics it explores; instead it invites further discussion and problem-solving to help address the goals and recommendations included herein.

We Heard You

This Plan is the culmination of an extensive and transparent community planning process. The plan contains a number of "What we Heard" callout boxes, which include some of the thoughts and ideas offered directly by residents. Community members shared their

ideas, concerns and recommendations for Bedford, and as much as possible, that input was incorporated into the Plan.

Help make it happen

This Plan is meant to stimulate discussion of the important topics it explores and to provide a base that invites further discussion and problem solving. Many of the ideas included will take time, money, capacity, and local champions to advance. Some will advance quickly while other may take many years to come to fruition. For this Plan to become a reality, the community must come together to carry its recommendations forward to implementation.







Planapalooza Round Table Discussion

Public Outreach

To develop this Plan, a great deal of time was spent consulting with the experts: the residents of Bedford. Residents and other community stakeholders were invited to participate through a variety of mediums, including offering input online; completing surveys or comment cards; creating artwork; attending interactive workshops, meetings and community round table events; visiting open studio hours; or simply catching the ear of planners and volunteers at community events. The engagement efforts focused on branding and marketing of the Master Plan process, as well as traditional and interactive public input.

A Master Plan "Think Tank," including members from across the community and various Town Boards, helped guide the Master Plan process and public engagement efforts. Representatives from the Town Council, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission, and residents from a diverse roster of professional and demographic backgrounds served on the Master Plan Think Tank.

Residents were invited to offer their comments throughout the process at the project website www.blueprintbedford.com. A project Facebook page was also launched to help disseminate information about the project and upcoming events. The project website was used to post documents and gather public input through discussion boards, direct messages, mapping exercises, and photo-sharing. The website remained active throughout the process and logged more than 4,300 individual visits. Project updates and email invitations were sent directly to stakeholders who registered on the Blueprint Bedford website.





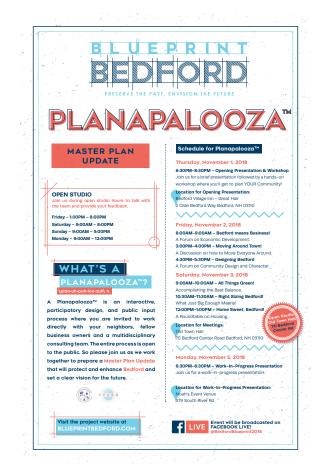


Residents respond to "What do you like best about Bedford?"

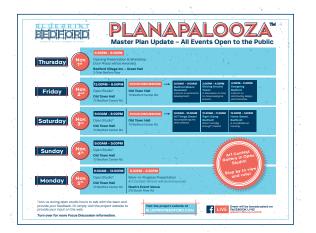
Marketing

Recognizing the power and reach of a good marketing campaign, the Master Plan project team developed a logo and branding to help make the Master Plan easily identifiable and recognizable within the community. With 'blueprint' defined as "a detailed plan of action" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary) the 'Blueprint Bedford' moniker quickly emerged as a brand name for the project that is both descriptive and memorable. TPUDC developed a colorful logo for the project which graphically highlighted the "blueprint" part of the moniker. The name and logo were used in all marketing and communications for the Master Plan effort to help generate interest and recognition of the planning effort in the community.

Project planners worked extensively to help spread the word about the Master Plan effort. Town staff supplied press releases to local media that resulted in coverage of events. Staff also worked with Bedford Community Television to record public service announcements to help generate attendance at Master Plan public events and outreach opportunities. Over 2,000 postcards and fliers were produced and made available at community businesses and public buildings to spread the word regarding Master Plan events and outreach opportunities. Project volunteers helped distribute outreach materials at community events, including at the polls for the August 2018 primary elections.



Planapalooza™ Poster



Planapalooza™ Schedule

Bedford

Yesterday

Age Friendly Survey

In advance of the formal Master Plan process, the Town took advantage of an opportunity to survey residents on their opinions of issues related to how 'age friendly' the community is with the help of the Southern NH Planning Commission (SNHPC) and funding from AARP. The survey evaluated residents' opinions to help discern how welcoming and accessible the community is to those of all ages, but particularly to young adults and older residents. With demographic trends indicating that the region and state's young adult population is falling and that the senior population is growing, the survey sought to help foster dialogue to ensure the community remains attractive for all demographic groups. Topics analyzed included access to housing, transportation, recreation, and economic prosperity. Through the summer of 2018, 817 Bedford residents took the survey to offer their unique perspectives and preferences.

The survey revealed that residents generally preferred the character of the existing housing stock in Bedford. Notably however, residents rated 'Small single-family homes (under 2,500 square-feet)' as the most desirable form of future new housing for the community. Gardenstyle apartments and live/work multi-use development were rated as the least desirable forms of new housing. Residents expressed support for a community center in Bedford, but were split as to whether taxpayer funds should be devoted to its development. The survey revealed broad support for walkability improvements in Bedford, with more than twothirds of residents opining that the Town does not invest enough in walkability improvements and more than 75 percent indicating that they would utilize a shared-use path if one was available in the community.



Bedford Age Friendly Survey Promotional Material



Community Events

Project planners and volunteers utilized existing School Interact Club to make presentations, community events and took the Master Plan solicit additional input, or to station a Master process "on the road" to meet with community Plan booth where attendees could drop by to organizations and gather additional public input. offer their input. Comment card stations were Planners attended several events, including Old also provided at the Bedford Public Library and Town Days, the Bedford Rotary Italian Dinner, the Town Office Building where residents could and meetings of the Bedford Men's Club, provide input. Lions Club, Rotary Club, and the Bedford High

The

Process

Outreach at Old Town Dav

Master Plan Events

The project kickoff event, held in September 2018, attracted nearly 150 residents to the Manchester Country Club. This event provided residents a chance to learn more about the Master Plan process and to offer some of their early input. Scheduled on the heels of an application for a large multifamily development, the issue of growth and development was a major point of discussion at the event. While some residents expressed support for the continued growth of the community, a more common sentiment was for increased controls and more regulation of development, particularly for multi-family development. Bedford Community Television (BCTV) filmed the event and broadcast it live.

Planapalooza[™], held from November 1 through November 5, 2018, marked the centerpiece of the public engagement process for the Master Plan. Made up of five days of public engagement programming, this intensive and interactive series of events brought the community together to discuss a number of issues important to Bedford's future and to work collaboratively to generate a vision to drive policy decisions for the Town. The project team set up a full working office and studio at the Old Town Hall where residents were invited to drop by at their convenience to meet directly with project planners and lend their input through one-on-one personalized interactions. This provided a welcome complement to the public engagement efforts for residents who may have been uncomfortable speaking at large public meetings.

On the first evening of the charrette, TPUDC delivered an introductory presentation on comprehensive planning and the project at the Bedford Village Inn. Immediately following the presentation, project planners facilitated

a hands-on workshop where the public was invited to roll up their sleeves, brainstorm their ideas and identify areas of the Town they love as well as areas that need improvement.

On the second and third day of the event series, Bedford residents, business owners, and other stakeholders were invited to participate in a series of community round table discussions at the Old Town Hall on subjects important to the Town's future, including:

- "Bedford Means Business" focused on issues of economic development;
- "Moving Around Town" focused on transportation issues in the community;
- "Designing Bedford" focused on community design and character;
- "All Things Green" focused on land conservation, preservation, and recreation;
- "Right Sizing Bedford" focused on what is most desirable level of growth and development in the community; and,
- "Home Sweet, Bedford" focused on housing issues in Bedford.

All of the community discussions were extremely well attended by the public, with the large conference table attracting several rows deep of participants. For those unable to attend in person, all events were streamed online via Facebook Live.

During the remainder of Planapalooza™, members of the public continued to filter into the studio, adding their ideas and talking to the team. Feeding off the input offered by the community, the project team showcased progress made so far during the final night of the event series.





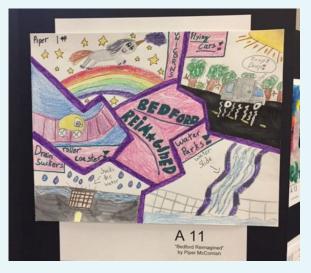


Planapalooza[™] Events



Art Contest

The Bedford community was invited to participate in a Master Plan Art Contest to showcase the creativity and artistic qualities of residents. The contest allowed children and adults alike to use their creativity to envision a future Bedford or share with the community their favorite places in the community. Thirtyfive beautiful and highly creative entries were received in the photography and drawing categories and displayed in the Planapalooza™ studio space. The winners were recognized at the Planapalooza™ closing event.





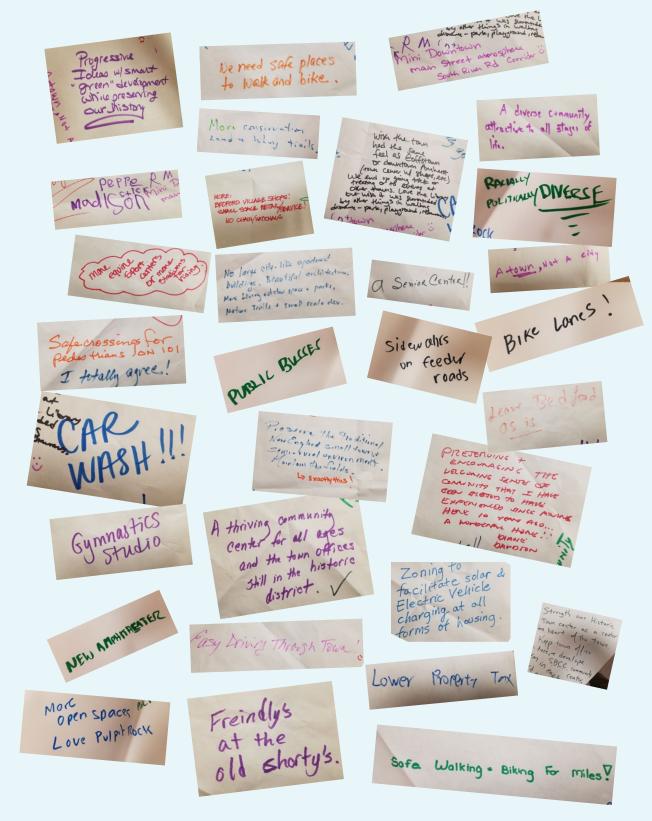
Master Plan Art Contest Promotional Material





From top: "Bedford Re-imagined" by Piper McCornish; "Flying Over Joppa Hill" by Nikita Bhat; "The New Bedford" by Kelsey Beelhman





Bedford residents had an opportunity to offer their comments for the Master Plan at a number of public events.

The

26

Bedford Today!

Plan Framework





Bedford Yesterday



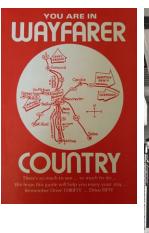
Bedford History













Foreign News Form Page NEW HAMPSHIRE SUNDAY NEWS Columnists Editorials A UNIQUE 'DO-IT-YOURSELF' HOUSING PROJECT Free Enterprise Pays in Bedford \$500 Scrub Pine Grov Now Boasts 100 Home Assessed at \$420.000

From right to left from top: 1.) A turn-of-the-century view of Bedford Town Center, 2.) The Bedford Mall in the 1970s. 3.) The Pines neighborhood was developed during the postwar period. 4.) The Bedford Hills development at the corner of Routes 101 and 114 was previously occupied by a large poultry farm. 5.) Traffic along South River Road in the 1950s. 6.) Bedford's train station was previously located in the center of town near the presentday Bedford High School. 7.) The Wayfarer Hotel and Convention Center was a regional destination.



Bedford's present and future is guided by its Bedford's history is also emblematic of historic past. Reminders of the Town's history, from rural national trends, particularly as automobiles farmhouses and 18th century homes, to John came to dominate transportation and land Goffe's Mill and remnants of the old estates use patterns in the mid-twentieth century. along South River Road, are common sites The construction of the former Jordan Marsh across the landscape of the town. Bedford's Department Store on South River Road in history is deeply embedded in the fabric of Bedford in 1960, marked an early shift of retail the community and helps inform its future. and commercial development from urban Residents commonly noted that they view the areas to more suburban locations convenient community as a rural one, consistent with the to major highways. This was quickly followed by origins of the town's development. other major development along the corridor, including the Wayfarer Hotel and Convention Center, a major hospitality destination and center for political events, and other major retail developments like the Bedford Mall, one of the early indoor shopping malls in New Hampshire. Infrastructure availability and zoning requirements have ensured that most of Bedford's major commercial development remains along the South River Road corridor.

Bedford developed largely as a self-sustaining agricultural community. Though it has evolved from its earliest days, the Town Center offers some glimpses of how Bedford appeared in earlier centuries. The Town was lightly settled. Homes were set on large properties and farming was common across the community. Over time, the growth of Manchester spread into Bedford's northeast corner, where development is more While Bedford's future is undetermined, like its dense and compact. The Pines neighborhood, with ranch and Cape-style homes set on past, it will likely be guided by larger societal small lots in a gridded street pattern, offers developments and trends. However, Bedford's an excellent example of a common post-war future will be led most chiefly by its residents and their aspirations for the community and the suburban housing development. From the 1960s forward, Bedford's growth intensified days and years ahead. This plan is one tool of and a community of a few thousand grew into many to help document and chart that future. one of the larger communities in the Southern New Hampshire region.

> Images from left: 1.) This home still stands at the corner of Meetinghouse and Liberty Hill Roads. 2.) The Bedford Zoo and Ballroom previously stood at the site of the Bedford Grove Shopping Center and hosted marathon dance sessions. 3.) French's Store was a landmark in Bedford Town Center for decades (the Presbyterian Church steeple is visible in the background).

Introduction

Bedford Yesterday

The

Process







Bedford Through the Years

1750

The township was incorporated and named Bedford, by Governor Wentworth in honor of the Duke of Bedford, John Russell. A Board of Selectman with a Town Moderator and Town Clerk is established and there are approximately 50 families living in Bedford.

0 1832

The Presbyterian Church is built.



1900

900

0

Bedford celebrates its 150th anniversary. The Manchester & Milford Railroad opens runs from Grasmere Station to Bedford, Merrimack, Amherst and Milford, carrying freight and passengers.

1909-1910

The original Town Hall burns down and the current Town Hall is built on the same site.

1925

Train service to Bedford is discontinued. There are now 150 automobiles in town. Students begin to attend West High School in Manchester.

1936

The Town votes to establish a Zoning Commission.

1950

Bedford celebrates

The population

is 2,176.

1953

1955

its 200th anniversary.

2,176

POPULATION

The first Zoning Ordinance

completed through Bedford.

is adopted. Route 101 is

The Everett Turnpike is completed connecting Bedford to Nashua

and the Massachusetts border.

1962

1980

population 9,481

The first professional planners, Metcalf & Eddy are hired to write the Town's first Master Plan. The Bedford Planning Board adopts the Plan in 1962.

2007

0



1990

9,481

POPULATION

Population is 12,563 approximately six times the population in 1950.



1965-1967

Jordan Marsh opens their first store in New Hampshire. The Bedford Mall opens in 1967. The population in 1970 is approximately 5,859.

3,636

POPULATION

1960



0

2000

Interstate 293 through Bedford is completed, connecting Bedford to Boston. Population is 3,636.

1961

NH Route 101 is re-routed as a limited access highway from Route 114 in Bedford across the Merrimack River to Manchester.

> The Process

Bedford Yesterday

1783

750

Isaac Riddle establishes the first store in Bedford. There are many small mills in town including sawmills and gristmills, turning and shingle mills, bark mills, cider mills and tanneries in town.



1850

Bedford celebrates its centennial.

The population is 1,913.

800

Population Data: US Census Bureau 0

Bedford High School opens. The first graduating class is in 2011.



2011

The Raymond Wieczorek Drive opens, creating the first direct access between Bedford, Londonderry and Manchester-Boston Regional Airport.

2017

Route 101 construction begins to widen the highway from two lanes to four between Route 114 intersection and Wallace Road.



2018

Blueprint Bedford Master Plan planning process begins. Bedford's population is now estimated at 22,458 according to the U.S. Census.



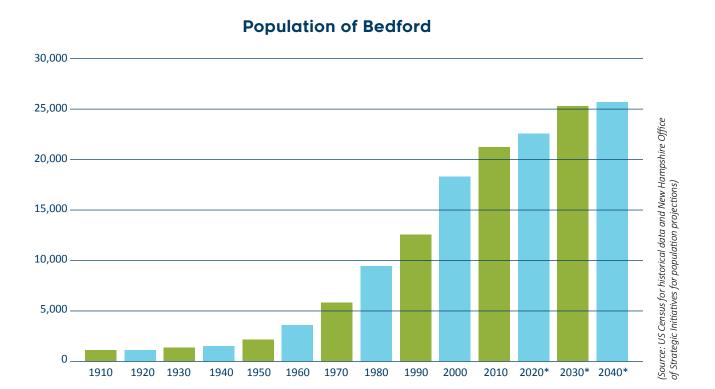
Bedford Today!

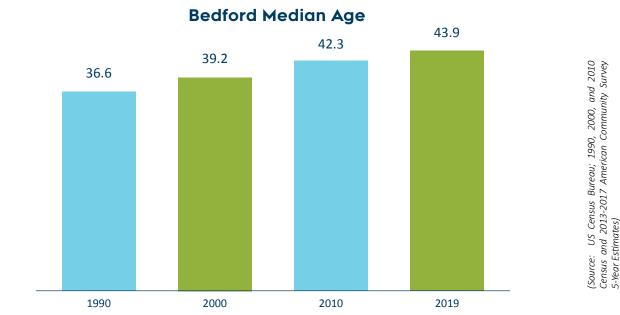
Plan Framework



Population & Demographics

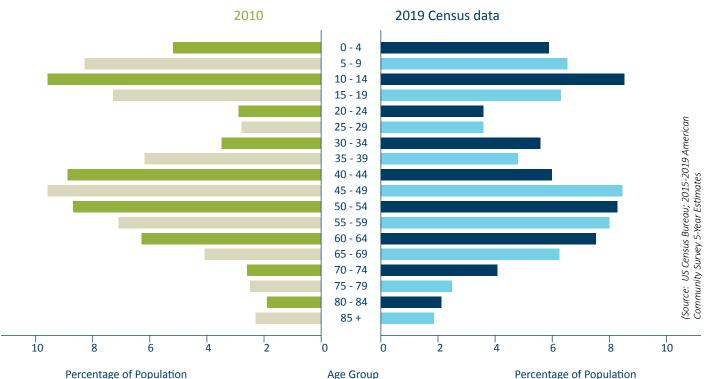
Population Growth and Projections





For 150 years, through the 1800s all the way to 1950, Bedford's population was remarkably stable, fluctuating between 1,102 to 2,176 residents over that time. However, between 1950 and 2000, Bedford experienced transformative growth, increasing in population approximately eightfold from 2,176 to 18,274 residents. Most of this growth took place in the form of single-family housing. In more recent years, as the Town has neared buildout status, growth has begun to taper off. The growth rate of 16 percent between 2000 and 2010 was the lowest recorded since the 1920s and growth is anticipated to be even less for the ten years ending in 2020.

Like New Hampshire and the nation, Bedford is aging. Approximately one third of Bedford residents currently fall between the ages of 45 to 64. The median age has jumped from 39.2 in 2000 to 44.1 in 2017, closely mirroring increases at the state level. The share of residents age 60 and over has increased at an even higher rate and close to one-quarter of Bedford's population now falls within that age bracket, suggesting stronger future demands for services for older persons.



Percentage of Population

Share of Bedford Population by Age Group (2010-2019)

Bedford Today!

Plan Framework



Income, Education, & Household Size

Bedford is generally regarded as an affluent community. Bedford's median household income is \$137,525. This is nearly double that of New Hampshire at \$70,936 and 84% higher than the median household income of the United States at \$59,039. In 2017, the US Census ranked Bedford's median household income as the second highest of the 234 municipalities in the state. Nearly two thirds of the households in Bedford earn over \$100,000 per year and over one in every five households earns over \$250,000 per year. The community has only 2.2% of families below the poverty rate.

Not all families and individuals in Bedford are affluent. Approximately 10 percent of Bedford households earn less than \$35,000 a year. Slightly more than three percent of students in the Bedford School District qualify for free or reduced school lunches. Approximately, two percent of Bedford households live below the federal poverty threshold. (Sources: US Census American Community Survey data, 2018 and NH Department of Education Division of Education Analytics and Resources). The Bedford Food Pantry, among many other service providers in Bedford and across the region, helps address socioeconomic needs in town by providing access to adequate food for Bedford families and individuals.

Bedford is known widely as a family friendly community, and the average household size, at 2.75 persons, is higher than many surrounding communities. However, the average household size in Bedford has followed national trends and declined somewhat over time. For example, in 2000 the average household size was measured at 2.85.

Source of Data: Environics

\$137,525 median household income in Bedford



of Bedford residents 25 and up have a **Bachelor's degree or** higher

(Sources: US Census Bureau 2015-2019 American Community Survey)

Schools and Enrollment

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the school system to Bedford, as it is central to the community's identity and quality of life. No other institutional feature of the community helps attract families, and keeps them in Bedford, more than its schools. The Bedford School District typically ranks in the Top 5 School Districts in New Hampshire by national platforms like Niche.com. At least one national ranking even placed the District in the Top 20 School Districts nationwide.¹ Two Bedford schools have been honored in recent years as Blue Ribbon Schools, a designation by the US Department of Education celebrating schools across the country with the highest levels of academic achievement or those with the most success in closing achievement gaps between demographic groups.

While awards and rankings are helpful acknowledgments, most Bedford families noted that their personal experiences, including the academics, dedication of teachers and staff, a tight-knit sense of community, and an assortment of social and extracurricular opportunities, are what helped draw them to the school system and keep them engaged in the community. Many residents noted that the School District was at the center of their social networks.

The Bedford School District includes six facilities serving students throughout the Town:

- Memorial School, Peter Woodbury School, and Riddle Brook School (neighborhood elementary schools serving grades K-4)
- McKelvie Intermediate School (serving grades 5 and 6)
- Ross A. Lurgio Middle School (serving grades 7 and 8)

The

Process

Bedford High School (serving grades 9 through 12) The high school opened in 2007, ending the longstanding arrangement of tuitioning Bedford students to Manchester West High School.

What we heard...

...about schools & enrollment

"We moved here for the schools, it's really what Bedford is known for."

"I am getting a good education and the [school district] prepares you for the future."

"The extracurricular opportunities available to the kids in Bedford are phenomenal."

> "We will stay in Bedford for as long as my kids are enrolled in the schools."

"The School District is the best thing about Bedford."

¹ National Council for Home Safety and Security 'Best School Districts in America' https://www. alarms.org/best-school-districts-in-america/



The opening of Bedford High School in 2007 cemented the community's reputation for its high quality schools and attracted growth in enrollment. It is notable for example, that while Bedford is only the twelfth largest municipality in New Hampshire, the Bedford School District boasts the fourth highest enrollment in the state. This reflects the desirability of the school district and the fact that many families with children choose to live in the community specifically for its schools. While this has helped Bedford cultivate an image as an energetic, family-friendly community, it also places additional demands on taxpayers as the School District accounts for more than 70 percent of property tax bills.

Additional growth and overcrowding represent significant concerns in the community as Bedford High School is currently above capacity and overcrowded. For the 2019-2020

school year, the Bedford School District had a total enrollment of 4,434 students, down slightly from 4,450 the previous year. School enrollment has remained nearly constant since the 2009-2010 school year, when total enrollment was 4,416. Although enrollments are above capacity at the high school level, enrollment levels in the lower grades have been steadily decreasing, and as these grade levels matriculate to the high school, overcrowding should subside at the high school level. For example, the total enrollment for grade levels just below the high school (grades 5 through 8) is approximately 5 percent lower than the high school enrollment. Enrollment levels at the elementary grade levels (grades 1 through 4) are even lower in Bedford, with 254 fewer students enrolled in those grade levels than the combined current high school enrollment. This suggests that at least over the next eight to ten years, enrollment levels should continue



Aerial view of Bedford High School and the Ross A. Lurgio Middle School

to subside at the high school. At this time, School enrollments can change significantly over the Bedford School District does not foresee time. Many school districts in New Hampshire the need to expand its facilities. The School were unprepared for enrollment spikes of the 1990s and early 2000s and were forced to District publishes enrollment projections up to three years into the future. The District notes invest in costly new facilities to accommodate. that enrollment can be difficult to forecast as Bedford is somewhat unique in that the school a number of variables can impact projections district is so well regarded that many families and small variations over time can significantly move to the community specifically for the impact the forecasts. The District projects schools. Special attention should continue to be enrollment will very gradually decline out to the paid to school enrollment levels to ensure that 2022-2023 school year, falling to 4,325. That new development does not place onerous new would reflect a 2.4 percent decline from the infrastructure demands on the School District current school year and a 4.6 percent decline and Bedford taxpavers. from the peak enrollment school year of 2016-2017.



The

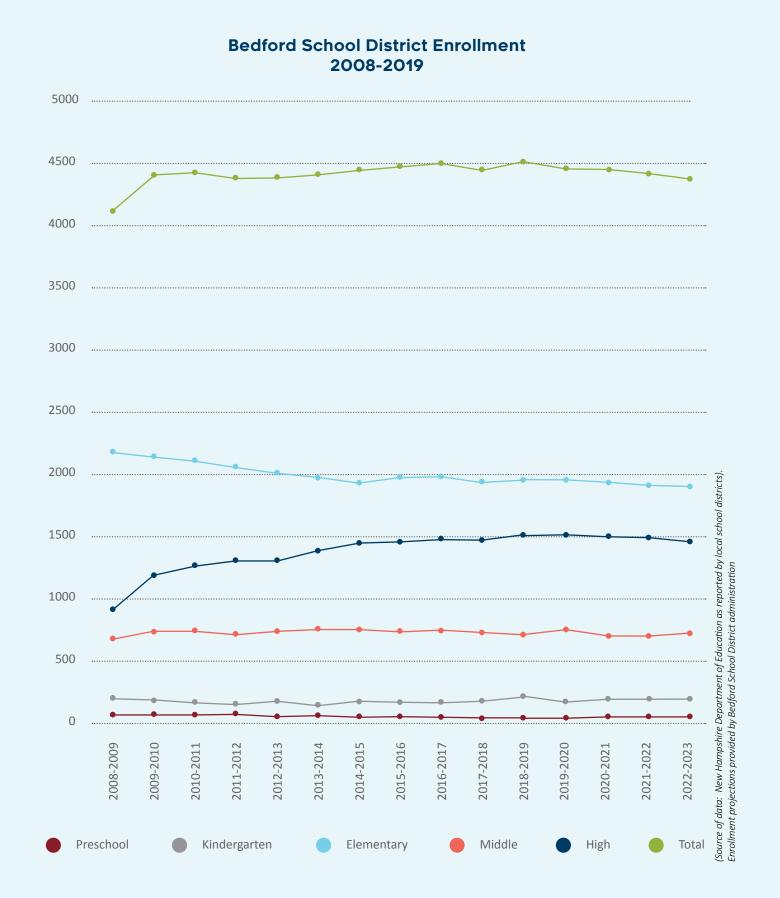
Process

Student catching the school bus

Bedford Today!

Plan Framework





Housing Stock and Market

Bedford's residential neighborhoods, which make up over 90 percent of the Town's land area, are generally tidy, attractive, and desirable, and most are set in wooded or natural environments. While Bedford does have a significant share of larger homes, it also boasts some surprising diversity in housing options.

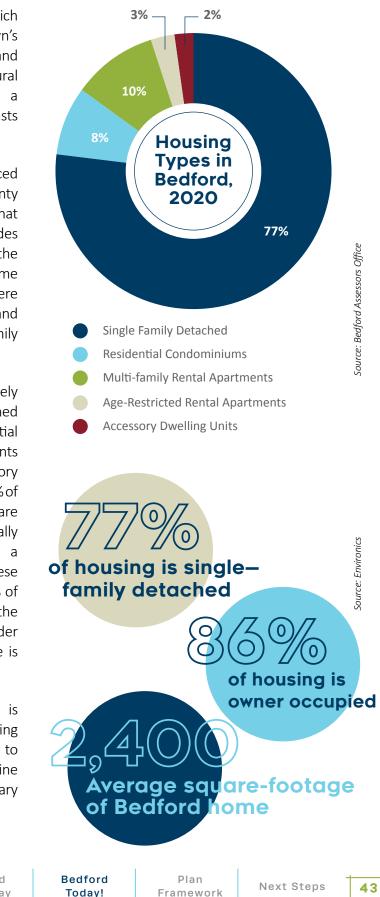
The housing market in Bedford has experienced a significant change over the past twenty years. The single-family housing "boom" that characterized Bedford's growth for decades began to taper off in the mid 2000s as the availability of land for single-family home construction declined. At the same time, there remains a strong market regional demand for new housing, and several multi-family developments have been built or proposed.

Approximately 77% of Bedford's approximately 8,077 housing units are single-family detached homes. Approximately 8% are residential condominiums, 13% are rental apartments (including age-restricted) and 2% are accessory dwelling units. Home ownership stands at 86% of the households and 79% of the households are occupied by families. Bedford has traditionally been a family-oriented community with a large share of families with children and these figures are illustrative. However, only 42.3% of the households in Bedford have children in the home and the median age of the householder (the person(s) in whose name(s) the home is owned or rented) in all households is 56.

These figures suggest a community that is gradually undergoing a shift in the housing market as the community ages, and relates to other indicators in Bedford such as a decline in enrollment in kindergarten and elementary schools.

The

Process



According to 2019 information maintained by the Bedford Assessing Department, the majority of Bedford homes and condominiums are valued between \$300,000 and \$500,000. Slightly more than 55 percent of the Town's ownership housing falls within this range. But there is diversity in the range of housing values and a much larger share of homes are valued under \$300,000 (17.16%) than those valued over \$800,000 (5.61%). However, Bedford's homes do skew larger than most communities. The median size of homes in Bedford hovers around 2,400 square-feet, according to the Assessing Department.

The Planning Department tracks housing inventory that is age-restricted, incomerestricted, and institutional in nature. Currently, there are 444 age-restricted independent housing units for older persons, and 392 assisted living units, as well as 459 nursing home beds at four different nursing home facilities. A total of

Accessory Dwelling Units in Bedford

referred to as an in-law apartment or granny flat,

is a separate apartment or living space attached to a single-family home. Examples might include a

ADUs are permitted in Bedford, provided certain requirements are met, including that the units must be clearly accessory to the primary residence and less than 1,000 square-feet in area, that they are residence and that the home still appears single-family in nature, they do not tend to be noticeable and attract controversy in the way that large new multi-family developments do. Detached accessory dwelling units, sometimes referred to as backyard cottages, are not currently permitted in Bedford.

2019 Median Assessed Value of Residential Homes & Condominiums



Although Bedford is generally regarded as an affluent community, approximately 70 percent of homes and condominiums are assessed at less than \$500,000.

68 independent senior housing units are rent-71% higher than that of New Hampshire at or purchase-subsidized as affordable units. and \$239,700. The median gross rent represents a 24 additional affordable units were recently similar trend. Bedford's median gross rent is approved. Additionally, 21 assisted living units \$1,423, which is 40% higher than that of New are rent-subsidized as affordable units. Finally, Hampshire and 50% higher than the United there are approximately 135 accessory dwelling States. This reflects the health of the regional units (ADUs) in Bedford. Sometimes referred to economy, Bedford's high median income and in-law apartments or granny flats, ADUs are the limited supply of high quality rental housing. often used to house family members but they In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically may also be rented out on the private real impacted the local and regional real estate estate market.

markets. Although the number of homes on the There are 102 income-restricted workforce market declined due to restrictions associated housing units in Bedford. Several recently with the pandemic, real estate values increased approved workforce housing projects will add significantly as buyers from more urban areas an additional 83 units. The median assessed sought to enter the market. Areas like Bedford value of owner-occupied housing in Bedford have increased in popularity as many buyers is \$418,750, which is more than double that have sought out larger homes in less densely of the United States median at \$185,700 and populated areas that can better accommodate

The

Process



of households have

children residing in

the home

Source: Environics



work-from-home arrangements and social distancing from neighbors. According to early estimates, real estate values grew between 5 to 10 percent in Bedford in 2020 alone.

Demand for smaller homes and condominiums is high in Bedford. The assessed value per square foot of land in these developments is triple that of larger lot single-family developments in other parts of Bedford, reflecting the strong demand for these forms of housing. Although several multi-family and workforce developments have recently been built, and there remains a healthy supply of larger single-family homes, no townhouse or cottage-style developments have been constructed in recent years.

Multi-family growth in Bedford has been more sporadic since 2001, with ten years of no building permits issued for multi-family units at all. However, in more recent years several multifamily and institutional developments have joined Bedford's housing inventory with others under construction or recently approved. A 133-unit apartment building opened on South River Road in 2020, and a 150-bed assisted living facility opened in 2021. A 96-unit workforce housing development is under construction on Chestnut Drive and a 238-unit elderly and workforce housing development was approved in 2020 off the South River Road corridor.

The strong demand for multi-family construction in a community accustomed to single-family residential neighborhoods has caused concern among residents. While the overall growth rate of housing each year in Bedford has remained nearly constant since 2001, the shift to multi-family residential growth has become

a flash point for discussion about the future of Bedford. There is concern in Bedford that the developments will negatively alter the character of the community and overwhelm the ability of the Town to provide adequate public services.

Hampshire passed statutory New requirements in 2008 requiring municipalities to provide "reasonable and realistic opportunities" for workforce housing. (Source: New Hampshire Workforce Housing law (RSA 674:58-61; Chapter 299, Laws of 2008 (SB





342)). In Bedford, rent for workforce housing In Bedford, a development must set aside at units must not exceed 30 percent of the gross least 25 percent of its units as income restricted income of a household earning no more than to be considered a workforce housing project. Existing examples of such projects include the 60 percent of the median income for a three person household for the Manchester NH Bedford Hills apartments on Cooper Lane, area. the Bedford Green apartment building on Hawthorne Drive, and the Kensington Woods Currently, Bedford permits workforce housing apartment building on Kensington Lane.

in most commercial and industrial districts, aside from commercially-zoned land on NH A continuing challenge for the community will Route 101 and on parcels in the Performance be to ensure it meets the requirements of Zone without frontage on South River Road or the workforce housing legislation while also the F.E. Everett Turnpike. Multi-family workforce addressing the concerns of residents who value developments must be served by public water the single-family residential character of the and sewer facilities, which restricts the locations community and want to maintain as much of in which they are permitted. Single-family and the Town's rural and residential character as attached workforce housing is also permitted possible. in the Town's single-family residential districts, but none have yet been constructed.

The

Process

The Bedford Green apartment building



Community Character & Development

The Town of Bedford covers 33.1 square miles. The community's character is strongly tied to the historic agricultural use of the land and residents cherish the elements of traditional New England rural charm, which are still evident throughout the town. Bedford was settled as a rural farming community with lowdensity development and no central business district. During the late 20th century, the Town grew rapidly and the majority of Bedford's farms and woodlots were converted to singlefamily residential neighborhoods with average lot sizes of 1.5 acres. The community has striven to preserve elements that exemplify the historic rural character including the tree-lined streets, stone walls, open spaces, and barns. Bedford's physical form is shaped by rolling hills and valleys with pockets of low-lying wetlands. Streams generally drain towards the Merrimack River, which also forms the town's eastern boundary.

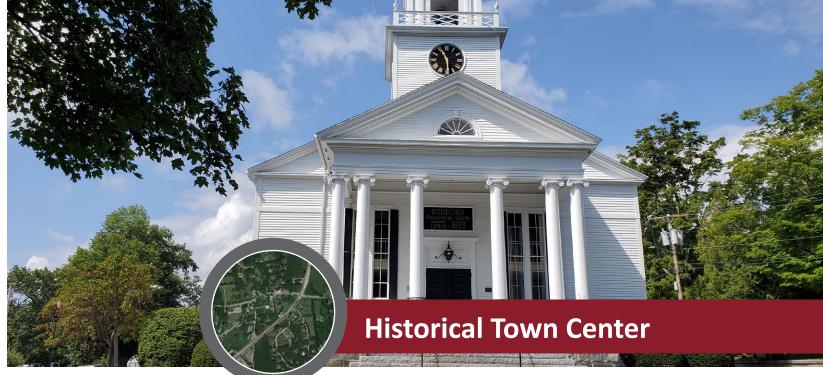
Although the majority of Bedford's land use is residential, Bedford is not simply a bedroom community. Significant areas of commercial development are located along Route 101 and South River Road. Route 101 bisects the town of Bedford and divides the largest area of residential development. The community has been careful to balance the rural character with smaller strips of commercial areas along Route 101. It has always been a priority to preserve segments of natural land along Route 101 and to discourage overdeveloping the corridor. The limited areas of commercially zoned land were originally established in the 1960s and have remained largely unchanged over the years. Wooded areas buffer commercial development from the nearby residential neighborhoods and create a visual break from the commercial development. There is a strong contrast between residential and commercial land uses

and it has always been a priority to protect the established neighborhoods from development impacts. Since the 2010 Master Plan, there has been a significant increase in development activity along Route 101. Including the Bedford Hills mixed-use development, expansion of Bedford Village Inn and the construction of several new businesses.

The South River Road corridor contains the most concentrated area of commercial development. This corridor extends from the Manchester city line southerly approximately six miles to Merrimack and generally runs parallel to the path of the F.E. Everett Turnpike and the Merrimack River. This area includes the largest tract of commercial land in Bedford and encompasses approximately 1500 acres. This Performance Zone has been identified as an opportunity for redevelopment and mixed-use development.

The pages that follow describe the character of eight unique areas found in Bedford.





The historical Town Center is located in advocated for more community events and the geographic heart of Bedford west of activity in the Town Center. Bedford does not the Meetinghouse Road and Route 101 have a traditional downtown or village center intersection. The Town Center is home to with a diversity of uses and high levels of activity. Bedford's landmark buildings including the Old The buildings are somewhat spread out, and Town Hall and the Bedford Presbyterian Church. the area has seen very few changes over the This area includes a cluster of historic homes years. The land is zoned Residential Agricultural and municipal facilities, including the public with a pocket of Neighborhood Commercial. library, municipal offices, and Town Common. The Town Center is further protected by the The area has a strong sense of place and is a Historic Overlay District. source of community pride, though some have

What we heard... "Preserve the history, the stone walls, and make it walkable."



"Add a demolition delay ordinance [for areas outside the Historic District], so developers cannot just demolish something."

"There should be more of a 'Town Center' feel to the area by the Old Town Hall and Library."





The "Pines" is a small traditional residential neighborhood, located in the northeast corner of Bedford, bordering Manchester and the village of Pinardville in Goffstown. Route 101 and Route 114 form the southern and western boundary for the neighborhood. Most of the older homes in this area are located on small lots of approximately 0.2 to 0.5 acre and unlike the newer residential developments, the street network is gridded. Many of the homes date back to the post World War II residential building boom. The residents in the "Pines"

enjoy convenient access to Manchester and Goffstown as well as the benefits of a more compact development pattern. There are a few commercial buildings along Boynton Street and Donald Street, but the neighborhood primarily consists of single-family homes. The land is zoned Neighborhood Commercial and General Residential. Northerly portions of the Performance Zone also include several small neighborhoods off of South River Road, which include similar lot sizes and built characteristics to the Pines.

Bedford's largest areas of commercial general office and medical office buildings, development are located along South River regional commercial shopping centers and Road and Route 101. South River Road serves as numerous small businesses. This area of a major regional commercial center while the Bedford has absorbed development pressures Route 101 corridor includes smaller scale retail and helped to balance the Town's need for and office uses. Route 101 is characterized by services and increased tax revenue. In Bedford. nodes of commercial development along the commercial development is typically oriented corridor with stand-alone shops and offices towards the street with surface parking lots and smaller scale shopping centers and office located between the road and the buildings. parks. The uses permitted in the Performance Zone are broad and the district is characterized by a large mix of development types, including

What we heard...

"I would love to see more walking and biking paths. It's great for health and fitness and getting to meet your neighbors."

What we heard...

"Route 101 could be more of a Town Center, with small boutiques and local shops and more the center of our community."

"I have everything I need within six miles of me."

50

"The neighborhoods aren't too congested with traffic which makes it great for running, and walking my dog."



"Bedford has successfully evolved in the last 20 years to stay relevant and desirable today."

"More mom and pop shops and fewer big chains"





Bedford is known for its attractive single family residential neighborhoods. Nearly 90 percent of Bedford's land area is characterized by singlefamily residential development with a minimum 1.5-acre lot size. Bedford's neighborhoods are deeply valued by residents, who enjoy the privacy and wooded surroundings they afford. Most subdivisions are laid out in a circuitous road network with limited direct connections between adjacent neighborhoods and major roadways. Both traditional subdivisions and open-space developments, where residences

are more clustered but common open space is preserved, are permitted in Bedford. Bedford's neighborhoods are largely car-dependent and pedestrian facilities are limited. Attached accessory dwelling units are permitted in all single-family areas of town. Homes in Bedford tend to be larger, owing to the Town's high median household incomes and the large share of families with children in the community.

Multi-family development in Bedford consists predominantly of garden-style apartment buildings. Although there are some townhouseand detached-style developments located in the Apartment Residential District off of South River Road and a townhouse development located off of Donald Street. The largest concentration of multifamily housing is located in the Performance Zone off of the South River Road. Some multifamily developments are agerestricted and many also contain workforce



housing units. The multifamily housing complexes in Bedford are consistent with suburban design and typically include shared parking areas, significant landscaping and convenient access to major thoroughfares. Most existing garden-style apartment developments in Bedford consist of larger buildings of at least 25 units each that are three to four stories tall.

Office & Industrial

Π

#

Office buildings within Bedford are scattered throughout the Town's commercial districts including the Office District, Commercial District, and Performance Zone. The largest concentration of office buildings is located along Constitution Drive in the Office District. In general, the office uses range significantly in scale from single-story to multi-stories and is located along the major thoroughfares or in office parks. Parking is typically arranged around the site in surface lots. These buildings, while located in a variety of places, are physically separated from other uses such as homes and commercial development. Industrial development is much less prominent and mainly located in the Performance Zone and the Industrial District off of Route 114. The industrial uses are similarly located in larger buildings with large parking areas, the buildings are also set back from the roadway and separated from nearby uses.

Π

Institutional and civic uses in Bedford include the public schools, golf course, municipal office buildings, public safety complex, recreational uses, churches, and other government offices. With the exception of the cluster of civic buildings within the Town Center, the civic and institutional uses are spread throughout the Town. Parking is typically within large surface lots, setback from the roadway. The buildings range in scale and architectural design. Older schools in Town were often incorporated into

What we heard...

54

H

"I like that the commercial/industrial and residential is separate in Bedford." "The South River Road corridor is a great opportunity. The standard should be high for new development there."

"Bedford is saturated with retail. The best fit is white collar businesses." What we heard...

"The library is the place to be in Bedford—the programs they have are wonderful."



From the top, left to right: 1.) The Elliot Urgent Care Center on Leavy Drive. 2.) The Optics 1, Inc. research and development facility on Leavy Drive. 3.) A large industrial facility on Iron Horse Drive. 4.) A multi-tenant office building on Commerce Drive in the Performance Zone. From the top, left to right: 1.) Bedford's public safety departments, including the Fire Department, were lauded by many residents. 2.) The Public Works Garage on Chubbock Road. 3.) The Bedford Public Library at night. 4.) Bedford's Middle and High School facility on Nashua Road.



Civic & Institutional

the surrounding neighborhoods. The three elementary schools are located within the neighborhoods they serve and the intermediate, middle and high school are centrally located with access to major thoroughfares. Religious institutions of all denominations and sizes can be found throughout the community.

"The Police and Fire Departments are the best! You can always depend on those guys." "The [Bedford] School District is well organized and they prepare you for the future ahead."

Rural Living & Farms

Rural residential areas in Bedford are characterized by expanses of natural unfragmented open spaces with a high degree of separation between buildings. Homes are typically located on large lots and the land is developed at lower residential densities. The land was historically used for agricultural purposes and forests were managed as woodlots. There are a few remaining active farms in Bedford and some of these areas are now large estate lots or "gentleman" farms.

Agricultural properties in Bedford are scarce due to past development pressures for new single-family homes. These larger undeveloped tracts of land are highly valued in Bedford for their agricultural history, natural resources, and scenic value. The largest concentration of rural land is located in the northwest corner of town, along the New Boston, Goffstown and Amherst borders. This development pattern best exemplifies the highly valued rural character of Bedford.

What we heard...

56

"I like that Bedford has a small country feelplease keep urbanization out of Bedford."

"People love Bedford the way it is-a more rural, oldfashioned, traditional town."

"Pulpit Rock is such a wonderful community asset."





Villeneuve Farm

Bedford Yesterday Bedford Today!

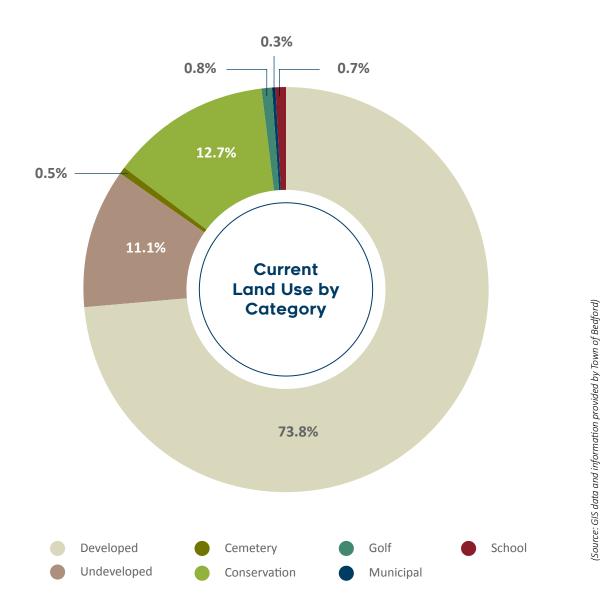
Plan Framework



Developed and Undeveloped Land

The map on the following pages divides the land in Bedford into seven categories, ranging from developed (73.8%) to conservation (12.7%). The conservation areas are preserved from development and consist of Town-owned open space properties or land permanently protected with a conservation easement. Small portions of land are categorized as cemetery (0.5%), schools (0.7%), municipal (0.3%) and golf courses (0.8%). This leaves only 11.1% of

land in Bedford that is currently undeveloped, but much of this land is in existing single-family residential neighborhoods and will not likely be developed in the future. In actuality, less than 5% of the vacant land in Bedford has the capacity to be developed. This analysis does not take into account developed land that may be re-developed in the future with a different configuration and intensity.





The Friendly Toast restaurant

Bedford Today! Plan Framework





GIS Data Source: Town of Bedford

Bedford Yesterday



Economy

Bedford boasts a dynamic and diversified economy. A number of high tech companies coexist with major retailers and an assortment of local businesses. Although, commercially zoned areas of Bedford are limited in size, comprising less than 10 percent of the Town's land area, they are remarkably productive. Bedford is the second largest employment center in the Manchester Area after only Manchester, and the community serves as net importer of jobs, with more people commuting into Bedford for work than those commuting out.

An average of 17,364 jobs are based in Bedford (US Census 2019 NAICS data provided by NH Economic & Labor Market Bureau).

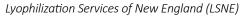
The largest employment sectors in Bedford are concentrated in Health Care & Social Assistance (20%), Administration & Support (13%), Retail Trade (13%), Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (9%), and Finance and Insurance (9%). The average weekly wage for jobs based in Bedford, including both private and government jobs, is \$1,237 which is similar

sectors, positions in Finance and Insurance and Professional & Technical Services command the highest average weekly wages at \$2,137 and \$1,823 respectively. Source: US Census 2019 NAICS data

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 dramatically impacted the local and national economies. However, preliminary data indicates that Bedford's economy is remarkably resilient. While the Town's unemployment rate peaked at 11.7 percent in April 2020, it recovered to 2.8 percent by November; similar to the 2019 annual average of 2.2 percent (Source: NH Economic & Labor Market Information Bureau). The long-term economic consequences of the pandemic remain unclear.



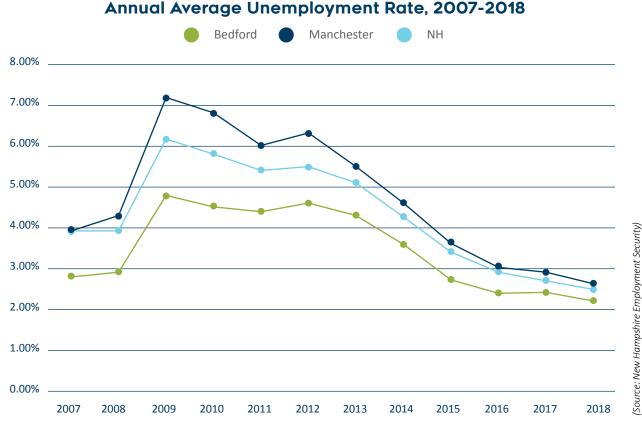
Bedford Village Shoppes



Employment

According to the US Census "On the May data from the most recent year available Bedford has 11.435 residents who are current employed. Employed residents of Bedford have the following characteristics:

- 62.3% of those employed earn ov \$3,333 per month compared with 49.7 for the Manchester-Nashua Metropolita Statistical Area (MSA).
- Similar to the MSA, Bedford has 14.8% its workforce in the Health Care and Soc Services industry (compared with 14.2% the MSA)



The

Process

ap" ble, htly ave	• A key difference is that Bedford has more jobs in professional services, management, and finance at 18.1% (compared with 13.7% in the MSA).
ver 7%	 Bedford also has fewer residents employed in retail services and manufacturing at 20.7% (compared with 25.3% in the MSA).
of cial 5 in	Bedford enjoys a low unemployment rate, with the rate remaining consistently below 3% since 2015. Historical unemployment data from 2007 to 2018 indicate that Bedford was not impacted by the 2009 recession as significantly as the region or the state. Bedford's unemployment rate is consistently below that of Manchester and the state of New Hampshire.



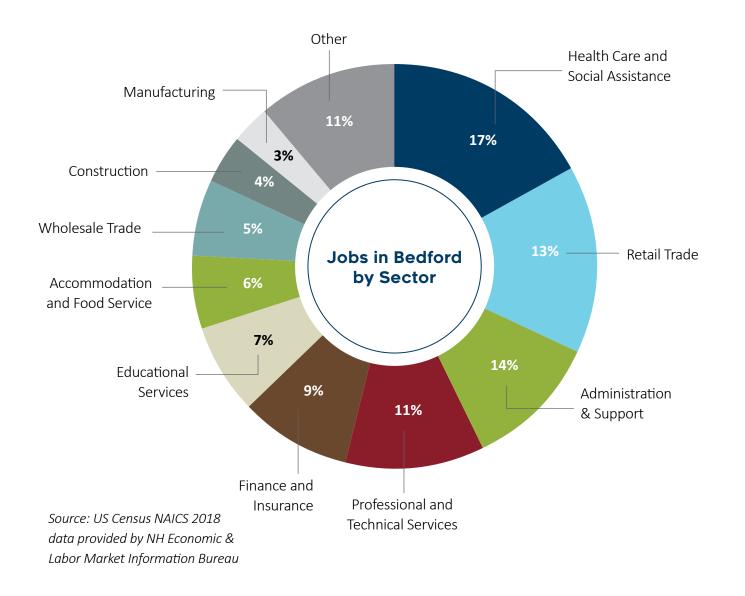
Bedford is a significant job center in New Hampshire and is home to the fourth highest number of jobs in Hillsborough County, after Manchester, Nashua, and Merrimack. There are more jobs available in Bedford, than residents of Bedford in the workforce available to fill them.

There are clear distinctions between the types of jobs available in Bedford and the types of jobs that Bedford residents hold. For example:

• Only 48.6% of the workers who come to Bedford earn over \$3,333 per month

compared to 62.3% of those who work and live in Bedford.

- The jobs available in Bedford tend to focus on the retail trade at 14.5%, and health care and social assistance at 16.6%.
- However, the professional services, management, and finance jobs are high in Bedford at 23.4%. This points to ongoing opportunities for Bedford residents to work in the community where they live.





Bedford is an important regional job center, Most Bedford residents commute out of however the vast majority of Bedford residents town for work. Approximately 85 percent commute outside of the community to their of residents commute to jobs outside the jobs. Moreover, the vast majority of Bedford community. Of jobs based in Bedford, jobs are occupied by residents form outside approximately 90 percent of workers commute the community. Jobs available in Bedford are in from other municipalities. The Covid-19 more concentrated toward retail trade and pandemic has greatly altered commuting health care and social assistance, while Bedford patterns and the Town will need to study residents are more likely to work in professional, new trends that may emerge as a result of scientific and technical services and finance the increased trend to work from home and and insurance. telecommute.

Flight Coffee Shop



Commercial Real Estate Investment

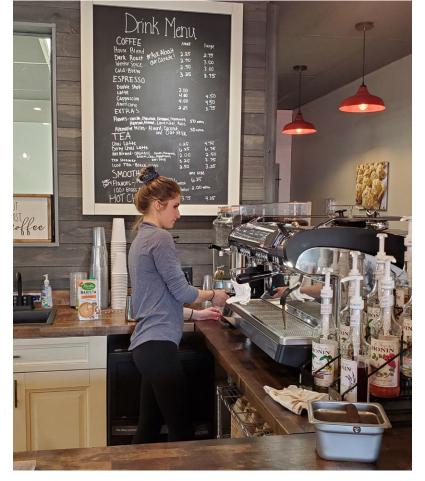
Commercial building investment in Bedford has seen a dramatic change since the housing market decline of 2008. Between 2010 and 2017, the value of commercial investment in Bedford had outpaced that of the value of residential investment in the Town with the exception of 2013. This is critically important in helping to balance the community tax base as it allows the Town to capitalize on the revenues of commercial property without the commensurate demand on services that residential development places.

Commercially zoned land is very limited in Bedford, and only a very small portion of commercial land is undeveloped. In order for the commercial tax base to continue to grow, Bedford will need to be successful in attracting higher valued redevelopment of developed parcels or rezone residential and other areas to allow commercial uses. Rezoning efforts have traditionally been quite controversial in the community, but there may be limited areas where rezoning is practical and responsible.



Whole Foods

66

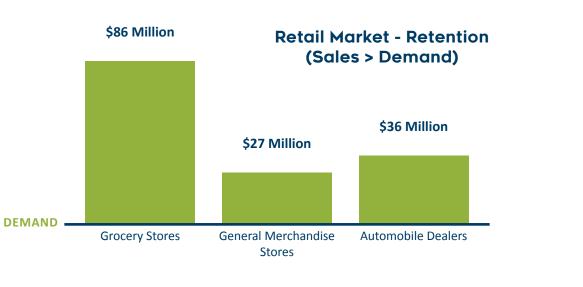


Simply Delicious Baking Co. in the Bedford Village Shoppes

Retail Market Supply and Demand

Bedford has traditionally occupied a dual role However, a closer look at the market and an in its retail market. The first role is that of a understanding of the retail dynamics of the regional retail complement to the Manchester greater Manchester Metropolitan Area paint metro area. This has been the case for decades, a very different picture. While the aggregate as the old Macy's department store was an retail sales in Bedford equal demand by the anchor to the region along with other retailers local population; a deeper look at the market that have come to congregate along Route 3 reveals that Bedford exceeds local demand in (South River Road). With the redevelopment several key categories. These are (listed in order of several major sites in the community, the of sales exceeding local demand): current strength of existing retail, and easy • Grocery stores where sales exceed demand access to the metropolitan area via excellent road connections; the retail strength of Bedford by \$86 million. Bedford operates as a is likely to remain strong. regional grocery shopping hub with two

At first glance, the Town of Bedford's retail market data would indicate that the community is in what might be termed "market equilibrium." The total demand for retail in store sales in Bedford is \$574.6 million while the total retail sales within the Town of Bedford equals \$574.9 million.



The

Process

- Hannaford grocery stores, a Market Basket, and the region's only Whole Foods Market and Trader Joe's stores.
 - General Merchandise Stores where sales exceed demand by \$27 million. The local Target, Lowes, and other major retailers place Bedford as a regional center for general merchandise.
 - Automobile Dealers where sales in Bedford exceed local market demand by \$36 million annually.

Grocery and general merchandise stores and automobile dealers serve as regional draws in Bedford, because sales are higher than demand within the community.



This begs the question that if the market is over-represented in certain categories and Bedford is indeed a regional attractor in major retail categories like groceries and general merchandise, where does the market have additional opportunities? The answer can be found in the categories where demand in Bedford exceeds sales and consumers need to spend money outside the local market, rather than purchasing goods from a store in Bedford. In retail this is called "leakage" The following are examples of this in Bedford. These are:

- Gasoline stations where demand exceeds supply by \$41 million. This suggests that there is potential for additional gasoline stations, however this use is strictly regulated in Bedford.
- Sporting goods where demand exceeds supply by \$18 million. While nearby Bass Pro and Dick's are out of the Bedford market, there could be an opportunity for specialty sporting goods stores.

- Clothing and clothing accessories leak at \$5.6 million. This is not unexpected but represents opportunities for Bedford particularly in mixed-use developments.
- Demand for restaurants in Bedford far exceeds the supply in the community. This represents a significant opportunity for both independent restaurants and national chains to tap. Redevelopment and new development along the South River Road and NH Route 101 corridors offers a chance to better capture this market.

In total, ongoing retail opportunities do exist in Bedford and are likely to concentrate less on "big box" type retailers and rely on both mixed use and small format stores to be competitive in the changing retail climate of today.



for gas stations, sporting goods, clothing stores, and restaurants.

Commercial Real Estate Trends

However, Bedford has proven resilient in adapting to these trends. While new retail Bedford's commercial real estate market development has been somewhat limited, is healthy and vibrant. In more recent major retail centers, including the Bedford years, demand has been strong for flexible Mall and Bedford Grove Shopping Center, have industrial spaces, including for research and recently undergone significant investments development uses, with manufacturing and and attracted new anchor tenants. The former office spaces combined. Examples include the Harvest Market in the center of Bedford growth of life sciences provider LSNE, Inc. as recently completed renovations to house new well as expansions of defense firms in Bedford, retail and food service options. The re-use of including for Advanced Optics, Haigh Farr, and the former Wal-mart space on Colby Court TRM Microwave. A planned manufacturing and will be important to the community moving office facility on South River Road for Wire Belt forward. Co. of America, a manufacturer of conveyor belts, represents one of the largest industrial The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 did not developments slated for Bedford in recent appear to significantly impact commercial real years. Medical office uses have continued estate development in Bedford. The Planning to grow in Bedford and service-based and Board reviewed and approved several major hospitality providers have also expanded across proposals. Unfortunately, some businesses the community. in the community did close, although many spaces are already being re-purposed for new Across the country, demand for retail users. development has diminished as consumer

preferences migrate to online shopping.



The

Process

Introduction

Bedford Yesterday

Flexible manufacturing and office developments like this one, for LSNE on Harvey Road, have broken ground in recent years.

Bedford Today!

Plan Framework





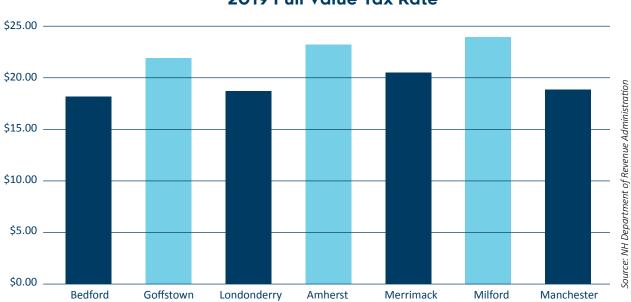
Manchester Country Club

Tax Base

Town revenues have increased at a healthy ra in Bedford over the last 10 years, with an annu growth rate of approximately 4.9 percent. Loc property tax revenues have largely fueled th growth.

Every year, the State of New Hampshi conducts a process called equalization, whe it estimates the tax rate for each municipali if all taxable property was assessed at 100% its value. In 2018, Bedford's full value tax rate \$18.17 (the official tax rate in 2018 was \$20.4 represented one of the lowest rates in Southe New Hampshire. Only neighboring Goffstow boasted a lower rate.

4.3%. In 2018, public safety accounted for 35% The term "The Bedford Advantage" has been of the expenditures while public works and used to describe the Town's favorable economic general government accounted for 29% and conditions, including its low tax rate and 23% respectively.



The Full Value Tax Rate is a calculation provided by the NH Department of Revenue Administration estimating the tax rate when properties are assessed at 100 percent of their market value. It is used to provide a more accurate reflection of tax rates between municipalities.

The

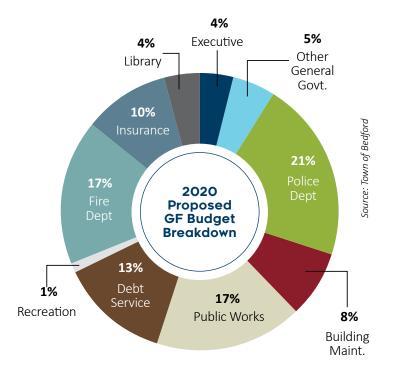
Process

ate	healthy financial and socioeconomic indicators.
ual	Although the Town's tax rate, while still very
cal	favorable, is not as low currently relative to peer
nat	communities as it has in past years. Bedford's
	Full Value tax rate has declined over time,
	dropping from \$20.74 in 2013, but the rate of
ire	decline has been less than in most comparable
ere	communities in the vicinity. For example, in
lity	2013, Bedford's rate was the lowest among
of	neighboring communities and considerably
e of	less than the next lowest municipality of
40)	Manchester at \$22.33.
ern	
wn	Expenditures increased by 38.8% from 2009
	to 2018, for an annual average growth rate of

2019 Full Value Tax Rate



In fiscal year 2018, the assessed value of residential properties in the Town of Bedford was \$3,007,671,640, up 10% from 2009. Residential assessed values experienced a dip between 2012 and 2013, but steadily increased after 2013. The assessed value of commercial and industrial properties increased by 28% between 2009 and 2018, for a 2018 value of \$759,375,050. The total assessed value (residential, commercial and industrial, and utilities) increased by 13% from 2009 to 2018 for an average annual growth rate of 1.5%.

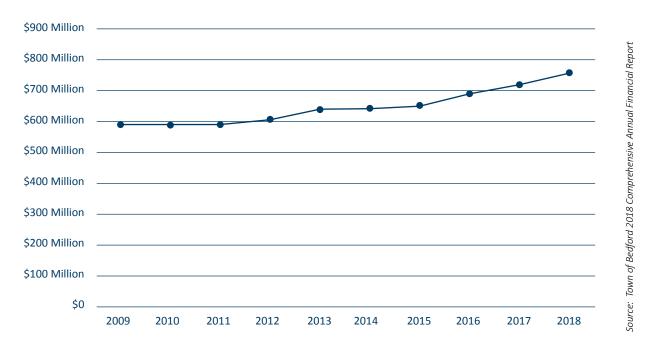




Town of Bedford Total Expenditures & Total Revenues







The

Process

Total Assessed Value of Commercial & Industrial Properties



Municipal Services & Infrastructure

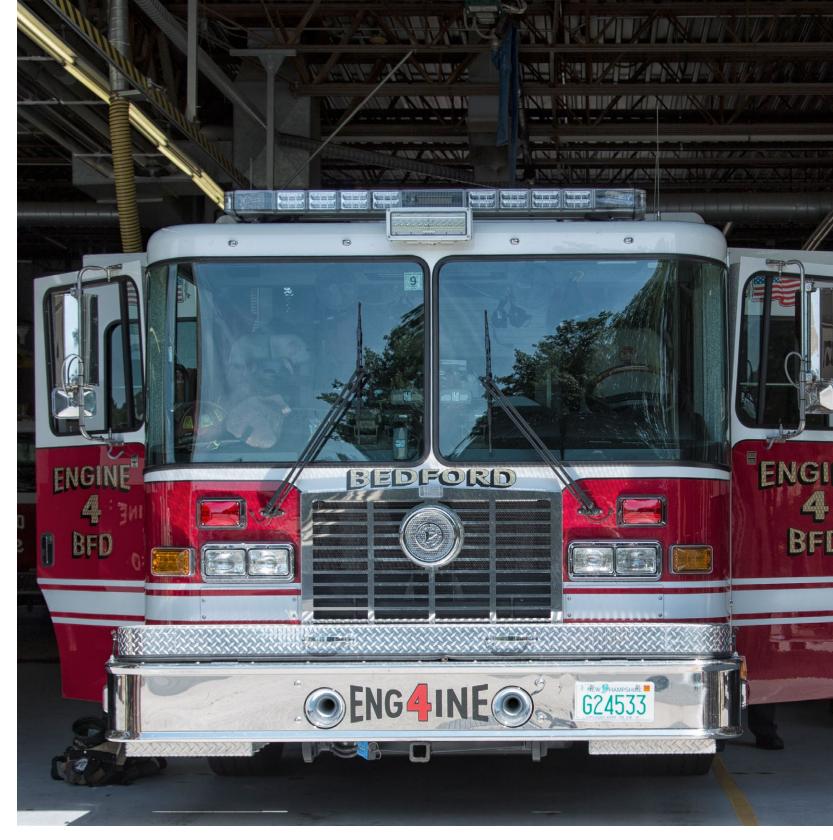
Bedford's municipal services are a vital aspect of day-to-day life and are critical to the Town's abilities to support appropriate development and provide a high quality of life for citizens. Managing the cost and timing of necessary improvements by prioritizing and planning infrastructure expansions in future capital and operating budgets is essential.

Future development described in the "Conservation and Development Framework" section of the Plan will require critical decisions to ensure infrastructure is in place to address existing deficiencies and serve new development in a way that does not threaten the Town's sense of place. Infrastructure- based policies in Bedford, including targeted public investments, capital improvement programming, and service provider coordination, can help Town officials respond to the anticipated timing of growth using the location and availability of infrastructure capacity.

Anticipated growth will likely place increased demands on infrastructure that in some cases is already in need of expansion or renovation to meet today's needs. An inventory of community facilities and infrastructure and a description of important infrastructure issues in Bedford follows.

Facility	Address	Use		
Police Department	55 Constitution Drive	Public Safety		
Fire Department	55 Constitution Drive	Public Safety		
Town Hall	70 Bedford Center Road	Municipal Office		
Town Offices	24 North Amherst Road	Municipal Office		
Public Library	3 Meetinghouse Road	Library, Community Center		
Department of Public Works (DPW) Main Garage	19 Chubbuck Road	Equipment and Facility Storage, DPW Offices		
Nashua Road DPW Facility	Nashua Road	Public Works Storage Facility		
Transfer Station	Chubbuck Road	Public Works		
BCTV	10 Meetinghouse Road	Community Television		
Source: Recreation Impact Fee Update, 2015				

Town/Administrative/Safety Facilities



Bedford Fire Department

Image Credit: Photography By Madonna

The

Process

Bedford Today!

Plan Framework



Capital Improvements Program

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) serves as the Town's long-range planning document for the purchase or construction of capital assets and is a blueprint for investment in major public infrastructure projects over a period of ten fiscal years. As with most municipalities, Bedford's capital needs are tremendous. Because the Town is constrained by fiscal realities, it must prioritize projects using a comprehensive evaluation and categorization system, followed by a financial analysis of each qualifying project. The plan outlines the individual projects, how they would be financed according to adopted Town Council policy, and the impact of the projects on the property tax rate and sewer rates.

Incorporated into the program are the Town Financial Policies adopted by the Town Council. The policies present financial goals for the Town to ensure proper financing of capital projects and to reduce long-term costs by decreasing the number of projects that are financed by debt. The Town has historically used only a small fraction of its debt limit.

As a result of the Town's strong financial management and commitment to a balanced budget, Bedford is the only government in New Hampshire (including the State itself) to be given a AAA rating by Moody's Investors service. This excellent bond rating tends to draw more investors and allows the Town to structure its bonds to its needs, thereby allowing the Town to be more fiscally responsible.

What we heard	
about community facilities	
"Quick response by town services."	
"Fair police that are caring."	
"Most towns have a senior center, Bedford does not!"	
Outdoor activities are a great way to attract new residents."	
Love the library but wish it was surrounded by other things in walking distance – park, playground."	
"Focus on providing more environmentally friendly services."	
"Develop Stevens-Buswell Community Center."	
"Strengthen our Historic Town Center as the heart of the town."	

Public Safety

A feeling of safety and security throughout The current Public Safety Complex, housing the Town is essential to quality of life for all both the Police and Fire Departments, is citizens. The Patrol Operations Division is the located on a 2.31-acre site in a business park core service element of the Bedford Police off of Highway 101. The facility, a converted Department, comprising the bulk of agency office building, was opened in 1994 and has not resources for crime prevention, highway been expanded or significantly renovated since safety, and community policing. The Division then. In order to meet the programming needs employs a captain, five sergeants, 18 officers, of the Departments, the 2018 Facilities Study and four special officers. Additionally, the recommends purchasing and demolishing Department has an Administrative Division, the building next to the existing complex and a Communications and Records Division, and constructing a new, 25,000 square-foot building a Detective Division (including five detectives to house the Police Department. The existing and two school resource offices). While Public Safety Complex would then be renovated meeting the challenges of continued residential to house the Fire Department. and commercial expansion, the Department has suffered significant staffing shortages in multiple divisions, due to a lack of gualified applicants.

Bedford Fire Rescue provides fire suppression, Advanced Life Support EMS response, and technical rescue. The Fire Department answers approximately 2,300 calls in a year. Twenty-four firefighters and four lieutenants work a rotating shift schedule. The Bedford Fire Department also has a Call Force of nine members that provide Fire and EMS protection for the Town.

The Bedford Fire Department has working relationships with neighboring communities (Amherst, Goffstown, Merrimack, New Boston, and Manchester) and uses a mutual aid system, sending and receiving apparatus and personnel for major incidents and/or times of overwhelming call volume.

The Department is self-dispatched from its own Police and Fire Communications Center. located in the Safety Complex.

The

Process



Bedford Fire Department Image Credit: Photography By Madonna

Bedford Today!

Plan Framework



A recommendation for a fire substation was first made in the Town's 2000 Master Plan. Due to growth and additional service demands in the South River Road area, a new substation remains a priority for the Department today. The Facilities Study recommends the construction of a Fire Substation on Town-owned property on Sunset Drive or other location on South River Road.



Bedford Fire Department Ambulance



On patrol at the Bedford Rotary Trails to Ales Race

Water and Sewer Infrastructure

The availability of water supply, the management to finance the connection, they would generally of stormwater and flood control, and the capacity be able to do so. The Water and Sewer Advisory to treat wastewater or 'sewage' are fundamental Committee make recommendations on the to the capacity of a community to ensure expansion of sewer service, and the Town Council environmental quality, develop and redevelop, makes approvals. and manage growth.

There are two retail water system operators Managing the water resources needed for in Bedford: Manchester Water Works and growth and development is a public and a private Pennichuck Water Works. Inc. Pennichuck responsibility in Bedford. Bedford's water resource manages the water systems in the southern infrastructure is a blend of private on-site wells portions of the town. Manchester Waterworks, a and septic systems, and public water supply and division of the City of Manchester, provides water wastewater systems. to the eastern side of town, including the South River Road corridor. Municipal water service has The Town of Bedford owns and manages the recently been expanded to a number of properties wastewater collection system that provides public in Bedford as a result of PFAS contamination. wastewater treatment to the most intensively Currently, only about one-third of of residential developed areas of the Town along the South River properties in Bedford have access to public water Road, portions of the commercial areas along service, while the rest rely on private wells.

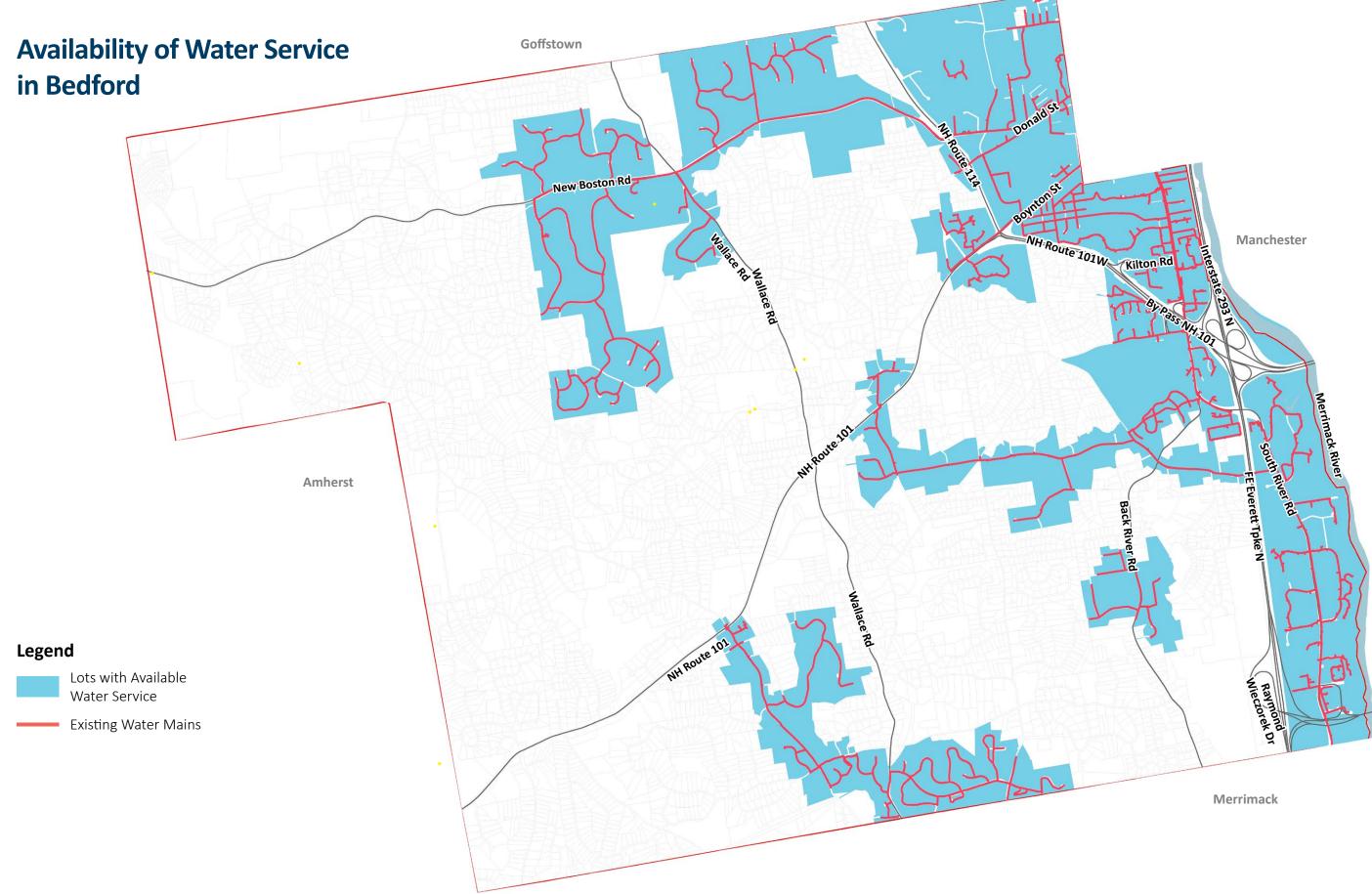
Route 101, and the public schools. The remaining areas of the Town are served entirely by privately-In 2016 tests showed that a number of private owned and managed, on-site wastewater systems. wells in Bedford and surrounding towns were

contaminated with elevated levels of PFAS The sewer service is possible through an interfrom Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics in municipal agreement with the City of Manchester, Merrimack. PFAS (polyfluoroalkyl substances) are which owns and operates the wastewater a group of man-made chemicals that can lead treatment facility to which the Bedford's public to adverse effects on human health. In March wastewater flows. Once treated, it is discharged 2018, in partnership with the New Hampshire to the Merrimack River. The Town's current Department of Environmental Services, Saintmonthly average flow of wastewater to the City of Gobain announced an agreement to fund the Manchester is 750,000 gallons per day, with a limit extension of municipal water service to properties of 1.5 million gallons per day. in portions of the towns of Merrimack, Litchfield, and Bedford.

The Existing & Future Sewers Bedford Facilities Plan shows the approved expansion of service New water standards went into effect in September to areas east of NH Route 114 in the "Pines" 2019. At that time, Saint-Gobain opted to issue neighborhood, as well as an area west of the bottled water to additional residents in Bedford. Everett Turnpike, covering Lodge Drive, Pond Approximately 250 additional wells are expected Drive, Bayberry Court, Mulberry Lane, and Sandy to be tested for contamination along Liberty Hill Pond Parkway. According to Bedford Public Works, Road, Meadowcrest Drive, Sebbins Pond Drive, the Town does not have plans or funding to Sandy Pond Parkway, Smith Road, and Veronica expand in these areas, but if a developer wishes Drive.

The





GIS Data

Bedford Yesterday Bedford Today!

Plan Framework



GIS Data

Bedford Yesterday Bedford Today!

Plan Framework

Library

The stated mission of the Bedford Public Library is to provide access to informational. educational, cultural, and recreational materials and services in a variety of formats and technologies; to be responsive to the public library needs of the community; and to uphold the public's freedom of access to information. However, the library truly serves as the heart of the community. Its central location in the Town's historic district provides a gathering place for local groups and a cultural destination for all residents.

Among the Library's many offerings are: book discussions for adults; a Sunday concert series; monthly computer classes; a speaker series; journaling workshops; STEAM programming; weekly story time; a therapy dog to help children practice reading skills; and a Summer Reading Program (for both children and adults).

In addition, the library offers outreach to three senior living communities in Bedford. Members of these facilities often come to the library to attend Thursday Theater and the Sunday Concerts, and the library plans to start a "Books by Mail" service that will allow homebound residents and residents at long-term care facilities to more easily borrow books.

The Library's current facility—the first expressly designed as a library—opened in 1996. In 2018, program attendance increased and demand for meeting room and study space exceeded capacity. The Town's 2018 Facilities Study found that the Library, which currently has 20,400 square feet on a two-acre site, needs an additional 8,890 square feet in order to provide area for additional stacks, as well as for group meeting spaces.



Bedford Public Library Image Credit: Photography By Madonna



Bedford Community Television and Radio

The Town of Bedford is one of the few cities programming; and Channel 23 is for school and towns in New England that has both a education and information programming. television station and a low power FM radio Equipment has recently been installed that will allow for live broadcasts during times of critical station (WBNH-LP). The radio station was emergencies for both television and radio. approved by the FCC in 2013, and officially launched in February of 2015. Its primary focus is public safety, but it also plays music produced by Bedford residents and has a significant town sports presence.

Bedford Community Television (BCTV) is the Town's local Public, Education and Government access community television station. BCTV has three channels. Channel 16 is for public programming; Channel 22 is for government

The

Process

BCTV recording studio

The station is funded (including equipment purchases and all operational and building costs) by franchise fees collected from cable subscribers. The Bedford Town Meeting Room is located in the BCTV Building located adjacent to the Town Hall. The BCTV and WBNH facilities are in good condition and well maintained.

Community Engagement and Voluntarism

A discussion of municipal services in Bedford would not be complete without acknowledging the essential work and public services that the Town's many volunteers provide, including those provided by the large number of civic, social, educational, advocacy and charitable groups to the community. Organizations like the Bedford Rotary Club, Parent-Teacher Group, and the Bedford Men's Club, to name just a small few, perform important community services that impact all residents of Bedford. The work of Bedford's many volunteers and community organizations provides invaluable benefits to the community, helps enhances Bedford's quality of life, and reduces taxpayer costs by best leveraging public investments.

As a fiscally conservative community with limited municipal staff and resources, Bedford relies on volunteers and non-profit organizations to organize and present community activities, to help spearhead public service projects, and to help contribute to some capital projects. Candidate forums, trail and road races, talent shows, and community meals and meetings are common event, hosted entirely by community organizations. Organizations also help foster greater dialogue in Bedford and encourage greater community involvement by residents.

Bedford residents were surveyed as part of the Age Friendly initiative on their involvements in the community and reported varying degrees of engagement. Those with children enrolled in the public school system as well as those volunteering in community organizations, tended to report the highest levels of engagement. Many older residents and households without children tended to report lower levels of engagement. The Bedford School District is at the heart of social and volunteer activities for many Bedford families. Many residents noted that while they are actively involved in School District activities, they are less involved, or not involved at all, in Town activities.



Recreation

Bedford's Parks and Recreation (BP&R) of public outdoor recreational opportunities department's core philosophy recognizes the in Bedford including more traditional public that outdoor recreational activities are an options like athletic fields and parks, to more extremely important and valuable resource rural options including hiking and walking trails. to Bedford, particularly as more sedentary lifestyles contribute to health and social issues The 2015 Recreation Impact Fee Study takes like obesity, diabetes and depression. In a closer look at the type of facilities offered in addition to improving physical health, outdoor Bedford and identifies opportunities to add recreational activities have been proven to additional facilities in parks and areas with reduce anxiety, which can reduce depression. active recreation potential. The study identifies up to 40 acres of land potentially available for Further, by participating in these types of activities with others in the community, there additional parks and recreation facilities. are social benefits. Considering this, BP&R While Bedford is fortunate to have the provides programs and facilities that are suitable recreational assets and programs it has, for all ages and abilities and strives to increase community members have made it clear that awareness of the importance of recreation to they feel that there is a need for additional the community. facilities, including recreational fields, gathering The Bedford Public Works Department is spaces, and opportunities for walking and responsible for managing the use of many of biking.

The Bedford Public Works Department is responsible for managing the use of many of Bedford's recreational assets in partnership with other boards, organizations and Town staff. Recreational programs provide a range of athletic activities for youths and adults, including soccer, lacrosse, football, tennis, basketball and baseball. There are a number



Splash Park

The inventory (as of 2015) of parks and recreational facilities in Bedford is summarized on the pages that follow.



Bedford Today!



Facility	Address	Athletic Fields/Courts	Other Outdoor Recreation Facilities	Total Outdoor Recreation Acreage	Indoor Recreation Facilities	Swimming/ Water Facilities
Active Rec	reation Facilities (Town	of Bedford)				
Bedford Village Common Park	Bell Hill Road	None	1 Skating Pond, 1 Bandstand (Market Basket Bandstand)	12.0	None	None
Earl G. Legacy Park	200 New Boston Road	1 Basketball Court, 3 Tennis Courts, 1 Softball Field, 1 Baseball Field, 1 Multipurpose Field	1 Skate park, 5 miles of Cross–Country Ski Trails	61.3	None	None
Greenfield Farms*	Greenfield Parkway	1 Multipurpose Field	None	2.0	None	None
Joppa Hill Recreational Facility*	148 Joppa Hill Road	1 Multipurpose Game Field, 1 Multipurpose Practice Field	None	20.0	None	None
Little League Complex	19 Nashua Road	2 Baseball Fields, 1 Softball Field	None	6.2	None	None
McAfee Practice Field	N. Amherst & Joppa Hill Road	Multipurpose Practice Field for Soccer/Lacrosse	None	3.6	None	None
Bedford Memorial Town Pool/Ann DeNicola Memorial Playground/Sportsman Field – Selvoski Field/ Riley Field Complex	20 County Road/Nashua & County Road	6 Tennis Courts, 1 Baseball Field, 1 Softball Field, 1 Soccer/Multipurpose Field	1 Skating Pond (seasonal), 1 Playground (Ann DeNicola Memorial Playground), Sledding Hill, 1 Performance Stage	29.6	None	1 Outdoor Swimming Poo 1 Splash Pad
Swenson Field	170 Jenkins Road	1 Baseball Field, 1 Softball Field, 1 Multipurpose Field	None	21.3	None	None
Heritage Trail	Along Merrimack River	No formal facilities	Canoe Launch	7	None	None
Active Recreation	n Facilities (Bedford Scl	nool District/SAU)			1	1
Bedford High School (adjacent to Selvoski Field/ Riley Field Complex)	47 Nashua Road	1 Soccer/Football Field, 1 Running Track, Track & Field Facilities, other facilities shared with Selvoski Field/ Riley Field Complex	None	3.0	3 Gymnasiums (Includes 2 indoor Basketball Courts)	None
		1 Basketball Court, 1 Baseball		70 (Makalvia Sabaal)		

Bedford High School (adjacent to Selvoski Field/ Riley Field Complex)	47 Nashua Road	1 Soccer/Football Field, 1 Running Track, Track & Field Facilities, other facilities shared with Selvoski Field/ Riley Field Complex	None	3.0	3 Gymnasiums (Includes 2 indoor Basketball Courts)	None
McKelvie Intermediate School/SAU Property	108 Liberty Hill Road	1 Basketball Court, 1 Baseball Field, 1 Softball Field, 1 Multipurpose Field, 1 Soccer Field, 1 Running Track	1 Playground	7.0 (McKelvie School) 5.0 (SAU Property)	1 Gymnasium (includes indoor Basketball Court)	None
Memorial Elementary School	55 Old Bedford Road	No formal facilities	1 Playground, informal outdoor play area (paved & grass)	2.0	1 Gymnasium (includes indoor Basketball Court)	None
Peter Woodbury Elementary School	180 County Road	1 Basketball Court, 1 Baseball/Softball Field	1 Playground	3.0	1 Gymnasium (includes indoor Basketball Court)	None
Riddle Brook School (adjacent to Earl G. Legacy Park)	230 New Boston Road	1 Basketball Court, other facilities shared with Earl G. Legacy Park	1 Playground	3.0	1 Gymnasium (includes indoor Basketball Court)	None

* These facilities are part of a larger conservation parcel which may include passive recreation and/or trails. Refer to the Open Space & Natural Resources section for additional information.

Source: Recreation Impact Fee Update, 2015



Power of Partnerships

As part of an integrated network of public service providers, Bedford already relies on a host of other public and private bodies and partnerships to ensure the efficient provision of public services. In the government realm, a partnership with the Manchester Water and Sewer Department allows for public water and sewer services in Bedford, and mutual aid agreements ensure that emergency personnel from other communities help the Town respond to emergencies. Local organizations also play a vital role. The Bedford Land Trust helps manage conserved land in Bedford and assist in conservation fundraising efforts while sports leagues provide a host of youth and adult team sports opportunities. These are just a few small examples in how government and non-profit partners assist Bedford in providing high quality services.

Community Center

Bedford's older adults in particular have expressed an interest in a community center. According to the Town of Bedford Age-Friendly Survey prepared by the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission, 56% of participants supported the need to build a community center, but only 47% stated that they would support the use of taxes to build such a center. A private non-profit group has been working for several years to establish a community center at the Stevens Buswell Building.

Stevens Buswell Building

Town Offices

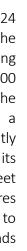
The Bedford Town Offices are located at 24 North Amherst Road and house many of the Town departments and boards. The building was constructed in 1987 and has about 10,000 square feet of space on a five-acre site. The building was originally intended to have a twenty-year lifespan and is now significantly overcrowded and considered to be past its useful life. Because the building does not meet the needs of a municipal building and requires a large amount of work and renovation to maintain, the 2018 Facilities Study recommends expanding or moving the offices.



The Bedford Town Office Building

The

Process





Bedford Historical Society Museum

Telecommunications

There are currently nine telecommunications towers in Bedford. Historically towers have been located along commercial corridors in Bedford, however two new towers were recently constructed in residential neighborhoods to address service gaps. There are still service gaps in residential areas, particularly in Northwest Bedford. Towers in these areas can be controversial, as many residents are resistant to having them in their neighborhoods.

XFINITY Cable internet is the dominant Internet provider. FairPoint Communications also offers DSL service. There have been preliminary discussions within the Town about establishing a public utility to offer fiber optic network for increased competition and improved service. The Town Council has an appointed Telecommunications Committee, which is working to prepare Bedford for new technologies including 5G and potential broadband.

Open Space & Natural Resources

Bedford is home to a rich diversity of natural resources including the Merrimack River, Ash Bog, several named streams, as well as hundreds of acres of significant wetlands, flood plains, forests, farmland, and wildlife habitat. The landscape is generally made up of hills and valleys with varying terrain and slopes. The land along the banks of the Merrimack River is the lowest point in Bedford, at 100 feet above sea level, and the terrain rises to 840 feet at the highest point on Holbrook Hill in the northwest corner of town. The natural landscape has always been considered a critical component of Bedford's identity and greatly contributes to the Town's rural character. The open spaces

What we heard...

...about preservation

- "Open spaces should remain."
 - "Maintain trails & open spaces & rural character."
 - "Retain what's special about Bedford."
- "Preservation of green space (ex: Pulpit Rock, Joppa Hill)."
- "More open space dedicated conservation."

"Maintain open spaces and trails (Pulpit Rock, Joppa Hill, Benedictine) — expand open spaces if possible."

provide residents with scenic views, offer the community access to outdoor recreational opportunities, buffer development, and provide vital green infrastructure services to help manage stormwater runoff and control flooding.

Water resources also make an important contribution to the community. The Merrimack River is the largest water body in Bedford and the largest watershed in the state and serves as the eastern border between the Town and the neighboring communities of Manchester and Londonderry. Several small water bodies offer recreational opportunities, including Sebbins Pond and Sandy Pond. There are nine named streams which drain into seven primary drainage basins, all of which flow into the Merrimack River, including Pulpit Brook, McQuade Brook, Riddle Brook, Bowman Brook, Pointer Club Brook, Sebbins Brook, Baboosic Brook, Patten Brook, and McQuesten Brook.

Joppa Hill Farm





The Town has seen significant development over the years, and as open space and natural resources became scarce, efforts have been made to protect some of these limited resources. During the public outreach process, residents continued to voice their concerns for the protection and preservation of Bedford's natural resources.

Formed in 1990, the Bedford Land Trust worked tirelessly to bring conservation to the forefront, and acquired conservation easements to permanently protect land. Together with the Conservation Commission, these groups brought awareness to Bedford's open spaces and natural resources. Alter 30 years, the Bedford Land Trust merged with the Piscataquog Land Conservancy in 2020. Piscataquog Land Conservancy will continue the Bedford Land Trust's efforts to ensure that the protected lands will remain in conservation.

The

Process

Bedford Yesterday

Hikers at Pulpit Rock

What we heard... ...about open space and natural resources "Green, leafy neighborhoods." "Maintain the fields."

> "More conservation lands and hiking trails."

"Protect our water, wetlands and open spaces."

"Conservation-minded."

"More outdoor space, parks and nature trails."

Bedford Today!

Plan Framework





A jogger on the Heritage Trail

Land Conservation & Stewardship

The community has been keenly aware of changes to the landscape over time and has taken steps to preserve and protect some of Bedford's richest resources. The Bedford Conservation Commission was formed in 1965 for the purpose of protecting the community's water resources. Since its inception, the Commission has taken its role seriously, "to protect, preserve, and serve the Town's natural resources and open space for the common good." The Commission is responsible for guiding the management of Bedford's publicly owned conserved lands and created the Bedford Open Space Plan in 2009. The Plan sets priorities for future land acquisition and targets specific parcels that should be considered for protection.

Through years of hard work by the Conservation Commission, Bedford Land Trust and private landowners, Bedford has protected approximately 1,972 acres of open space. This includes lands owned by the Town, private properties that are protected by conservation easements, and land set aside as open space within cluster subdivisions. Notable preserved areas include:

• Joppa Hill Farm is a 312 acre historic farmstead located on the Bedford/Amherst boundary. The Town owns 190 acres which are also protected by a conservation easement held by the Piscataguog Land Conservancy. The land includes open fields, forested areas, two recreational playing fields, trails, and an educational farm.

The

Process



Joppa Hill Farm

• Ash Bog is a 161 acre property that includes a large wetland system along the banks of McQuade Brook. The Bog is notable for providing valuable wildlife habitat for a very diverse range of terrestrial and aquatic species. It offers unique opportunities for wildlife observation and other naturalist pursuits and is one of the largest wetland systems in Bedford.



Ash Bog

• The Pulpit Rock Conservation Area is the largest conserved tract of land in Bedford. The property includes 338 acres and is home to the "Pulpit Rock," a unique geological land form that was created by glacial lakes. In addition to the miles of recreational trails, Pulpit Rock includes wetlands, streams, rock outcroppings and other flora and fauna, making it one of Bedford's most popular outdoor recreational places. The land is also protected by a conservation easement held by the Piscataquog Land Conservancy.



Pulpit Rock Conservation Area

Tarr Trust is a 332 acre tract located on the Goffstown/Bedford boundary with 252 acres in Bedford. The land is known for its scenic qualities. Notable features include beaver ponds, mature forests, extensive mountain laurel, and established trails. The property is owned by the Piscataquog Land Conservancy.



Tarr Trust

 The Heritage Trail includes interconnected trail easements along the Merrimack River, which provides public access to almost the entire four-mile length of riverfront, along Bedford's eastern boundary from Manchester to Merrimack. The land is known for its Bald Eagle nesting areas, the scenic views of the river, as well as a carry-in boat launch for water access.



The Heritage Trail

The Conservation Commission is also responsible for the ongoing stewardship of Bedford's Town-owned lands. The Commission and Piscataguog Land Conservancy work together to monitor and inspect the properties, ensuring the conservation areas remain protected over time.

One significant regulatory tool to protect open space is the Cluster Residential Development Ordinance which also includes an option to transfer development rights, allowing one parcel to be developed at a higher density in exchange for protecting another nearby parcel of land. The ordinance was initially adopted in 1987 and requires that at least 25% of the overall tract be set aside as open space. Approximately 595 acres have been protected through the cluster subdivision process. Examples of Bedford's cluster neighborhoods include Greenfield Farms, Bedford Three Corners, and The Preserve. Although the cluster zoning has been successfully utilized throughout Bedford, there may be opportunities to enhance the ordinance. The ordinance has not been significantly overhauled, and many developers simply opt to pursue traditional subdivision which results in no open space protection.

The residents of Bedford also serve an important visitors per day, on a summer weekend. A recent role in the protection and stewardship of natural focus has been to build trails that are accessible resources. Landowners with large lots have the to all, including older persons and people with option of enrolling in the State's Current Use disabilities. The Commission received a Land & program where land is taxed at a significantly Water Conservation Fund grant to construct an reduced rate based on its current value and accessible trail, approximately half a mile long, use, as a woodlot or agricultural property, leading from Pulpit Road to the historic Gage's rather than at its real estate market value. Mill site at the Pulpit Rock Conservation Area.

The landowner is then charged a penalty tax when land is taken out of Current Use and developed. In Bedford, 70% of the use change tax collected by the Town is placed in the Conservation Fund which is used to fund future acquisitions and land management. There are approximately 2,439 acres enrolled in the Current Use Program in Bedford.

Trails & Outdoor Recreation

Popular recreational trails provide public access to Bedford's open spaces. There are ten destination hiking areas in Bedford with several miles of trails, which are used for hiking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, mountain biking. Trails and are typically constructed by volunteers and maintained by the Town. The trails provide

residents with access to nature and also help to improve quality of life by giving families places to exercise or safely walk off-road, in a community where the sidewalks are sparse. A recent pedestrian count at the popular Moore's Crossing trailhead indicated an average of 60

The

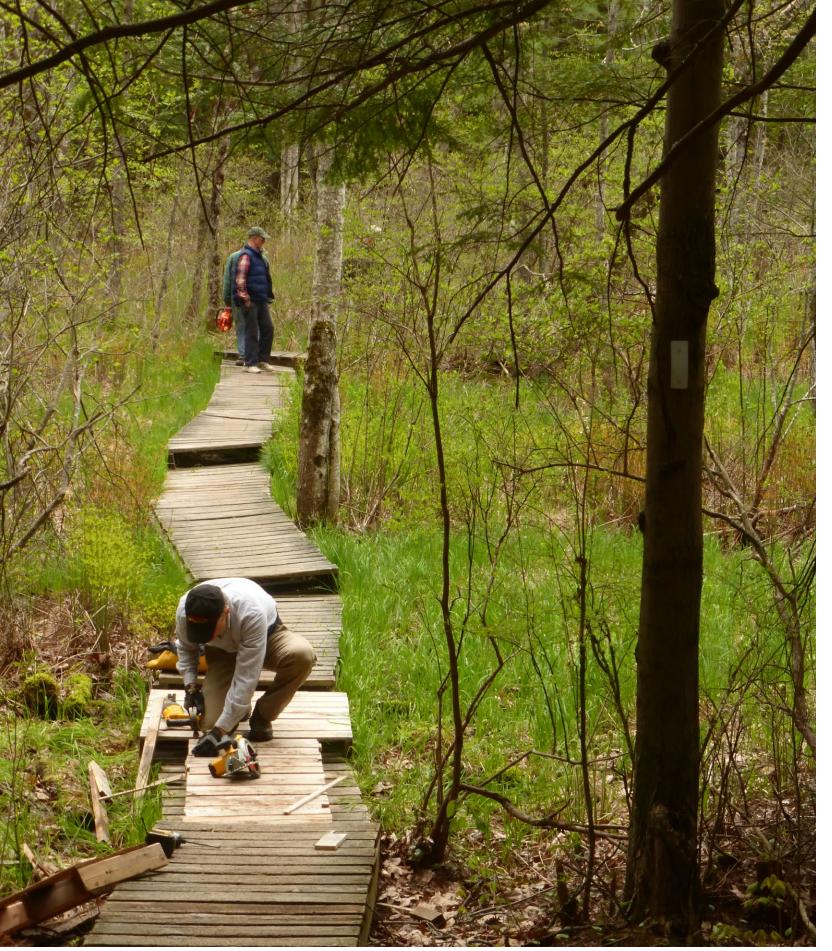
Process



Bedford Boy Scouts work on a trail marking project







Trail work at Pulpit Rock Conservation Area

Water, Wetlands & Floodplains

Wetlands are a vital component in the The Town has adopted regulations to protect maintenance of Bedford's natural environment. Bedford's wetland resources. Bedford's They provide an array of functions and values Wetlands Conservation Ordinance prohibits that support environmental health and provide the filling of jurisdictional wetlands for site many benefits, including flood and stormwater development and requires a 50-foot setback control, maintenance of water quality, fish and for structures from all delineated wetland wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation. The areas. The Town has also adopted Flood Hazard Bedford Conservation Commission has a review Zoning to protect floodways and floodplains role in the permitting process as it relates to associated with the major water systems in development in and around wetlands, and Bedford. The Performance Zone also includes to stormwater management plans. A Prime special standards for development along the Wetlands study was conducted in 2005 and Merrimack River shoreland. The wetland the study determined there are approximately regulations lack specific standards for the 3,900 acres of wetlands, covering 18% of protection of riparian vegetation and do not the land area in Bedford. Of these wetlands, provide a buffer to the wetland resource. approximately 964 acres were considered Good planning practices that encourage the to be wetlands of significant value, but the maintenance and enhancement of shoreline Commission decided not to designate Prime and riparian areas are one of the easiest ways that Bedford can work to protect its water Wetlands in Bedford. resources.



The

Process

98

Pulpit Brook in Bedford

Bedford Today!

Plan Framework





Riddle Brook flows through the center of Bedford

Stormwater Management

When it rains or as snow melts, the resulting stormwater flows over roads and ground surfaces, picking up debris, chemicals, oils, grease, salt, sediment, and other pollutants. These can have harmful effects on drinking water supplies, recreation, fisheries, and other wildlife. Stormwater resulting from increased impermeable surfaces also contributes to flooding in areas of Bedford. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has mandated that certain communities (including the Town of Bedford) create a Stormwater Management Plan and take other actions to reduce stormwater pollution. The Town is taking several actions, including more frequent street sweeping and maintenance of stormwater systems, additional public education programs, and more rigorous tracking and controls of private development to comply with the requirements.

Several Bedford water bodies are classified as "Impaired Waters" by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, including parts of Riddle, McQuade, McQuesten, Patten, and Baboosic Brooks and Sebbins Pond. In most

instances, the impairment was due to external contaminations such as chloride, acidity, or high amounts of minerals like aluminum. Failing wastewater systems and inadequately controlled stormwater runoff can also contribute to impairment conditions. The Town recently adopted a Stormwater Management and Illicit Discharge Detection & Elimination Ordinance which requires all new development to meet higher standards for stormwater treatment and erosion control. Moving forward, Bedford will need to maintain a strong focus on stormwater quality and education to continue to satisfy the requirements of the MS4 permit.

approximately two-thirds of residents depend on private well water

Source: GIS Data provided by Town of Bedford

Green Infrastructure & Resiliency

Green infrastructure is generally considered to be the collection of natural areas and ecological systems that support stormwater control, reduce pollution, recharge groundwater, reduce flooding, improve air quality, reduce heat island effect, conserve water and contribute to the natural beauty of the landscape. Green infrastructure can also include engineered systems that closely mimic the natural environment. The Open Space Plan identified and mapped Bedford's green infrastructure. The study identified wildlife corridors, connected water resources, and protected lands to define and map the highest value natural areas in Bedford. Protecting these lands from development will help to better prepare Bedford for flooding that may occur as a result of severe weather events or other natural disturbances. The green infrastructure map also provides important connections between existing conserved lands for recreational use and wildlife movement. Specific parcels that should be considered for preservation in the future are shown on the map and the Plan recommends working with existing landowners within the green infrastructure area to encourage proper management, regardless of whether or not the land is formally protected by the Town.

In Bedford, the Energy Commission leads many municipal efforts to reduce energy use utilizing a NetZero approach to energy reduction in municipal buildings and infrastructure. For example, a retrofit of street lighting from traditional metal halide to LEDs was recently completed, efficiency improvements to the Department of Public Works heating and cooling systems are underway, and Bedford's six school buildings are being assessed for opportunities to reduce energy use and generate renewable energy. In addition, the Bedford Library was renovated with a geothermal heat pump system.

The

Process

The Energy Commission provides outreach to the public by organizing campaigns like Solar UP, which encourages private citizens to consider solar facilities on their properties, and it offers a Green Business Award that acknowledges businesses that demonstrate a commitment to minimizing their impact on the environment and increasing sustainability. In addition to conservation measures, Bedford is investigating locations where municipal solar energy can be generated.



Roof and ground-mounted solar panels at the Harbor Group office building



An electric vehicle charging station at Whole Foods Market

Bedford Today!

Plan Framework



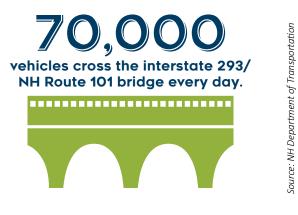
Transportation Patterns: Moving Around & Through the Town

Bedford's Transportation System Today

Although it may be best known as a residential community, Bedford is also a major employment center and highly integrated with and interdependent on neighboring communities and the regional economy. The performance, accessibility, and efficiency of the Town's transportation system is critically important to the quality of life and economic health of both Bedford and the surrounding region.

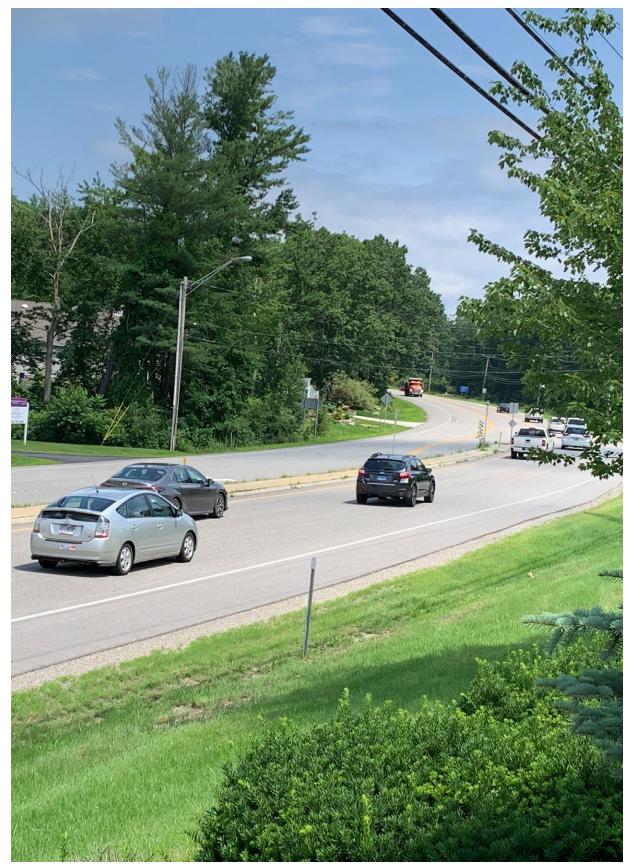
Bedford is located at a crossroads of several of New Hampshire's busiest transportation corridors. Few communities of its size enjoy access to so many different major corridors, and experience as much traffic as Bedford. NH Route 101, the state's most heavily traveled east-west corridor, crosses through the heart of the community. Plagued by some of the most persistent traffic congestion in Southern New Hampshire, a 2.1-mile section of the corridor in the center of Bedford is currently being widened to include four lanes.

Interstate 293 and the F.E. Everett Turnpike, two of the state's busiest limited access highways, cross Bedford's east side. US Route 3/South River Road, Bedford's primary commercial corridor, and NH Route 114, delivering traffic to Goffstown and other points to the north and east, experience traffic volumes approaching 30,000 and 25,000 vehicles per day at points, respectively. Raymond E. Wieczoerek Drive, located in the far southeast corner of Bedford, funnels traffic from the F.E. Everett Turnpike across the Merrimack River toward Londonderry, Manchester Airport, and located only two miles from the Bedford Town line.



Approximately 70,000 vehicles cross the Interstate 293/NH Route 101 bridge over the Merrimack River linking Bedford and Manchester every day. Bedford offers the closest access to the limited access highway network for a number of communities to the west. Tens of thousands of commuters drive through Bedford to access the F.E. Everett Turnpike, including thousands from communities like Amherst, Goffstown, Milford, New Boston, and Weare. Virtually all westbound traffic from Manchester must cross through Bedford, placing heavy through traffic demands on surface corridors like NH Route 101 and 114.

Manchester is not the only major employment center within a reasonable commuting distance of Bedford. The cities of Concord, Nashua and Lowell. Mass. are within a 30-minute commute. Portions of the Boston Urbanized Area also fall within a 30-minute drive and Downtown Boston is less than 55 miles away.



The

Process

Route 101

Bedford Today!

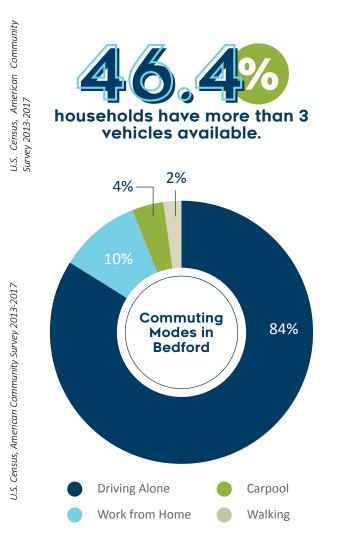
Plan Framework

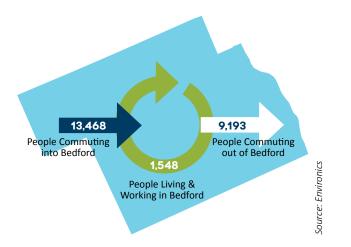


How We Travel

The automobile is the dominant mode of travel in Bedford and will likely remain so for the foreseeable future. A plurality of Bedford households report that they have more than three vehicles available for household use. Approximately 84 percent of residents commute to work by driving alone. Ten percent of residents indicated that they primarily work from home, while the remaining six percent carpool, walk, bike, or use public transit.

Bedford is well-oriented for automobile travel. Bedford was settled primarily as a farming community in its early years with a crossroads at its center. Dirt roads connected farms with



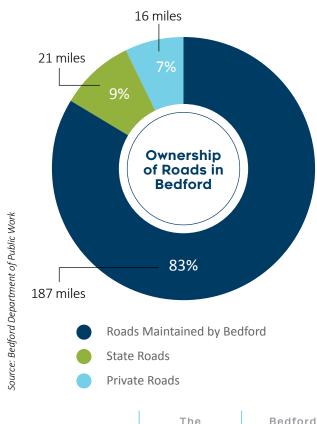


the center. located at the south side of Beards Hill and the valley of present-day NH Route 101 with Bells Hill to the south. By the late 1800s, a branch of the Boston and Maine Railroad served Bedford, linking Milford to Manchester. The Pines neighborhood in northeast Bedford, largely developed in the postwar 1940s and 50s, is unique for its relative density and gridpattern of development. Bedford experienced rapid growth beginning in the 1960s and most residential development has been lower density and expansive across large areas of the community.

Highway networks are extensive and provide convenient access to major destinations. Parking facilities are plentiful in nearly all areas. Bedford's land use characteristics, including that most residences are located in lower density neighborhoods relatively distant from employment centers, makes it unlikely that alternative travel modes, apart from carpooling or working from home, would prove viable everyday transportation modes for most residents of the community. Additionally, families with children make up a large share of the Bedford's population and the



mobility needs of families tends to be greater than those for other households. Finally, the Town has relatively limited accommodations for alternative travel modes, including limited public transit and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

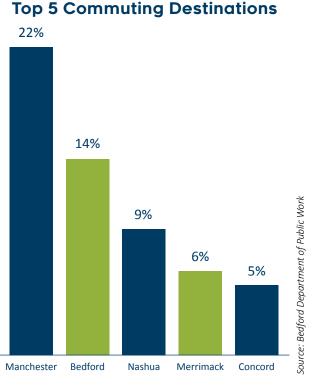


Process

104

Bedford Yesterday

The Town road network covers 224 miles with 187 miles, or 83 percent of all roads, maintained by the Town of Bedford. There are also 21 miles of state roads in Bedford (9 percent) and 16 miles (7 percent) of private roads in the community.



Bedford Today!

Plan Framework



Walking & Bicycling

Pedestrian and bicycling facilities are limited in Bedford. The current sidewalk network is limited to northern half of NH Route 101 (between Constitution Drive and Wallace Road), Hawthorne Drive, Boynton Street, Constitution Drive, Greenfield Parkway, and small portions of several other local roads. However, the sidewalks recently constructed as part of the Route 101 widening significantly increased the Town's sidewalk inventory and provide a strong foundation to pursue additional connections.

Although there are no formal bicycle lanes or routes in Bedford, bicycle ride information collected by the Strava mobile application suggest that most bicycle riders seek out alternatives to major corridors in Bedford. For example, Beals Road, Meetinghouse Road, County Road, Patten Road, North Amherst Road, Wallace Road and Back River Road boast some of the highest bicycle use in Bedford. Most of these roads offer alternatives or 'short-cuts' to major corridors. Despite their more direct eastwest routes, bicycle traffic along Route 101 and New Boston Road is relatively light.



Bedford bicyclist

In Bedford, several unpaved trails are popular for more recreational bicycle/pedestrian uses. The Heritage Trail runs along the Merrimack River just to the east of South River Road in the southeastern corner of Bedford. Although currently just under two miles in length and unpaved, there may be opportunities to expand the trail to allow it to serve a transportation purpose for pedestrians and cyclists. Additionally, just to the north of Bedford the Goffstown Rail Trail is a 5.5 mile paved trail linking Goffstown Village to Manchester. There may be an opportunity to tie into the trail from Bedford, to allow residents in the northwestern part of Town access to the alternative travel route.



County Road adjacent to Riley Field Tennis Courts

There are areas of Bedford where walking and bicycling and public transit use are more viable alternative travel modes. The South River Road corridor, with its higher intensity of development, and its mix of commercial and residential uses. Sidewalks and bicycle facilities would be incorporated along the corridor as part of the planned widening of the southern part of the road, currently programmed in the NHDOT Ten Year Plan. Areas of the Pines neighborhood, where residential uses are more clustered and in proximity to some neighborhood-level commercial uses, is another.

The strategies identified in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan would improve walking and biking connectivity between the Town Center cluster including the Library and current project, the safety and functionality municipal facilities, and the school complexes of a multi-use bicycle and pedestrian bridge south across NH Route 101. The Town also over Route 101 connecting Bell Hill Road and placed a high priority on safely connecting the Nashua Road, which was originally identified in Memorial Elementary School, the Pines, and the 2002 Corridor Study of NH Route 101, is still Donald Street near NH Route 114 with the needed. Town Center.

The easterly extent of the current Route 101 Other areas where residents noted pedestrian project ends at its junction with Route 114. This and bicycle improvements would be helpful intersection is the busiest and occasionally most include New Boston Road, Wallace Road, congested intersection in the region. A new plan that studies and plans for the intersection as well as the entire Route 114 corridor to Goffstown Village will begin in 2021 and include double the extent of sidewalks in Bedford. an analysis of the bicycle and pedestrian safety a strong step towards a more walkable needs.

Liberty Hill Road, and North Amherst Road. The NH Route 101 widening project will nearly community. The project also provides much needed access management eliminating some driveways and roadway connections that are no longer necessary. Although not a part of the

The

Process

What we heard...

...about walking & bicycling

"Need safe places to walk & bike."

"[Need] safer crossings for pedestrians on 101."

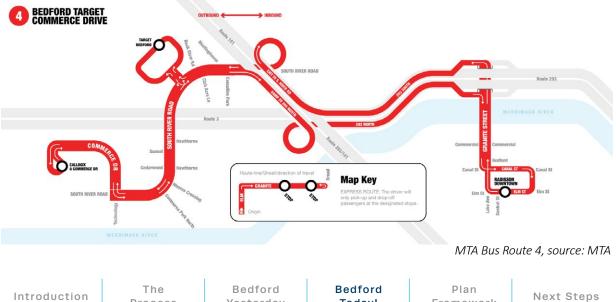
"It would be nice to have more sidewalks."





Public Transit

Public bus transit service is available in Bedford, route on Saturdays. No public transit service is however its reach is limited. Bus transit provided available in Bedford, or the Greater Manchester by the Manchester Transit Authority (MTA) Region, on Sunday or after 7 pm on any day of already links limited portions of the South River the week. Road corridor to Manchester. The Number While there are no specific plans for expanding 4 route links the Target/Lowes Shopping Center in Bedford and offices on Commerce bus transit service further into Bedford or providing services to connect residents Drive to Downtown Manchester with five weekday buses per day. This service is funded in Bedford Center or neighborhoods to in part through private financial contributions Manchester, opportunities may exist in areas of provided by office users in the Commerce Drive concentrated economic activity and compact, area of Bedford. At this time, the Town does not walkable neighborhoods. The NH Department make any financial contribution to bus service of Transportation's recent Statewide Strategic or public transit. The Number 7 route links the Transit Assessment Study identified potential Bedford Grove Shopping and the Bedford Hills for regional service along the NH Route 101 Center to Downtown Manchester with eleven corridor, specifically connecting neighboring Amherst and Milford. bus trips per weekday. Seven buses make the



Today!

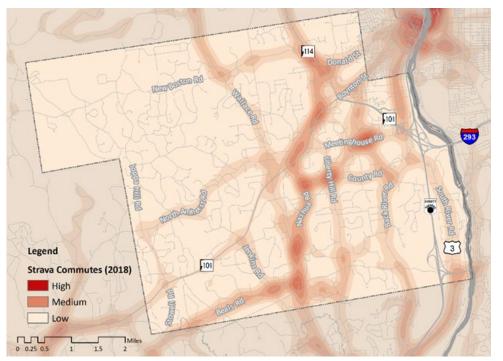
Framework

3 Legend Strava Rides (2018) High Medium Low 0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2

Densities of where people ride bicycles for recreation purposes

Λap

Лар



Densities of where people commute by bicycle throughout town

108 Town of Bedford, New Hampshire | Master Plan 2021

Process

Manchester Transit Authority (MTA)





On-Demand Transportation

There is no public demand response service available for seniors and others in Bedford who are not able to drive or lack access to a vehicle. Demand response allows riders without access to a vehicle to schedule pick-up and dropoff service for necessary trips, like medical appointments or grocery shopping. Community and philanthropic organizations fill this demand somewhat, but have limited capacities. Most other neighboring communities do offer demand response service for seniors, including Goffstown through MTA, Merrimack through Nashua Transit, and the Souhegan Valley communities to the west through the Souhegan Valley Rides service. Bedford's population, like the nation's, continues to age and the share of the community over age 65 continues to increase. It is well established that older adults prefer to age in place. An AARP survey found that 80 percent of adults over age 50 nationally prefer to remain in their homes and communities as they age. In light of these trends, the issue of transportation for older adults in Bedford and the potential for demand response services will likely take on greater importance in future years.

of Americans over age 50 prefer to remain in their homes as they age.

What we heard...

...about public transit

"Why is there no public transportation for the elderly & disabled?"

"I think we do not need public transit."

"Lack of public transportation becomes a big factor as I, and others like me, are aging."

"Bedford is not designed for public transportation."

Passenger Rail

The prospect of passenger rail service in A private company, the Boston Surface Railroad Southern New Hampshire has long been a Co., previously floated plans to develop a source of public policy debate. Specifically, privately maintained passenger rail extension the extension of the MBTA commuter rail from Worcester to Bedford, however the service from its current terminus in Lowell company declared bankruptcy in 2019 and the with stops in Nashua, Bedford or Merrimack, plans appears to be indefinitely on hold. and Manchester has been hotly debated. The Several residents noted that they would like state has taken some preliminary steps to to see rail service extended to the community, advance passenger rail service, but it remains a although others noted that sufficient public controversial topic and there are no firm plans transit service is already offered through the in place for construction or implementation Boston Express bus service. The Boston Express of the service. The Capitol Corridor Rail service includes stops in Londonderry and Study, completed in 2015, evaluated several Downtown Manchester to Logan Airport and alternatives for improving transportation South Station in Downtown Boston. mobility between Southern New Hampshire and Massachusetts. The study concluded that It is likely that public debate and discussions passenger rail service to Manchester provided regarding potential passenger rail service the strongest range of benefits, but noted such will continue at the state level and the Town an expansion would be expensive (over \$300 should remain engaged with state and federal million) and require additional debate from policymakers. policymakers. The proposed rail route would follow the existing Pan Am rail corridor, which runs along the More recently, in 2019, the legislature approved legislation to allow NHDOT to develop a financial plan to fund potential rail service.

The

Process

railroad tracks in Bedford





NH Park & Ride Lot

Park & Rides

Known for encouraging carpooling and ridesharing, park and ride facilities are most utilized along major transportation corridors at the convergence of heavily traveled routes. They are also popular near airports and other central transportation hubs like bus and train stations. Although Bedford is located on several major corridors, the Town has no formal park-andride facility. The former large Macy's parking lot off South River Road (U.S. Route 3) near the interchange of I-293 and NH Route 101 previously served as an informal ride sharing lot, but was lost when the redevelopment of the "Market and Main" development started.

Currently, there are more than 30 municipal or state owned and maintained lots throughout the state. The NH Department of Transportation alone maintains over two dozen park and ride facilities across the state, with most lots located in Southern New Hampshire and the Seacoast. However, none are located in close proximity to Bedford. Lots in North Londonderry and Hooksett are the closest such facilities.

The Role of Technology

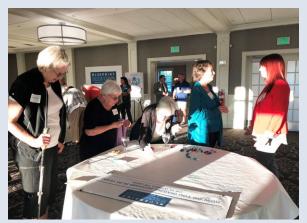
Technology is helping transform transportation, and for many of us, helping reduce our need to travel. A host of social, professional, and personal needs can be accomplished without leaving our homes. Instead of commuting long distances, many simply telecommute from the comforts of their homes. Instead of renting movies, we now stream content online. Instead of big shopping trips, a few clicks can allow any good or service to be delivered directly to us. The COVID-19 pandemic has only accelerated and intensified these trends.

As a relatively affluent community, most Bedford residents enjoy access to these technologies that help minimize travel. It is notable for example, that more than 10 percent of Bedford residents work from home. A significantly higher share of Bedford residents telecommute than their peers at the state and national levels. Limited broadband availability in some residential areas of Bedford, likely depresses telecommuting in the community beyond what may be possible.

What We Heard

The public outreach process for the Master Plan occurred during a period of transition and some disruption in the community with the construction of the NH Route 101 widening project well underway. While some residents expressed concern about the aesthetic and environmental impacts of the project, most expressed hope that it would help alleviate one of the most chronic traffic bottlenecks in Bedford and the Greater Region.

Many residents noted the charm and rural character of most of the Town's winding and narrow roadways. Most residents were complimentary of the Town's commitment to roadway maintenance, which has represented a significant community investment in recent years through passage of two major road bonds, including the care and planning taken in constructing roadway improvements. Residents repeatedly invoked Bedford's convenient location and accessibility to several major corridors as positive attributes of the community and key considerations in helping them choose Bedford as a home. Some residents noted that although traffic congestion in Bedford could be burdensome, that congestion levels were generally less than in many other areas or that alternative routes were often available.



Master Plan Public Outreach Event

Bedford Yesterday Bedford Today!

Plan Framework

While Bedford's location has helped fuel

the Town's growth and provided valuable

opportunities for economic development, it has

also come with costs. During the public outreach

process, residents noted several transportationrelated concerns. Traffic congestion during

peak hours was often noted as a quality of life

issue in Bedford, with residents specifically

noting the South River Road corridor and NH

Routes 101 and 114 as problem areas. Many

residents lamented the additional burdens that

heavy volumes of through traffic place on the

community, particularly on NH Routes 101 and

114. Several noted difficulty in crossing Route

101 and the perception that the roadway

acts as a barrier between neighborhoods and

A large number of residents complained of

the lack of transportation options available in

Bedford, including too few safe places to walk

and bicycle. One resident noted that "There are

no sidewalks anywhere near my neighborhood,"

while another said, "We live close to Woodbury

School, but nobody walks, it's not safe." However,

others expressed concern that investments in

pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure would

be too costly and were not practical in a

community where the population is largely

spread out and accustomed to automobile use.

Expanded public transit services were noted as

a community need by many Bedford residents,

including most frequently for the extension of

increased connectivity in the community.

Next Steps



passenger rail to the region.

A Strong Foundation for Transportation Planning

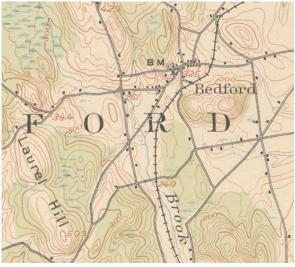
Bedford has taken a proactive approach to transportation planning in the community. The Route 3 Corridor Access Management Plan, prepared by the Town by VHB in 2007, provides recommendations for enhancing traffic flow and improving safety along the South River Road/ Route 3 corridor. The Plan has been a valuable tool to help facilitate connections between sites and secondary roads, particularly since the corridor has absorbed the most additional development in recent years.

The Route 101 Corridor Study, completed in 2002, has helped guide improvements to the roadway, including the recently completed widening project and other safety improvements, over the last two decades.

The Bedford Pedestrian & Bicycle Connectivity Master Plan, recommended in the 2010 Bedford Master Plan, was completed in 2014 and provides a foundation to approach pedestrian and bicycle improvements in Bedford.

Transportation Safety

Increased traffic leads to congestion which presents mobility and safety issues. Speeding is considered a problem throughout town and has resulted in severe accidents. Reducing traffic and maintaining the same level of mobility requires making some trips possible without an automobile. Designing streets so that they can accommodate walking and biking, and so that they are accessible to all, often referred to as a "Complete Streets" approach, may be viable for certain streets in Bedford and would represent a safety improvement. While an incremental step, the current expansion and improvements to the NH Route 101 corridor bring much needed sidewalks, crosswalks, and design elements to reduce speeding and provide refuges for pedestrians.



Historic map of Bedford Town Center

Improving safety requires an iterative process to review both driver behavior patterns (e.g. speeding and distraction) and infrastructure improvement needs. The Town of Bedford's Highway Safety Committee meets monthly and is comprised of representatives of the Police, Fire, Highway and School Departments as well as a Town Councilor and two citizen representatives. The Committee is charged with making recommendations to the Town Council on any issues that impact highway safety, which may include enforcement, traffic control signage, or infrastructure improvements.

Currently, the intersection of NH Route 101 at NH Route 114 and Boynton Street has the most crashes with incapacitating injuries in Bedford. The Route 101 corridor west of Wallace Road, and River Road/U.S. Route 3 south of Technology Drive have clusters of such crashes. While other severe crashes have occurred over the last five years, they are spread throughout the town, making it difficult to ascertain if there are roadway characteristics and conditions that are causal to the crashes, a requirement for RSA and HSIP awarded improvements. The Town of Bedford can continue to utilize the RSA program

as a means of identifying and securing funding for safety improvements. RSA applications are due to the NH Department of Transportation annually, generally on December 1st.

Congestion

Peak hour traffic congestion is a persistent challenge on many major corridors in Bedford. The recently completed Route 101 widening project helped address the single most persistent source of traffic congestion in Bedford. In coming years, the elimination of the Bedford Toll Plaza will help address another significant source of congestion. There are a number of tools to help reduce congestion including expanding technologies to notify motorists of traffic incidents so that they may take alternative routes, encouraging telecommuting, and encouraging the use of alternative travel modes, including ride-sharing or public transit.



The

Process



Aerial view of Airport Access Road

Traffic congestion at the Route 101/Route 114 intersection

Bedford Today!

Plan Framework





Route 101 in Bedford

NH Route 101 Corridor

The NH Route 101 corridor is the Bedford's most prominent transportation artery, bisecting the center of town. The corridor changes dramatically in character as it travels east to west in Bedford. As part of Interstate 293 on the eastern extreme of Bedford, approximately 88.000 vehicles cross the Merrimack River to enter or leave Bedford every day. After the signalized intersection with NH Route 114, the road transitions to a surface corridor. Approximately 30,000 vehicles travel on Route 101 west of NH Route 114, and daily traffic counts drop to approximately 20,000 by the time the corridor reaches the Amherst town line.

The recent NHDOT widening project of Route 101 from Route 114 to Wallace Road accomplished a long-term community goal. The project added sidewalks and additional landscaping to the corridor and helped address recurrent traffic congestion by adding travel lanes.

A corridor-wide safety improvement project is scheduled for construction from 2022-2023 at a cost of \$8.9 Million. This project also stems from the 2002 Corridor Study of NH Route 101 and will result in safety improvements from Wilton to Bedford.

While these improvement projects are welcomed and will improve operations on sections of the NH Route 101 corridor, there are substantial additional improvement needs that have not yet been programmed for funding. Specifically, the lack of left-turn lanes along the corridor to access roadways and businesses west of Wallace Road is a major traffic safety concern for the Town.

The 2002 Corridor Plan recommends widening Route 101 to four lanes through Bedford all the way to western Milford and the upgrading the NH 101 and 114 intersection in Bedford to a 'two-level intersection.' Improvements of this nature would be extremely costly and may not be feasible. While the Corridor Study has been a helpful guide and long-term plan, it is now nearly 20 years old and an update of the plan to reflect current preferences and funding sources would be helpful.

Interstate 293 and the F.E. Everett Turnpike

The F.E. Everett Turnpike provides connectivity to the Concord. Manchester, and Nashua Areas as well as to Northern Massachusetts and Greater Boston. In the coming years, the corridor will see one of the most significant infrastructure improvement projects in the state of New Hampshire. Between 2021 and 2025, the existing two-lane section of the F.E. Everett Turnpike between Exit 8 in Nashua and the I-293 junction in Bedford will be expanded to three lanes in each direction.

NHDOT has plans to convert the Bedford Toll NH Planning Commission (SNHPC) to place an Plaza on the turnpike, a significant source of Engineering Corridor Study on the NH Ten-Year existing traffic congestion, to electronic tolling. Transportation Improvement Plan from NH By reducing or eliminating traditional toll Route 101 to the intersection of Henry Bridge booth lanes, either option would substantially Road in Goffstown. The SNHPC concurred with improve safety and operations at the toll plaza this request, and the study was included in the and reduce congestion and associated vehicle Ten-Year Plan for 2021 at a cost of \$395.000. emissions. NHDOT has indicated it is leaning The Southern NH Regional Planning Commission toward an all electronic tolling conversion.



Bedford Toll Plaza on the F.E. Everett Turnpike Image Credit: AA Roads

It will be important for the Town to remain fully engaged with NHDOT and other partners to ensure that the Town's needs are considered in the design of both the widening and toll plaza conversion.

As Bedford's primary commercial corridor, NH Route 114 South River Road makes up a significant part The NH Route 114 corridor begins in Bedford of the community tax base. Running from the and serves communities to the north and Manchester city line to the Merrimack town west, including Goffstown and Weare. The line, South River Road transitions significantly corridor experiences its highest traffic volumes in character over the course of its six miles. in Bedford, where the road starts as a limited The northern part of the corridor is notable access corridor. The frequency and severity for the density of its land uses and its high of traffic crashes has increased along the concentration of retail. office. and residential corridor, and the Bedford Highway Safety Committee has identified the Route 114 as a priority for safety improvements. In 2017, the Town of Bedford (in conjunction with the Town of Goffstown) applied to the Southern

The

Process

identified Route 114, between NH Route 101 and New Boston Road, as one of 12 corridor sections in the 14-municipality region that would deteriorate to over capacity conditions by 2040 without improvements.

The purpose of the study is to identify capacity, operational, and safety improvement needs on the NH Route 114, which could then be used as a basis for including a construction project in the NH Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Plan. The Town of Bedford will coordinate with the Town of Goffstown. Southern NH Planning Commission, and NH Department of Transportation to oversee the completion of the study and the development of the study's recommendations.

South River Road (U.S. Route 3)



uses. The southern portion is much more suburban in nature, with a lower intensity of uses, several vacant or underutilized parcels, and large vegetated buffers between properties. The northern portion of South River Road, including all points north of the Lowes and Target development, falls within the Urban Compact and is Town-maintained. All points south are state-maintained.

The entire corridor falls under Bedford's Performance Zoning District, which allows a myriad of commercial uses and permits a great deal of flexibility in land development. With the completion of the U.S. Route 3 Access Management Plan, the Town has prioritized capacity and operational improvements on this corridor to reduce and eliminate bottlenecks. The Town's priority has been capacity improvements between Hawthorne Drive and the Manchester Airport Access Road.

The U.S. Route 3 (a.k.a. South River Road) plan for the unimproved segment of roadway between Hawthorne Drive and the Manchester Airport Access Road calls for a median divided

highway with two through travel lanes in each direction, 5-foot paved shoulders, and a 5-foot sidewalk. A center turn lane will be provided at selected locations to facilitate left turns along the corridor at signalized intersections. Along this southern segment of the corridor, left turns will be accommodated at two existing and two future signals at the intersections of Hawthorne Drive North, Hawthorne Drive/ Cedarwood Drive. Commerce Way. Technology Drive, and the Airport Access Road. The Bedford Planning Board often includes improvements as a condition of approval, by private

developers, in part or in total, at the time a site plan is submitted. Some planning elements have been constructed while others are in various stages of development

New Boston Road

New Boston Road is a state-maintained regional east-west connector road that links the NH Route 114 corridor with towns to the west, including the Town of New Boston and Mont Vernon. For many, it is an important alternate route to Route 101. Traffic volumes have increased considerably on this corridor over the past decade, and average daily traffic volumes now exceed 10,000 vehicles per day west of Tirrell Hill Road.

Similar to the NH Route 114 corridor, the frequency and severity of traffic crashes has increased along the New Boston Road corridor, and the Bedford Highway Safety Committee has identified the corridor as a priority for safety improvements. Developing a study and

plan for the roadway corridor in the context of a "Rural Complete Street" to accommodate other modes such as bicycle and pedestrians is desired as emphasized in the Bedford Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity Master Plan. Safe connectivity to the Riddle Brook School is also an important consideration in this context.

Looking Forward

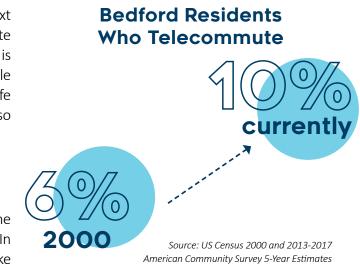
Transportation Trends

New technologies are helping to transform the transportation network and marketplace. In just a few years, ride sharing applications like Uber and Lyft have become ubiquitous. Online shopping has become the norm for many. Technologies to support autonomous vehicles are advancing rapidly. The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has accelerated many of these trends. Advancements in technology are occurring so rapidly and emerging from so many different industries and sectors of the economy, it is impossible to project exactly how they will impact Bedford. Bedford's challenge will be to adapt to these disruptions and harness changing technologies to advance community goals and minimize any negative impacts. This response may involve new regulatory initiatives in some areas, while in others it may lend itself to relaxing some existing regulations.

Rapidly changing technologies are making work from home a more viable option for many, and the potential of autonomous vehicles to provide rides for those who can't drive. Automotive manufacturers are offering Electric Vehicles (EVs) in a rapidly expanding availability of options. Demand for quick charging stations along major transportation routes like those in Bedford is already being felt and provided, mostly by private developers at regional retail attractors like grocery stores and in shopping

The

Process



areas. Much like handicap and other parking requirements, identifying locations and considering regulations can help facilitate the wider adoption of EVs.

The share of Bedford residents who telecommute in Bedford has grown from 6% of workers in 2000 to 10% currently. This change, though it might appear small, has helped eliminate hundreds of commuting trips from the road network, reducing congestion and improving safety for other travel users. By working to expand broadband access to residents, the Town can continue to enable and promote telecommuting. Since the share of telecommuters in Bedford is already growing, and because many residents work in fields where telecommuting is a viable option, this would likely represent one of the most practical ways to reduce congestion and improve traffic safety in Bedford.





Conservation & Development Framework



A scene along Joppa Hill Road in Bedford

Conservation and Development Approach

During Planapalooza[™], community members participated in a mapping exercise that identified areas of the community that they either liked, disliked, or saw opportunities for improvement. Parts of the Town that residents value included recreation areas, conservation land, existing residential neighborhoods, and the commercial area at Route 3 and Kilton Road. Areas in need of improvement included several of Bedford's main intersections, and the Route 101 commercial corridor, which many viewed as disjointed and not conducive to pedestrian activity. Many residents supported ideas of reconfiguring or redeveloping existing suburban strip centers and improving walkability in commercial areas.

It was clear from the map exercise and from discussions with Planapalooza™ participants that most residents prioritize focusing future planning efforts on land conservation and preservation of existing neighborhoods. Overall, the community's feeling was that existing residential neighborhoods should be maintained as-is, while opportunities for redevelopment were limited to existing activity centers, particularly along the Route 3 corridor and Route 101. The public input provided during the planning process led to the creation of a Conservation and Development Map which organizes the community into Sectors prioritized for varying degrees of land conservation, including both permanently protected and recreational open spaces, existing developed neighborhoods, and mixeduse/commercial sectors that support existing and proposed walkable, complete activity centers. By organizing the Town according to conservation and development sectors, intentional and informed decisions can be made

about how to most efficiently spend dollars on infrastructure improvements that will support the Master Plan.

The Conservation and Development Map provides a graphical interpretation of how the Town's land use policies should apply to the physical landscape of the community and where and how future conservation, preservation and development should or should not be accommodated. It is intended to guide near-term revisions to the Town's zoning ordinance to ensure that the land use regulations are consistent with the vision set forth in this Plan. It is important to note that the Conservation and Development Map is not a zoning map. It is intended to show, in a general sense, the desired amount of conservation and the pattern and location of future development or redevelopment. The boundaries shown are imperfect and intended only to reflect the general pattern of desired future development. A more detailed zoning map will need to be generated with significant public involvement as a part of a future zoning ordinance update to achieve a more fine-grained assignment of zoning classifications. Future zoning changes and other policy decisions should be based on the framework provided here to address the Town's hopes for the future. Implementing the Map by updating Bedford's zoning ordinance can address the concerns related to enhancing community character Town-wide.



The

Process

Greenfield Farm Parkway

Bedford Today!





Organization of the Map

The Conservation and Development Map is organized into Sectors designated for either conservation, preservation, or development, with the specific character of each further defined. Each Development Sector is associated with a certain intensity and character of development. This varies from the approach used by a conventional Future Land Use Map that focuses primarily on separating land by use rather than grouping areas with similar existing or desired future character. Sectors are used to guide where and to what extent conservation and development are to be encouraged and directed.

Bedford's Conservation and Development Map has a Conservation Sector: C-1 Conservation Land Sector and two Preservation Sectors: P-1 Rural & Residential Sector and P-2 Traditional Neighborhood Sector. Input from the Bedford community favored keeping single-family residential as the primary land use. There are two Development sectors: D-1 Locally Serving Development Sector and D-2 Regionally Focused Development Sector. Within each of the Development Sectors, there is a varying degree of potential for new development or redevelopment. Some are already developed and a small amount of change is anticipated in the future. Specific descriptions of each sector's attributes follows.

C-1 Conservation Land Sector

The C-1 Conservation Land Sector includes land that is already under conservation, either through easements or ownership by the Town or other conservation entities like local land trusts. Many of these areas have been set aside to be protected in perpetuity through easements or

deed restrictions. These areas include surface waterbodies, protected wetlands, floodplains, protected habitat, riparian corridors, purchased open space, conservation easements, wildlife transportation corridors, and open space associated with cluster subdivisions, as well as transmission line corridors and cemeteries. Moving forward, efforts should be focused on expanding and connecting conserved areas, including conserved areas in neighboring towns, to improve connectivity for outdoor recreation and natural resource protection.

P-1 Preservation Sector

The Preservation Sector makes up the largest proportion of the Town; and encompasses the areas developed with low-density neighborhoods and agricultural lands (some with water and sewer, but most with on-site systems) that should remain "as is." This area is defined by conventional suburban development patterns of primarily detached single-family houses. A few significant tracts of rural undeveloped land remains in this Sector. These areas should be either preserved or developed as cluster subdivisions with significant areas of protected open space. The use of accessory dwelling units should be continued to provide more housing choice and flexibility in these areas.

P-2 Traditional Neighborhood Sector

The Traditional Neighborhood Sector include areas of medium-density neighborhoods of homes set on smaller lots, many within neighborhoods of a gridded street pattern with strong street connectivity. These neighborhoods offer more compact housing options in neighborhoods and include pockets

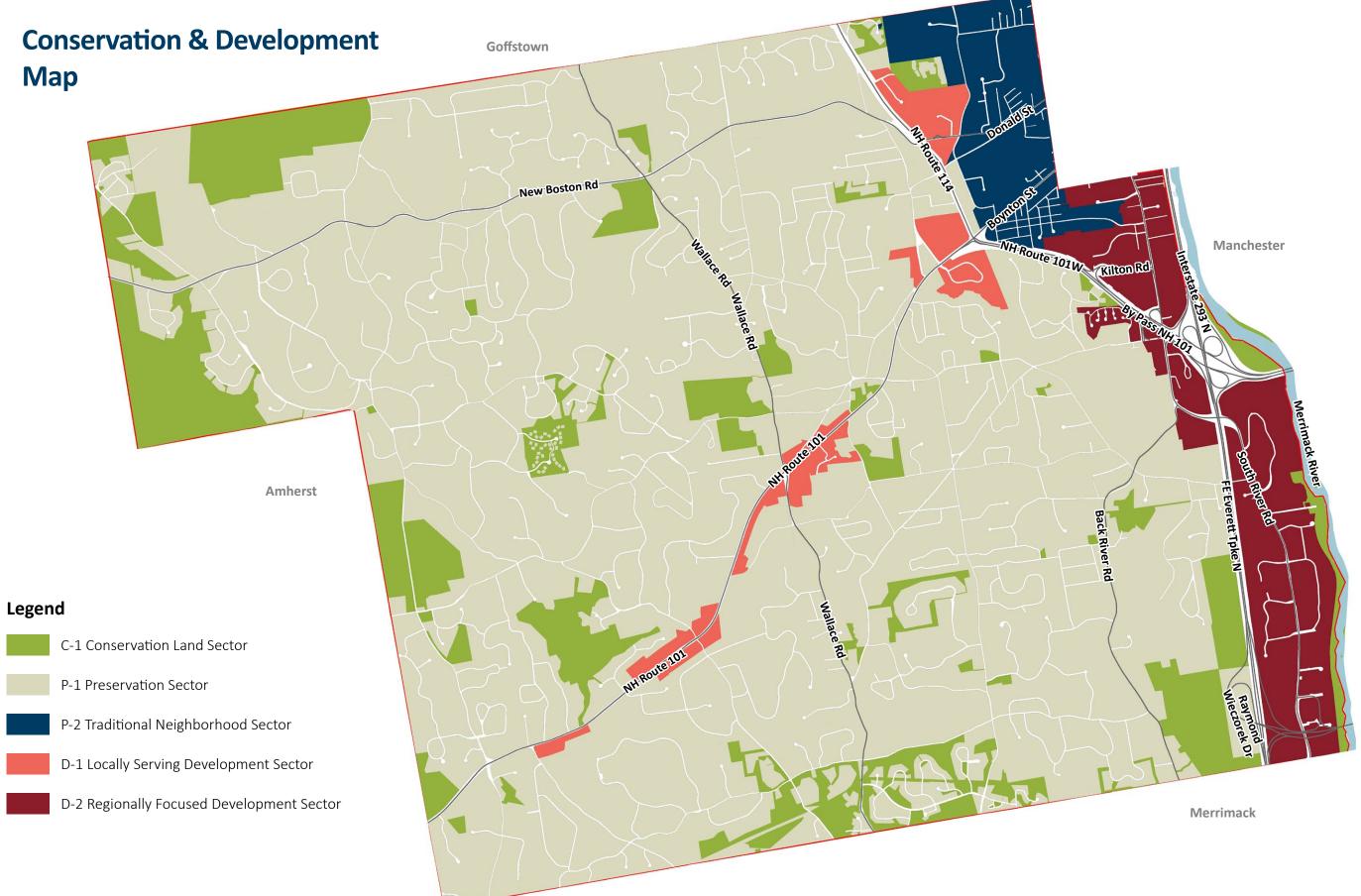
of small-scale commercial uses. This area would **D-2 Regionally Focused** benefit from a neighborhood plan to carefully **Development Sector** evaluate existing regulations and opportunities for traffic calming and expanded recreation and The Regionally Focused Development Sector pedestrian bicycle facilities. Commercial uses generally encompasses the South River that provide neighborhood amenities, including Road corridor and surrounding areas. This coffee shops, boutiques and small offices, may area presents the greatest opportunity for be considered in limited areas that do not regional-scale commercial development and detract from residential character. job creation. Existing development in the D-2 sector has occurred in a conventional, auto-D-1 Local Development Sector oriented suburban pattern, and includes several big-box retailers and office park environments. Locally Serving Development Sectors are smaller Some newer development has begun to take nodes of activity that are mostly developed a mixed-use approach. Moving forward, the but still contain underutilized parcels. Most of Town should carefully evaluate in what areas these areas were developed in a conventional, of the corridor mixed-use development should auto-oriented suburban pattern located along be permitted and develop design standards to Routes 101 and 114. Buildings have smaller ensure development reflects the community's footprints and target primarily local customers vision. New development, redevelopment, or and patrons passing through the area. Zoning the reuse of existing land and buildings should in the Route 101 commercial areas is stricter be encouraged to help achieve more walkable in terms of maximum heights and building and bikeable corridors including improvements footprints. The Locally Serving Development to the Heritage Trail and greater public access Sector should allow for changes in development to the Merrimack River. The southern part patterns while maintaining the scale of buildings of this sector may also present opportunities and requiring high quality architectural and site for transit-oriented development, should a design. The area of this Sector encompasses passenger rail station come to fruition at the the existing commercial areas; no significant Bedford/Merrimack border.

expansions should be planned. Instead, redevelopment and the reuse of existing land and buildings should be encouraged to better meet the local goal of achieving more engaging patterns of development. Even though access to these various nodes will likely continue to be via automobile, a sensitive approach to redevelopment in the future would allow for the creation of a more walkable environment. New development should be carefully designed to complement Bedford's rural character.

The

Process





GIS Data

Bedford Today!

Plan Framework





Next Steps for Tomorrow's Bedford



The Bedford Farmers Market

Town of Bedford, New Hampshire | Master Plan 2021 129

Step I for Tomorrow's Bedford:



Maintain Bedford as an Outstanding Community

Thanks to dedicated citizens, careful governance, and thoughtful planning, Bedford is already a wonderful community. The community will work to preserve and enhance those features that make Bedford, well Bedford, including its high quality services, educational and cultural resources, manageable tax rate, and valued neighborhoods and natural areas.



Town Playground

Across the region, Bedford is known for its family-friendly neighborhoods, rural landscape and its thriving business community. Despite the Town's growth, Bedford maintains strong ties to its rural and agricultural heritage in a community that spans four centuries. Old farmhouses, historic homes, stonewalls, and woodlands are common features throughout Bedford. In nearly all parts of Town, strong elements of the natural landscape are highly visible or incorporated into the built environment, and commercial buildings are designed in a way that reflects the community's heritage.

Planning for tomorrow's Bedford should preserve those qualities of Bedford that help differentiate and characterize the community, to ensure that the Town can continue to grow while preserving its character. During the public engagement process, many residents noted that they felt a sense of pride in the community and wanted to ensure that the features that have helped make the community so desirable, including its excellent public schools, convenient location, abundant services and rural character, continue well into the future. While change will continue to occur, the Town should strive to ensure that Bedford remains a great place to live, work, and play for many years to come.



Preserve and Enhance Bedford's Unique Character

1.1 - Evaluate zoning and land use regulations to ensure that regulatory frameworks continue to support Bedford's rural and residential character in neighborhoods and along the Route 101 corridor.

1.2 - Maintain current zoning along Route 101 which concentrates commercial development into nodes and provides visual breaks in commercial activity and integrates aspects of Bedford's rural character into the corridor.

1.3 - Promote land conservation and acquisition efforts to preserve open spaces that contribute to the Town's rural character.

1.4 - Encourage the incorporation of public art and design elements in municipal and private development projects to celebrate the unique heritage and character of Bedford, and to contribute to a stronger sense of place.

1.5 - Promote Bedford's agricultural heritage and preserve Bedford's remaining farmlands. Continue to permit agriculture as a permitted use across most of the Town's land area, and encourage farm stands and agricultural activities.

1.6 - Continue to enforce existing commercial sign standards throughout Bedford to discourage visual clutter along roadways.

1.7 - Work with the NH Department of Transportation to create attractive and welcoming gateways to Bedford on the major road corridors with design elements such as signs, landscaping, and lighting.

opportunities for open space protection.

The

Process





1.8 - Evaluate the Town's current cluster residential development standards to improve

Winter view of Bedford meadow

Bedford Today!

Plan Framework





Implement Best Practices in Community Design & Architecture

1.9 - Adopt town-wide design guidelines and architectural standards to improve the siting and design of buildings, parking lots, landscaping and lighting, to enhance the appearance of development. Encourage standards to require parking to be placed to the side and rear of commercial and multifamily residential structures.

1.10 - Evaluate public interest regarding the adoption of overlay districts to promote village scale development along the NH Route 101 corridor, between Nashua Road and Wallace Road, to encourage development that is more consistent with the historic character of Bedford.

1.11 - Work with residents and business owners in 'The Pines' neighborhood along Boynton Street and Donald Street to develop a neighborhood plan for the area with the goal of preserving valued features of the area and improving flexibility for property owners in the maintenance and renovation of buildings.



Bedford Hills Mixed Use Development

1.12 - Pursue grant opportunities that implement the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, to improve sidewalk connectivity between civic uses, businesses, schools, parks, and residential areas in the vicinity of the Town Center.

1.13 - Engage the community to develop architectural, density and design standards for multi-family development, to ensure new development is consistent with the visual character and heritage of the community.

1.14 - Promote building design that is 'age-friendly' in nature and accessible for all residents, including those with disabilities and limited mobility.

1.15 - Review Bedford's Wireless Telecommunication Ordinance to ensure the siting and design of new telecommunications facilities meet the technology needs of the community and are consistent in scale and design with the Town's character.

1.16 - Continue to permit shared parking and consider adopting site plan regulations to create maximum parking rates at commercial and multifamily residential sites, to mitigate the adverse impacts associated with the over-supply of parking on commercially-zoned parcels.



Elliot Medical Office Building



1.17 - Encourage growth in the Performance Zone, where infrastructure is most abundant, and maintain and enforce Performance Standards.

1.18 - Maintain existing zoning, lot sizing, and dimensional standards, in the Residential & Agricultural District.

1.19 - Maintain a regulatory framework that ensures that Bedford remains a town, with elements of vibrant suburban and rural characteristics, as well as thriving commercial areas.

1.20 - Continue to assess school and recreation impact fees on new residential development and continue to review opportunities to assess additional fees for other municipal services.

The



Metea Lane

Ensure Balanced Growth to Realize a 'Right-Sized' Bedford



Step 2 for Tomorrow's Bedford:



Foster a Healthy, Active, **Multi-Generational Community**

Bedford is a healthy, welcoming, and inclusive community both for longtime residents and newcomers. The Town promotes a spirit of voluntarism and public service to help advance community goals and Bedford provides opportunities for all residents, regardless of socioeconomic status, to participate fully in community discussions and decisionmaking. Cultural and recreation opportunities are high quality and abundant. Housing opportunities are available for residents of all generations and household sizes.



Bedford is a great place to live and a popular place to call home. Critical to the Town's desirability is the multi-generational nature of the community, a low tax rate, plentiful social and recreational opportunities, attractive housing options, and high quality schools and municipal services.

Bedford's existing residential neighborhoods are highly valued by residents. One challenge for the community is to respond to the demands for additional housing, including meeting its statutory obligations to provide

workforce housing opportunities, without adversely affecting the character of Bedford. Throughout the public engagement process, there was broad consensus that established residential neighborhoods should be largely preserved as they exist today. However, accessory dwelling units (ADUs) have proven successful in Bedford at providing additional housing opportunities consistent with the character of established neighborhoods, and offer one creative opportunity to help address housing needs. There is also some consensus that more compact or middle-sized housing

options, including townhouse and cottage developments with lower maintenance demands, are needed in Bedford. The aging of the population has also spurred increased demand for smaller homes or "aging in place" communities with additional amenities and services for health, transportation, and socialization. While Bedford can continue to be responsive to housing demands and welcome additional housing opportunities, these efforts should incorporate community dialogue, additional regulatory tools and design criteria, to ensure new development is consistent with the existing character of the community.

Bedford's dedication to fiscal conservatism and the Town's careful handling of taxpayer funds, is Encouraging community engagement and exemplified by the Town's Triple-A bond rating, voluntarism is important to foster social which represents a source of civic pride. At the connections and collaborative communitysame time, it is widely recognized that there are significant unmet infrastructure and service wide discussions. The Town can provide a strong foundation to inspire participation and needs in the community. As the Town has discourage perceptions that Town Government grown, demands for police and fire protection, is closed off or inaccessible. In an era of parks and recreation, public water and sewer newspaper shutdowns and consolidation of the connections, and other town services have news media, the Town can also continue to step also increased. A comprehensive study of the forward to help inform citizens in community Town's facilities and space needs is underway, decision-making and consensus-building. and recommendations are expected to address facilities needs across Town government. Effective coordination and open communication will be important to completing the facilities improvements.



The

Process

2.1- Develop a strategy to ensure that Bedford remains an inclusive and multi-generational community and evaluate opportunities to expand housing options for those of all ages and household sizes.

2.2 - Promote the Town's Accessory Dwelling Unit zoning as a model to offer more housing choice in Bedford and adopt design and siting criteria to permit detached accessory dwelling units via a Planning Board Conditional Use Permit process.

2.3 - Develop opportunities for the construction of 'Missing Middle' housing types, or more compact housing types compatible in scale with single-family housing, such as cottage-style development or townhomes.



Village Green



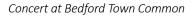
2.4 - Coordinate with Southern NH Planning Commission to update the Region's Housing Needs Assessment to track regional housing production, including how the Town compares to peer communities regarding housing regulation and production, both for market rate and workforce housing.

2.5 - Continue to provide realistic opportunities for workforce housing development consistent with state law and regularly assess the effectiveness of Bedford's workforce housing ordinance.

2.6 - Continue to participate in regional and state forums and partnerships to advance housing solutions and ensure regional collaboration and action efforts.

2.7- Regularly assess Bedford's zoning and land use regulations and existing housing stock to ensure the Town is responsive to demographic changes in the community and region.





Promote Expanded Social and Civic Engagement

2.8 - Support and create partnerships with community organizations, charitable and business associations, and neighborhood groups in Bedford.

2.9 - Evaluate opportunities, including partnerships with the private sector, to provide more meeting places in Bedford for community groups and organizations.

2.10 - Investigate barriers to social and civic engagement in Bedford and adopt strategies to ensure all members of the community are provided opportunities to participate fully in community discussions and municipal governance.

2.11 - Promote additional opportunities for events or platforms where Bedford-based farmers and small business owners can showcase and sell their products and wares to the broader community.

2.12 - Develop a strategy to increase turnout in municipal elections.

2.13 - Continue to utilize the resources of Bedford Community Television (BCTV) and WBNH-Radio to share important news and information to the community.

2.14 - Encourage more grassroots and community-based journalism in Bedford in response to the continued consolidation and contraction of traditional media sources. Enhance the Town's use of social media platforms.

2.15 - Evaluate opportunities to expand recreational, social, and educational programming activities to underserved populations. Expand outreach efforts to ensure all residents are aware of the offerings and programs available.

2.16 - Continue to strengthen the use of the library as a community gathering place for recreational programs, creative expression and social engagement.

2.17 - Support existing annual Town events and evaluate opportunities to host additional community festivals or events.

2.18 - Promote a vibrant arts community in Bedford by identifying barriers to the growth of arts and encourage opportunities to showcase artists in Bedford.

2.19 - Develop a programming plan to more fully utilize the Bedford Village Common as a community gathering place for residents of all ages.

2.20 - Survey Bedford's older residents regarding desired services and recreational opportunities to ensure adequate activities and services are available.





Bedford Library sign

The

Process

Concert at Old Town Day



Little Free Library





Bedford Safety Complex, photos by Madonna

Provide High Quality Municipal Facilities and Services

2.21 - Finalize and adopt long-term municipal facilities plan and space needs analysis and advance its recommendations.

2.22 - Continue to incorporate the Bedford School District into the plan review process for large residential development projects.

2.23 - Implement the recommendations of the Bedford Parks and Recreation Facility Assessment, last updated in 2018.

2.24 - Engage residents in the development of a recreation master plan with broad public input to analyze current and projected recreational needs, trends in recreation use, and best practice in recreational programming and facilities to ensure high quality recreation programs and facilities for all ages.

2.25 - Continue to implement the recommendation of Bedford's sewer master plan and evaluate opportunities to expand water and sewer infrastructure by partnering with the private sector.

2.26 - Update the Town's GIS database and online mapping resource to ensure that maps and data are available to the public.

Step 3 for Tomorrow's Bedford:



Bedford will work to preserve its rural landscapes, open spaces, and historic resources. The community will maintain its existing residential neighborhoods while providing opportunities for development in appropriate areas.



Bedford's neighborhoods hold a special place and management of the existing open space in the hearts of many residents, they are rural properties to ensure that they are preserved for enough to feel connected to nature and yet future generations. The Town should continue close enough to major conveniences that to pursue conservation of the remaining open neighborhoods do not feel isolated. Many spaces and work to update the Open Space residents noted that Bedford offers just the Plan to reflect the current conditions and right mix of convenience and rural appeal. community preferences. Bedford's open spaces are an integral part of The Zoning and Historic District Ordinances have served as valuable tools to maintain the places is critical to Bedford's future.

the Town's identity and the protection of these character of existing historic and rural areas and Throughout the Master Plan public outreach to provide buffers between neighborhoods and process, residents expressed significant adjacent commercial zones. The Town should continue to review and update the land use support for land conservation and maintaining the rural feel of the community. Bedford should regulations and permitting processes to guide continue to encourage good stewardship new development.

The

Process

Preserve open spaces, rural and historic character, and

Stonewall along Church Road

Bedford Today!

Plan Framework



Steward Conserved Land, Trails, and Natural Resources

3.1 - Update the Bedford Open Space Plan and implement its recommendations.

3.2- Leverage grant opportunities to invest in the Heritage Trail to enhance the trail as a recreational asset in Bedford. Explore opportunities to expand the trail and to improve its surface to allow increased accessibility by all members of the community.

3.3 - Continue mapping Bedford's trails and develop detailed maps for each trail system.

3.4 - Identify opportunities for new trail construction and strive to connect trail systems as much as possible. Continue to pursue grant funding to support this work.

3.5- Increase public awareness of Bedford's outdoor recreational resources by expanding use of social media and town website as resource for information.

3.6 - Develop and implement land management and stewardship plans for all municipally owned conservation properties. Coordinate with Piscataquog Land Conservancy on property management.

3.7 - Provide education and outreach on stewardship relating to habitat management, management of invasive plant species, and best practices in stormwater management to private landowners.

3.8 - Continue to allocate funds from the Land Use Change Tax to the Conservation Fund.

3.9 - Maintain strong partnerships with local and regional land trusts.



Preserve Bedford's Rural and Historic Character

3.10 - Maintain the existing Historic District and Historic District Commission review process to ensure new construction and development respects the character of Bedford's historic Town Center.

3.11 - Pursue grant opportunities to promote historic preservation in the Historic District and throughout Bedford, including surveying and documenting historic sites and buildings and implementing best practices in preservation.

3.12 - Increase awareness of Bedford's historical resources and seek opportunities to share the stories of Bedford's historical places.

3.13 - Consider adopting a demolition delay ordinance to provide time for the Town and land owners to consider alternatives to demolition and time to document the historical resource prior to demolition.

Step 4 for Tomorrow's Bedford:



and Manage Change

A pristine natural environment and a growing economy are not mutually exclusive goals in Bedford. Local government, residents, and businesses are careful stewards of the environment. Bedford supports growth in areas where it is appropriate, including areas where infrastructure is available, and in a manner that is minimally impactful to the environment. The Town works with residents and the private sector to realize environmental goals, including clean air and water and energy conservation. The community is prepared for a changing and dynamic environment, including extreme weather events.



In New Hampshire's highly-variable four-season climate, changing conditions are a fact life. Moving forward, the region is forecast experience more weather extremes, includi extreme precipitation events, variabil in temperatures, and longer periods both flooding and drought conditions. T Town's major infrastructure will be test and potentially more susceptible to failur Protection of land within flood plains or adjace to water bodies can reduce costs associat with flood damage and preserve wat resources. Land conservation and protection

The

Process

Conserve the Natural Environment

Summer view of meadow in Bedford

of
to
ng
ity
of
he
ed
re.
ent
ed
ter
on

Bedford Today!

Plan Framework

of water resources emerged as major themes

from the Master Plan public outreach process.

While popular for a variety of reasons, these

measures will also help the community prepare

Promoting energy efficiency and sustainability

efforts provides both environmental and fiscal

benefits. Costs associated with solar and wind

energy production have declined dramatically

in recent years, to the point that they are less

expensive to construct in most locations than

facilities powered by fossil fuels. The Town can

and respond to changing conditions.



both encourage landowners to adopt more sustainable practices and to lead by example by retrofitting municipal facilities to incorporate renewable energy sources. By reducing the use of fossil fuels, the community can reduce negative impacts on the natural environment, including on air and water resources, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Town should also expand outreach efforts to ensure residents are aware of grant and loan opportunities available for HVAC conversions and solar and wind energy systems.

Change will not be limited to climate conditions. Bedford residents are heavily reliant on private wells for their water needs and the PFAS contamination of drinking water to many homes and businesses in Bedford has increased public awareness of the critical role water quality plays in daily life.

The Coronavirus pandemic also offers a stark reminder of how quickly features of daily life can be transformed. Changes in technology, demographics, and commerce will continue to impact the community and the region. Brick and mortar retail stores and even office buildings will be challenged by a continuing trend toward utilizing technology for purchases and work arrangements.



Ash Bog

For the next few decades, Bedford will continue to age and diversify. Transportation and communication networks may look dramatically different over time thanks to advancements in technology and upcoming 5G wireless infrastructure. Preparation and adaptability will all be critically important in helping Bedford respond to changing conditions and a changing environment. While planning cannot predict the outcomes or exact impacts of these changes, it can be tremendously helpful in promoting a culture of preparedness and mitigating disruption when changing conditions do emerge.



4.1 - Review and update the wetlands ordinance to improve water quality protections.

4.2-Evaluate requiring low impact design practices to ensure new development minimizes impervious surface coverage, treats and infiltrates stormwater, and reduces drainage flows into existing outlets.

4.3 - Continue to work with the EPA and state and regional partners to implement the requirements of the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit to reduce stormwater pollution and to require best practices in stormwater management and design.

4.4 - Continue to work with the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) to evaluate Bedford's water supply for emerging contaminants such as PFAS and ensure all residents have access to safe drinking water.

4.5- Educate residents and homeowners on the importance of regularly testing their private well water for potential contaminants.

4.6 - Continue to update Bedford's Floodplain Development Ordinance in response to recommendations from FEMA and the State of New Hampshire to mitigate risks associated with flood prone areas.

4.7 - Partner with other municipalities environmental organizations and state and regional partnership, to improve stewardship and help protect the Merrimack River Watershed area.

4.8 - Work with NHDES and other partners to monitor impairments in Bedford water bodies to ensure progress in improving water quality.





4.9 - Pursue the development of a town-wide sustainability strategic plan to carry out the recommendations set out in this plan, identify others initiatives, and standardize sustainable practices as part of municipal operations and procedures.

4.10 - Continue to provide a solar energy and wind-powered tax incentive for residential and business owners to encourage alternative energy sources

4.11 - Assess opportunities to reduce energy use in municipal buildings and school district facilities.

4.12 - Streamline the development review process and permitting process for wind and solar systems to encourage the design and construction of energy efficient buildings.

The

Process

Merrimack River

Promote Energy Efficiency and Sustainability



4.13 - Encourage Bedford residents and business owners to be good environmental stewards by limiting energy consumption and reducing dependence on fossil fuels. Provide information on energy saving techniques, educational opportunities and programs to residents.

4.14 - Develop local standards for the siting of ground-mounted solar arrays.

4.15 - Promote the reduction of solid waste through increased recycling and composting.

4.16 - Promote the use of alternative modes of transportation, including walking, cycling, carpooling, and public transit use, as well as telecommuting.

4.17 - Support the expansion of electric vehicle infrastructure and charging stations to meet local and regional demands.



Plan for Changing Climate, Demographic, and **Technological Conditions**

4.18 - Utilize existing vulnerability assessments of municipal facilities, including for transportation and water infrastructure, to plan and program for mitigation improvements associated with flooding and erosion from increased extreme precipitation events.

4.19- Continue to work with residents and other partners to promote a culture of preparedness across the community.

4.20 - Continue to update the Hazard Mitigation Plan and Emergency Operations Plan and encourage preparedness across all levels of municipal government.

4.21 - Evaluate whether Bedford should become a community broadband service provider to provide alternative Internet services to residents with the goal of improving Internet speeds at competitive pricing.



Optics 1 research facility

Step 5 for Tomorrow's Bedford:



Bedford provides opportunities for entrepreneurs to enter the marketplace and thrive. The community supports both a thriving small business community and a strong base of national and international employers. Bedford is a trusted partner to support regional initiatives, including education and workforce training programs, and works cooperatively with peer communities to advance the region's economy. Bedford leads by example by embracing technological and economic change to deliver higher quality, streamlined and more cost-effective services.



Bedford is proud of its diverse slate of both for the Town's business community, for both large and small businesses and business large and small employers, will be effective in ensuring a vibrant business environment for recruitment and retention is vitally important to the Town. Commercial uses are an integral years to come. part of the community tax base and generate Bedford has an important and positive story approximately 20 percent of the Town's to tell, and should take an active role in tax revenues. While many opportunities promoting itself, both for the benefit of its exist for enhanced or expanded economic residents and its business community. In an development in Bedford, several trends, such increasingly connected world, the importance as telecommuting and internet commerce, will of maintaining a strong digital presence is challenge the viability of some of the Town's existing businesses. Marketing and advocating vitally important. Resources like BCTV allow the

The

Process

Support innovation, entrepreneur-ship, and a vibrant & dynamic

Sunrise Labs

Bedford Today!

Plan Framework





Town to present an active public outreach role. Moving forward the Town should continue to participate in regional economic development partnerships to improve local economic development strategies.

The Master Plan public outreach effort indicated that residents were most receptive to development within Bedford's Performance Zone, along the South River Road corridor. In recent years, retail development has attracted more regional traffic and there is continued opportunity for the area to grow as a regional destination for dining, shopping, and entertainment. Regardless of what uses are built in the Performance Zone, the Town should pursue high quality design and architectural standards to enhance Bedford's character.

Office building on Constitution Drive



Tell Bedford's Story and Advocate for its Business Community

5.1 - Work to establish a branding effort to advertise and market Bedford as a dynamic destination for economic development, to provide a positive introduction for prospective residents and businesses.

5.2 - Establish an outreach program to assist existing Bedford businesses and to improve communication between the Town and the business community.

5.3 - Support efforts to expand technology and high-speed internet across Bedford's residential areas to support residents who work from home.

5.4 - Encourage the development and use of shared co-working office spaces to encourage residents to work in Bedford.

5.5 - Identify key gateways to Bedford and install infrastructure, including 'Welcome to Bedford' signage, to foster a positive and welcoming introduction to the community for travelers.

5.6 - Continue to engage with employers regarding housing needs to support opportunities for a growing workforce in the community.

5.7 - Encourage a balance between national companies and locally owned businesses in Bedford, which traditionally keep more resources within the community and offer more locally focused opportunities for social and creative engagement.



5.8 - Consider establishing a Bedford Economic Development Commission or Committee to advocate for the Town's business community and provide recommendations to advance economic development to the Town Council and Planning Board.

5.9 - Consider hiring an Economic Development Director or other staff to focus on economic development effort in Bedford, including business retention and recruitment.



Focus Development in the Performance Zone

5.10 - Promote and market the Performance Zone as a vibrant, distinct, and attractive regional destination for commercial, industrial and mixed-use development.

5.11 - Engage with the community to determine if mixed-use developments with residential uses incorporated should be permitted in the Performance Zone and develop a definition of what constitutes a mixed-use development with criteria to ensure a balance of commercial and residential uses. Pursue design and architectural standards to ensure that new mixed-use development is consistent with the community's vision, including the scale, appearance and intensity of such developments.

5.12 - Promote development that engages with and encourages greater access to, the Heritage Trail and the Merrimack Riverfront.

The

Process

Office building on South River Road



5.13 - When appropriate, continue using the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) tool to help fund public investments in the Performance Zone.

5.14 - Encourage adaptive reuse and infill of existing commercial and industrial sites and buildings.





Senior Living of Bedford

28 South River Road



5.15 - Publish a developer's guide or handbook to help business owners navigate the Town's permitting process.

5.16 - Continue to provide fact sheets and other outreach materials to convey zoning, land use, and building code information in the most accessible manner possible.

5.17 - Recodify portions of the zoning ordinance for clarity and ease of use by developers, land use boards and residents.

5.18 - Continue to allow flexibility in the development review and approval process to incentivize and encourage the best design outcomes for Bedford.

5.19 - Continue to permit phased developments coordinated by the Planning staff, where land use approvals are long-term in nature and improvements can be implemented over time, without requiring repeated reviews and approvals, unless significant changes are made.

5.20 - Continue to work with federal, state, and regional partners to identify regional opportunities for economic development and work cooperatively to forge regional solutions and partnerships.

5.21 - Expand opportunities to review minor land use applications through the Administrative Approval process instead of the Planning Board process.

Step 6 for Tomorrow's Bedford:



Bedford is an accessible and connected community. The Town supports a safe, innovative, and efficient transportation network and leverages opportunities to enhance connectivity for all travel users, including drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders. Where appropriate, the community pursues opportunities, at both the local and regional level, to expand technology and infrastructure connections to support the community's quality of life.



Bedford's convenient location, at the partners, and neighboring communities to crossroads of several major arterial roadways, implement road safety and traffic congestion contributes to the Town's appeal. This central improvements. Many of the community's location has powered the community's growth most pressing transportation needs, including and fostered one of the most productive safety improvements along Route 101, the business districts in Southern New Hampshire. widening of the southern portion of US Route However, as a community that shoulders a 3/South River Road, and a corridor study to large share of through traffic, Bedford can guide improvements to NH Route 114, are also experience significant traffic congestion. already programmed in the NHDOT Ten Year Bedford should continue working with the Improvement Plan as a result of regional NH Department of Transportation, regional coordination.

The

Process

Advance Transportation & Infrastructure Connections

South River Road

Bedford Today!



Bedford should also embrace technological innovations to help reduce and manage traffic by sharing relevant information with motorists in real-time regarding accidents, construction, and other traffic events so that travelers can make more informed travel decisions. One of the surest ways to curtail congestion is to reduce the need of residents to make peak hour trips in the first place. Bedford already boasts one of the highest shares of residents who telecommute in the state.

With many employers now offering this option in much greater numbers, the Town should continue to encourage a supportive environment for telecommuting.

While traffic congestion is a concern on several arterial roads, many residents noted that traffic speeds are too high in their neighborhoods and that roadways can feel unsafe. The Town should

evaluate options for traffic calming, to help slow traffic and improve safety for all travel users. Improvements to arterial roadways, including the recent Route 101 widening project, can also help by improving travel times and reducing the incentive for motorists to use local roads as short-cuts.

A desire for access to more transportation options, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities and public transit, represented a consistent theme throughout the public outreach process. However, others cautioned that Bedford's automobile-oriented land uses and lower intensity of development would make such investments cost-prohibitive and even undesirable. For bicycle and pedestrian improvements to be successful in Bedford, they will have to be located to connect popular destinations or designed for more rural environments.





View of Route 101

Traffic Safety Control sign

Promote Safer, Less Congested, and Better Connected Streets

6.1 - Work with the Department of Public Works and the Highway Safety Committee to identify local streets where travel lane markings could be narrowed to promote reduced traffic speeds and facilitate a safer environment for all travel users.

6.2 - Identify deficiencies in roadway safety and take steps to improve traffic control devices like signage, traffic signal coordination, pavement markings and lighting.



6.3 - Continue to require formal traffic impact assessments for new development proposals and continue to require necessary improvements to mitigate traffic impacts on surrounding roadways.

6.4 - Continue to work with NHDOT to implement safety improvements along NH Route 101 with a particular focus on improving the safety of left-turns along the corridor.

6.5 - Continue to implement recommendations of the U.S. Route 3 Access Management Plan to promote greater connectivity and access management along the South River Road corridor.

6.6 - Identify opportunities to increase connectivity between developed parcels in commercial districts, including those along South River Road and Route 101 as redevelopment occurs. As commercial or mixed-use redevelopment is approved, implement the recommendations of an access management plan to improve safety.

6.7- Maintain reasonably comfortable flows of traffic during peak hours (known to traffic engineers as a Level of Service of D or better) recognizing that congestion may occur at certain locations.

6.8 - Continue to require that new development bear a proportionate share of the costs of highway capital projects and off-site improvements.

6.9 - Continue to use wayfinding signage to direct the traveling public to civic and recreational areas, business districts, and other attractions in Town to help improve navigability for visitors and promote further exploration of the community.

The

Process

View of Church Road



6.10 - Encourage local street connections between existing neighborhoods and new residential development where practicable. Where vehicular connections are not possible due to topography or other existing conditions, promote bicycle and pedestrian connections and trail improvements.

6.11 - Partner with NHDOT to encourage ride-sharing and explore opportunities for siting a 'Park and Ride' facility in Bedford on state-owned land owned land along the South River Road or the NH Route 101 corridor.



Promote Alternative Travel Modes and More Complete Streets

6.12- Prioritize Complete Streets projects that can be constructed within the available public rightof-way and develop a model road cross section to enhance pedestrian and bicycle travel for rural roads where sidewalks or bicycle lanes may be impractical.

6.13 - Continue to utilize NHDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant opportunities.

6.14 - Prioritize the identification and improvement of walking routes to Bedford's schools to ensure safety for students and school employees.

6.15 - Require that pedestrian ways and private developments are designed to serve the needs of the handicapped as well as older residents and those with limited mobility.

6.16 - Investigate the feasibility of expanding public transit service in Bedford to major employment centers and denser residential areas. Consider cost-sharing models by partnering with the private sector to facilitate expansions of public transportation.

6.17 - Work with the Manchester Transit Authority and other partners to implement demand response service in Bedford to provide transportation to older residents, who are not able to drive, for medical appointments, shopping trips and other errands.



6.18 - Work with state and regional partners, as well as those from the private sector, to investigate the economic feasibility and plan for future passenger rail service to the region, including a passenger rail station in Bedford. If the passenger rail station comes to fruition, solicit public input to envision how the surrounding area should be developed, including potential transit oriented development.

6.19 - Work with NHDOT to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety along New Boston Road.



Promote Regional Collaboration and Innovation

6.20 - Continue to work with NHDOT, the Southern NH Regional Planning Commission, neighboring communities and Bedford's state legislative and congressional delegations to embrace a spirit of regional cooperation to plan regional transportation improvements and to advocate for increased investment in regional and Bedford specific transportation projects.

6.21 - Utilize technology, including Transportation Demand Management (TDM) tools, to keep residents and visitors informed of accidents, construction activity, and other causes of traffic congestion in real time, so motorists can make more informed travel decisions.

6.22- Partner with NHDOT, the Nashua and Southern NH Regional Planning Commissions, and the Towns of Amherst, Milford and Wilton to complete an update of the NH Route 101 Corridor Study.

6.23- Work with the Southern NH Planning Commission and the NHDOT to implement the project for South River Road capacity and pedestrian improvements south of Hawthorne Drive as identified in the NHDOT Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Plan.

6.24- Pursue adopting a Memorandum of Understanding with NHDOT to ensure best practices in access management and driveway design for new development along state-maintained corridors, particularly NH Route 101 and the southern portion of South River Road.



Today!

Process

153

Next Steps

Framework



Implementation Plan



Opening presentation and workshop at Bedford Village Inn



Implementing the Blueprint Bedford Master Plan depends greatly on the ability of residents, business owners, developers, Town staff and elected officials to work together for a common purpose. The six core "Guiding Principles" and associated "Next Steps for Tomorrow's Bedford" should be used to guide investment and decision-making in Bedford for the next ten years, or until the Master Plan is updated again. The numbered action items listed under each "Next Step" will serve as a playbook for implementation, identifying projects and policies that are achievable within this time frame. The Planning Board will work to create an implementation matrix to consolidate the action items throughout the document into a single location and will assign a general timeline and responsible party or parties for each item. The structure of the Master Plan does not require all projects or actions to be completed in sequence. Implementation will occur over time, consistent with the pace of growth, emerging local or regional initiatives, and available funding and partnerships.

Focus discussion group at Old Town Hall





Opening presentation and workshop at Bedford Village Inn