

Chapter 2

SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND TOWN FACILITIES

VISION

As we enter Durham we are drawn to its incredible natural beauty, its tidal bay, its woods, and its country roads. Continuing on through Durham we picture a community with an inviting, active, easily identified downtown, which supports varied shops of differing character. We picture a warm atmosphere inviting people to spend time in Durham. We envision a Town that encourages you to walk or ride your bike through a picturesque, bustling small community, with businesses and restaurants catering to all of our citizenry. People live here because of our culture, our relationship with the University of New Hampshire, pride in our school system and a feeling of connectedness with other community members. Our vision for the future of Durham is of a citizenry that is more involved in all aspects of growth, development and decision making, with a growing downtown and improved recreational facilities and gathering places. With the continuing growth of southern New Hampshire, we will strive to maintain our small-town character, while supporting a healthy business environment.

INTRODUCTION

Sense of community is not a topic often found in master plan documents. It is not a quantifiable concept that can be easily demonstrated with statistics and data. It is a feeling and a condition that is experienced differently by different people. Why would anyone address such a subjective notion as part of a master plan?

A master plan outlines the vision a community has of itself or would like to promote for itself. In essence, this vision is the definition of *sense of community*. A well-defined sense of community can provide a justifiable basis for the planning decisions and recommendations made throughout this Master Plan.

Sense of community can be defined as a combination of *identity, image, and connections and sense of belonging*. *Identity* is how we see ourselves as a community, who we are, and what is important and valuable to us. *Image* is how we are seen as a Town, how we look, and how we are remembered. *Connections and sense of belonging* is an awareness of, involvement in, and understanding of the community in which we live.

Throughout this master planning process and in studies and workshops prior to this, the need for an enhanced sense of community was often discussed as an important factor in planning the future of the Town of Durham. The 1995 Community Development Plan described Durham as a town with a strong identity that is in need of a revitalized image and enhanced connections among its varied residents.

OUR IDENTITY

There are certain aspects of our identity that most residents can easily agree upon. This common view of our community is an underlying theme that unites a diverse population. In the various community workshops and the 1995 Community Development Plan Durham residents expressed their views about their community.

The following are some common aspects of the identity of Durham:

- We take pride in and wish to maintain our small-town character.
- We value and prize our “rural” environment and rich natural resources.
- We enjoy the intellectual and cultural benefits of being a “university town,” while living with the pressures associated with this relationship.
- We take great pride in our educational system.
- We value Durham's strong sense of history.

OUR IMAGE

How we are seen as a Town is important to our sense of community. The pride we feel for our Town is directly related to its appearance. The image

we promote to prospective residents, students, and businesses affects their decisions to invest in this community. As part of this chapter, the image and appearance of the Town will be discussed. Included in this discussion will be the perceived need for an identifiable Town center and library complex, the desire for an improved downtown with greater emphasis on pedestrians, and the idea of gateways to the Town as important factors in establishing a lasting, positive image for the Town.

CONNECTIONS & SENSE OF BELONGING

An awareness of, involvement in, and understanding of the community we live in are integral to the enhancement and development of a sense of community. It is crucial that residents have the opportunity to know and become involved in events and meetings in their community. This need for better communications will be addressed in this chapter.

Town Facilities

In addition to the general idea of sense of community, this chapter also discusses several specific existing Town facilities. Recommendations will be made based on current and future needs. Included in this discussion will be the future location of the Durham Fire Station (the lease for the current location expires in the year 2009), location for the Durham Ambulance Corps, as well as the potential future needs of the Oyster River School District in Durham. Recommendations for the Town Hall, the Old Town Hall, Courthouse, the Craig Supply property and the H.A. Davis Building (Grange) will also be discussed. This chapter also contains discussion of and recommendations for areas in which the Town and University can better work together to achieve common goals.

It will not come as a surprise when we say that Durham's residents have widely diverse opinions regarding how our identity and our image should be represented in the future or how a sense of belonging is nurtured and grown. This Master Plan process is an opportunity to understand the issues facing Durham, to balance varied points of view, and to achieve compromises for the good of the Town as a whole.

TOWN CENTER

BACKGROUND

The need for a Town center to improve our sense of community was discussed in the 1989 Master Plan and the 1995 Community Development Plan: “Many people feel that Durham lacks a center - an identifiable 'Town common' and places for informal social interactions. In previous plans, suggested solutions include: building a community center/Town library, developing more areas conducive to socializing, and improving the downtown aesthetically as a magnet for residents rather than just students” (1995 Community Development Plan, p. 31). The 1998 Master Plan Survey indicated that 56% of those polled favored the development of a Town center.

Partially in an effort to respond to the desires outlined in the 1995 Community Development Plan, UNH and the Town agreed to establish a separate and independent Durham Public Library in 1996. This library is currently located in temporary quarters in the Mill Plaza. The Library Board of Trustees is currently discussing and investigating the potential for a permanent home for the library. The future location for this facility has the potential of anchoring a Town center for Durham, which would become an active social hub that draws residents into Town.

The 1993-1994 Town Facilities Plan (authored by the Town Administrator and the various department heads) identified the future space planning needs for each of the Town's departments. That plan identified the immediate need for adequate facilities for the Police Department. It also discussed the consolidation of the Department of Public Works to a location separate from the existing municipal complex. Both these recommendations were acted upon, which had the effect of decentralizing Town government and freeing up some space in the cramped confines of the existing Town Hall. When the Department of Public Works and the Police Department moved to their new facilities, the Town Hall site began to make sense as a site for the development of a Town/civic center containing the Town offices and/or a Town library.

NEEDS

Sites for the various needed functions associated with a Town center may be chosen in a piecemeal fashion depending upon which department or organization is ready to act or what property becomes available. However, with proper advance planning, the community may be able to shape the results so that the collection of shared spaces will become an attractive presence greater than the individual parts.

A Town center can be many different things. It can be a busy commercial center that attracts residents and provides a stage for social interaction. It may not even be a building or set of buildings, but instead be a geographic center such as the classic New England town green, which is bounded by civic and/or religious structures. It can be a true civic center that provides both a civic presence, with the aid of pleasing architecture suited to the locale, and a venue for daily social interaction of the Town's residents.

The exact definition of what a Town center needs to be for the Town of Durham is a combination of the descriptions above. After many meetings among the Sense of Community and Town Facilities and the Public Utilities and Services Master Plan Subcommittees, the Master Plan Steering Committee, and discussions with Town residents, it is apparent that the desire for a Town center stems from a need for a place for everyday social interaction, the desire for a strong civic presence, and connections between our Town, its people, and its history.

Another aspect of the desired Town center has to do with Durham's image as a town. For those traveling through or past Durham, it is often difficult to know where the center of Town is. The commercial center of Town is removed from one major through road, (Route 108), and is by-passed by the other major through road, Route 4. The existing Town Hall is a charming building in keeping with the scale of the town, but does not by itself provide a visual center. There is a potential opportunity to create a Town center which produces a lasting positive visual image of the Town of Durham that is separate and independent from the University.

Potential components of a Town center, in order of their perceived need, are as follows:

Immediate need - site for the future library including:

- meeting rooms
- large gathering space
- small intimate spaces (“nooks & crannies”)
- small outdoor play area

Short-term need - community center for:

- senior gathering
- teen gathering
- location for Oyster River Youth Association office
- kitchen function
- children's center

- meeting rooms for other Town groups

Short-term possibility - renovated or relocated Town Hall. (See Other Town Facilities discussion.)

Long-term need - performance space (if not provided in the High School).

Attributes of this Town center site must include:

- welcoming, easily identifiable
- central/focal
- connected to downtown
- tied to the Town's history
- have pedestrian access to all parts of Town
- have pedestrian access to the commercial core (important)
- be accessible to all town residents
- be an obvious destination
- have ample parking
- public seating areas, such as benches
- visually appealing
- have green space
- have the library as a strong architectural symbol
- should not remove properties from the tax roles unless other characteristics are strong enough to outweigh the loss in taxes

POTENTIAL SITES IDENTIFIED

The current Town Hall/former Department of Public Works site (approximately .8 acres) is a viable site, especially if joined to the courthouse site and the adjoining property where the Sunoco gas station (approximately 1.0 acres) is currently located. A civic center/Town common (Town hall, library, community building) could be created at this or another highly visible location.

If another location is chosen, the Town Hall parcel might be sold for another type of development that is beneficial to the Town. By creating deed restrictions for the future use of this parcel, the Town could influence its ultimate appearance and function.

The property at 17 Madbury Road (approximately 2.4 acres) and near Pettee Brook parking lot was available for sale at the time this Master Plan was drafted. This property is quite large and is adjacent to the downtown

commercial area. The site is pedestrian friendly for residents and for children at the Middle School and the high school. A Town center in the downtown core would contribute to the needed build-up and density of the downtown. Funding options could include developing partnerships between the Town, the Library, and Growing Places Day Care, as well as the proceeds from selling the Town Hall/old DPW site for commercial development, if the Town Hall is relocated to this Madbury Road site.

CHALLENGES OF THE POTENTIAL SITES

The Town Hall site is located along a highly traveled route through Town and is therefore not as pedestrian friendly as other sites might be. It does however, afford a great visibility and opportunity to create a very identifiable civic center for those passing through Durham. It is also linked with the Town's past. The connection to the Oyster River, the Town's historic genesis, and the Old Town Hall (courthouse) make this a very attractive option.

The Madbury Road site is currently in a “run-down” area of Town, surrounded by student and Greek housing. Because of this, this neighborhood may not be appropriate for the development of a Library or Town Hall. Its development could however be a catalyst for redevelopment of an area of Town that really needs it. It could also save this property from becoming an area of even more student housing.

The biggest challenges in creating a Town center will be to agree on a site, to secure it, and to find funding for all the other features that are involved.

Either location would be good for Durham, and other suitable sites may become available in the near future. The selection of the site will have a significant impact on how Durham grows and what it will look like in the future.

TOWN CENTER ISSUES, GOALS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUE:

There is a need for an identifiable Town center in Durham. If the Town waits and lets the winds of real estate decide for it, the Town will have lost an opportunity to purposefully direct the vision of its future.

GOAL:

Develop a gathering of civic buildings that provides an identifiable, attractive Town Common that serves as the stage for social interaction both formal and intimate.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Establish a committee to identify and develop a program of services (e.g., space needs for various uses such as library, historic museum, town hall, etc.) and to define the needs for a Town community center. As part of this work, conduct community workshop(s) to identify the desires of the community and a better vision for the community center.
 - Priority: Within 2 years
2. The Committee should analyze and compare, in detail, the available sites based upon the above program. Two potential sites are 17 Madbury Road and a combination of the existing Town Hall/Courthouse site and the Route 108 Sunoco site.
 - Priority: Within 2 years
3. The Town should obtain options to purchase the sites identified as potential locations prior to conducting a feasibility study. This will protect them from being sold prior to completion of this study.
 - Priority: Within 2 years
4. Perform a Town center feasibility study for the Town Hall/Sunoco site, 17 Madbury Road site, and other sites based on, but not limited to, the following criteria: visibility, image and identity as a Town center, ease of access, parking availability, usefulness, connection to commercial and green space, and pedestrian access.
 - Priority: Within 2 years
5. Appropriate funds and contract for the preparation of conceptual site plans showing interrelationship of old and new buildings, parking,

landscaping, and linkages to the downtown, the Oyster River, and the historic district.

- Priority: Within 2 years
6. With public input, purchase, design, and construct/redevelop the selected site to meet the Town's present and ongoing needs.
- Priority: Within 2 years

TOWN APPEARANCE

BACKGROUND

The appearance of a town has a direct relationship to the pride the residents have for it and reflects the values and prosperity of the community as a whole. If Durham is to attract new businesses, students, and visitors, it must constantly assess its image and appearance to those entering the Town for the first time as well as those who experience the Town on a daily basis.

Durham is a Town of breathtaking images. Beautiful natural vistas, rolling pastoral fields, and the stately architecture of the University are but a few of the positive images one visualizes when thinking of Durham. Our downtown however, lacks the character, detail and warmth found in other small towns across New Hampshire.

With increased growth continuing in southern New Hampshire, pressures to change the landscape surrounding Durham will continue to mount. It is to the Town's advantage to assess and inventory the vistas that impart the "rural character" the Town values so highly and to prioritize their importance to the Town.

APPEARANCE ASSETS

There are several automobile, pedestrian, and rail corridors to and through Durham from which the Town is seen and experienced. Some of these corridors include the following:

- Route 108
- Route 4
- Madbury Road
- Main Street/Concord Road

- Mast Road/Route 155A
- Mill Road

An orderly progression from a pastoral landscape to the more developed core of downtown exists. From the outer edges of Durham to the inner edges of Town most of the visual imagery is positive in nature and conducive to the desired image of a rural landscape surrounding a bustling small town (see Diagram 2.1). Some of the major imagery includes the following:

Route 4 from the East:

- View of Little Bay over the Scammell Bridge
- View of Wagon Hill Farm
- Johnson Creek crossing and the view to the Durham Business Park
- View of Oyster River from Bunker Creek

Route 4 from the West:

- Outer edge - forested highway and agricultural fields
- Inner edge - forested highway (greenway)

Route 108 from the North:

- Outer edge- fields in Madbury
 - Durham Evangelical Church
 - Police Station
 - field at Stone Quarry Drive
- Inner edge - the Pines Guest House
 - Beard's Creek
 - Oyster River

Route 108 from the South:

- Outer edge - agricultural fields
- Inner edge - view of open field and Town skyline
 - Mill Pond and Town Landing

Main Street/Concord Road:

- Horse barns
- Entry to the University of New Hampshire
- Whittemore Center

Mast Road/Route 155A:

- Horse farm
- Leewood Orchards

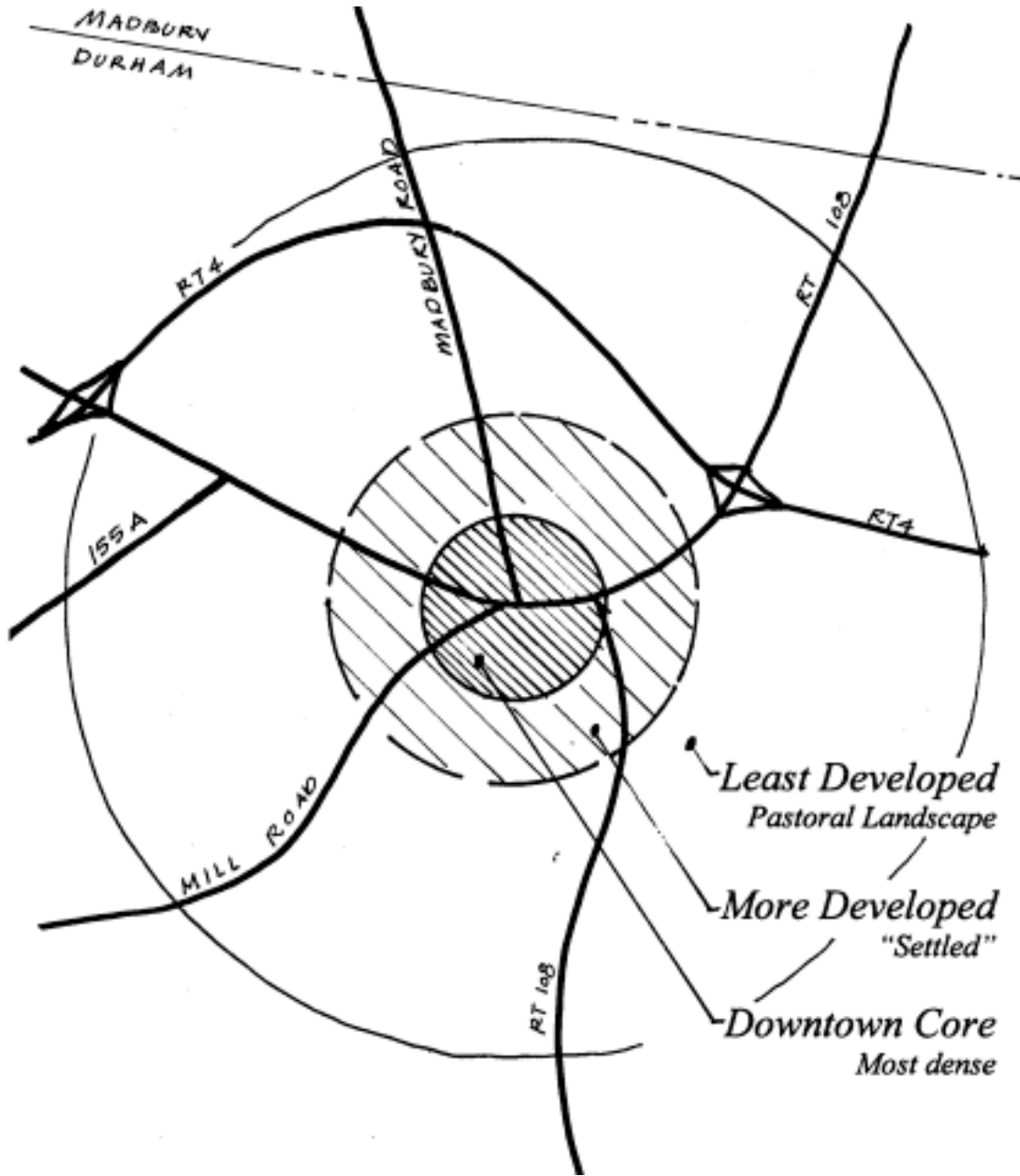
Madbury Road:

- Small town entry road/major greenway

Mill Road:

- Small Town entry road/ major greenway

Diagram 2.1. PROGRESSION OF DURHAM'S LANDSCAPE



DOWNTOWN APPEARANCE

It is only when one encounters the downtown area at “Gasoline Alley” or the Main Street/Pettee Brook Loop that one experiences less positive visual imagery and a lack of unity or character.

Durham's downtown, with its emphasis on automobile traffic and wide, speed-inducing streets, is not inviting to the pedestrian. Its rundown patched sidewalks, uneven tilting curbs, and outdated unflattering lighting lack a scale, character, and warmth that is attractive and draws pedestrian users and life to the downtown.

Shopping in the downtown area is very limited and the facades of many of the businesses appear tired and uninteresting. Much of the rental housing which is a significant part of the architecture in the center of Town, is not maintained and appears disorderly and unkempt.

The first phase of a downtown enhancement was completed in the summer of 1999. These improvements were the first step toward revitalizing the image of downtown. The improved lighting, paving, street furniture, and landscaping should provide a warm, unified, inviting visual image to a large portion of downtown. As part of this initiative, Main Street was planted with new street trees.

It is important that future phases of this enhancement are undertaken and more of downtown is incorporated into this new look to ensure that all aspects of Durham's downtown are as positive as the Town's outlying edges.

The University is working in conjunction with the Town and has planned enhancements to the western portion of Main Street as it runs through the campus. New street trees and landscaped traffic medians are planned for this portion of the work.

With the addition of this landscaping, Main Street will join Mill Road and Madbury Road as landscaped corridors through Town.

Also, in conjunction with this revitalization, the Main Street Program is promoting a facade improvement program in which the businesses within the central business district can apply for low interest loans to improve the appearance of their facades.

TOWN APPEARANCE ISSUES, GOALS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUE:

Durham can foster a greater sense of community through attention to its image and appearance.

GOAL #1:

Protect and enhance Durham's small-town and open rural character.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Appoint a committee to work in conjunction with the Town's Director of Planning and Community Development to inventory and prioritize important critical visual images, gateways, and corridors in Durham.
2. Develop a series of recommendations to protect the key vistas and analyze zoning regulations for these important areas. Recommend changes in zoning or land use regulations to protect the future use and the effect on the views of these parcels. The proposed conservation development initiative recommended in Chapter 9 – Land Development Regulations - can provide the needed flexibility and tools to protect these viewsheds.
3. Produce a detailed visual resource guide that prioritizes the importance of Durham's significant vistas for use by the Planning Board in its decision making and by private developers.
 - Priority: Within 2 years
4. After referencing the visual resource guide, consider Town acquisition of scenic easements for the highest priority viewsheds critical to Durham's visual imagery.
 - Priority: Within 2 to 6 years
5. Review and assess both the Town's standards for driveways and roads, as well as the State's regulations for roadway widths, turnouts, and sight distances to determine potential negative impacts on Durham's

rural roadways. Draft a set of clear and comprehensive Town regulations for “rural” roadways, which can be utilized by the Town Council, Town staff, and the Planning Board when considering proposed changes to these roads.

- Priority: Within 2 years
6. Once conflicts between the State Department of Transportation regulations and Durham's desire to preserve its rural roads are identified, be proactive with the State. Call attention to these conflicts and discuss them prior to any future projects by the NHDOT. When a proposed project is reviewed by the Planning Board or initiated by the NHDOT, utilize the Town rural road guidelines discussed above to ensure that any upgrades to State roads are done in a manner which is sensitive to the scale of the community.
 - Priority: Within 2 years

GOAL #2:

Preserve, enhance, and establish landscaped corridors to and through the Town.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Create a Town-wide landscape master plan, which would illustrate the vision of what Durham could be twenty-five years from now. This plan would identify existing and healthy greenways and corridors, significant natural resources, and other existing assets. It would also outline opportunities for future plantings by the Town, private individuals, and community groups. It would coordinate overall landscape plans for pedestrian and automobile corridors, locations for future pocket parks, desired improvements to existing parks, as well as direct decision making by Town departments for future improvements and capital planning. The Town Council should establish a community based working group led and assisted by the Planning and Public Works Departments to begin this study. Members of the Conservation Commission, the Durham Garden Club, and UNH's Sustainability Program should be included in this working group. The Planning Department should research the grant potential for this type of effort.
 - Priority: Within 2 to 6 years

2. Require landscape buffers along major corridors that would screen the view of parked cars from the street. Require future parking to be located behind or to the side of buildings when possible
3. Update and improve the existing Town Zoning Ordinance, particularly the Landscape Ordinance, and recommend appropriate additions or changes.
 - Priority: Within 2 years
4. Establish a Town tree-planting program that would slowly, year by year, implement the recommendations outlined in the landscape master plan described above. Allow for participation by homeowners, private organizations, and property owners. For instance, if an individual or neighborhood would like to see street trees in their area planted earlier than the Town's schedule, the homeowner or neighborhood could share the cost with the Town. Or, the Town might supply the plants and the individuals might provide the labor. These types of initiatives often draw the community into the effort and establish a greater sense of ownership and participation.
 - Priority: Within 7 to 25 years

GOAL #3:

Enhance the appearance of Durham's downtown core.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Continue future phases of the physical Downtown Street Enhancements which includes improvements to the appearance of downtown and traffic calming measures such as narrowed roadways at crosswalks, appropriate locations for crosswalks, and improved sidewalks.

1. Continue design process for phase two of the Downtown Street Enhancement Project. Consider specific areas to be addressed in this and future phases including the Pettee Brook Loop, Jenkins Court, and the remainder of Main Street. The Planning Department should lead this work, with participation by the Department of Public Works and citizen volunteers.
 - Priority: Within 2 years

2. Using the decisions made during phase one of the Downtown Street Enhancements Project completed in 1999, establish a standard palate of materials and details for typical conditions throughout the downtown and commercial core for street and sidewalk improvements.
 - Priority: Within 2 years
3. Encourage the Main Street Program's "Facade Improvement Program," which is a program started in March of 2000 that provides up to \$40,000 via a low-interest secured loan for businesses that wish to renovate storefronts, facades, and signage. Design review by the Main Street Program Design Review Committee is required to participate in the Façade Improvement Program.
 - Priority: Within 2 years

GOAL #4:

Enhance the appearance of downtown Durham as a whole.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Adopt a Town property maintenance code in an effort to improve the appearance and maintenance of properties throughout Durham.
 - Priority: Within 2 years
2. Develop, adopt, and enforce architectural standards for specific areas in Town that are important to the image of the Town, principally the downtown and commercial core.
 - Priority : Within 2 years

COMMUNICATIONS

BACKGROUND

A sense of community is experienced when one is aware of, involved in, and has an understanding of the community in which he or she lives. While Durham has a varied population that is active in many civic activities, this population lacks a connectedness because of poor

communications. Residents also lack central facilities that could help improve their interactions and communications.

In the 1998 Master Plan Survey, 72% of the residents agreed that Durham should have a newsletter to improve communications within the community. In addition, the 1995 Community Development Plan, authored by a very large group of Town residents, identified the need for an enhanced sense of communication within the Town. “Central sources of information to reduce the sense of fragmentation and heighten community awareness” were called for in that plan.

In the past, Durham had a small regional weekly newspaper and a newsletter produced by the Town Administrator to fill the gap in the coverage provided by the local newspapers. Neither the newsletter nor the weekly newspaper is in existence any longer.

Durham has many, many groups active in various civic, recreational, and cultural pursuits. These groups include the following:

- Oyster River School District
- Local church groups
- Durham Historical Association
- Oyster River Youth Association
- Durham Garden Club
- Durham Art Association
- Great Bay Rotary
- Durham Public Library
- Silver Squares
- Active Retirement Association
- Main Street Program
- Durham Business Association
- Lamprey River Watershed Association

With outlying areas being developed, the Town needs to bring its citizens together in a central location, whether physically through a Town center, or via other forms of communication. Currently, the Jackson’s Landing playground, the skating rink, the Whittemore Center, the UNH outdoor pool, Main Street, Town Hall, and the schools serve as the Town’s only public meeting places.

COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES, GOALS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUE:

Because of the efforts of many local organizations, Durham enjoys the benefit of an active calendar of events throughout the year. Many of the events go unheralded because of lack of adequate communications. As the Town grows, it needs, more than ever, to promote a sense of connectedness.

GOAL #1:

Create a greater sense of community in Durham by providing as many means as possible for increased and enhanced communications.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Enhance communications by continuing to update and expand the Town Website, which will provide access for approximately 63% of Durham households (source: 1998 Master Plan Survey). In addition, establish a dedicated phone line to provide 24-hour access to Town information. Another outlet for information would be a community access cable station that could, among other things, televise Town Council, Planning Board, and other Board and Committee meetings. These tools will publicize and promote Town events, and inform residents about other Town happenings.

Priority: Within 2 years

2. Appoint a Communications Coordinator to develop and expand the recommendations above and to promote upcoming events in the Town. This coordinator would work in conjunction with the Main Street Manager to get the word out to all residents. This could be part of a full-time position split 1/3 with a Recreation Director and Volunteer Coordinator.

- Priority : Within 2 years

GOAL #2:

Foster communication links among local businesses, UNH, local organizations, and the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Continuation of the Main Street Program on a permanent basis (past the year 2000) will provide a means of connection among varied organizations in Durham.
2. The Town Council, Main Street Program, and UNH should plan for the extended future of the Main Street Program in Durham.
 - Priority: Within 2 years
3. Durham needs to re-establish a newsletter/newspaper to communicate important issues involving business, UNH, Oyster River Schools, upcoming events, and other important information to the Town. This paper would provide a forum for discussion of local issues and a place for local announcements by all kinds of organizations. It may receive funding through sponsorships from the Town, UNH, Durham Business Association, local merchants, and Town residents.
4. The Town Council, along with either the Durham Business Association or the Main Street Program, and UNH should investigate a possible partnership to produce this newsletter/newspaper. A committee to study the feasibility for such an effort should be established.
5. Criteria for the establishment of a non-profit newsletter should be researched and studied.
6. Explore the possibility of a paper produced and coordinated by an independent organization such as the Main Street Program using interns from both UNH and the Oyster River High School, along with volunteers from the Town.
 - Priority: Within 2 years
7. Create a central and up-to-date bulletin board containing Durham and UNH events. This will require close coordination of town and UNH.
8. Establish local cable coverage of Town Council meetings and other boards and committees as appropriate.

VOLUNTEERISM

BACKGROUND

It is in the best interest of Durham for its citizens to feel involved in the community through volunteerism. People who perform volunteer work feel connected to other members of the community and have a vested interest in the welfare of the Town. Volunteers are essential to the success of current Town events including the Fourth of July, Durham Day, Memorial Day Parade, Light-up Durham, Spring Fling, the Easter egg hunt, and the Summer Concert Series. Projects such as the recently completed Jackson's Landing Playground and even this master planning effort may not have happened in the same fashion without volunteers. In addition, volunteers are vital to the functioning of Durham Town Government by their service on various Boards and Committees such as the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Historic District Commission, and others. Volunteerism is the means to produce and provide an enhanced and enriched level of detail in the tapestry we call our community.

VOLUNTEERISM ISSUES, GOALS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUE:

The Town needs to promote volunteerism.

GOAL:

Increase volunteerism within the Town to create a better sense of community and to increase the actual number of volunteers, which would shift the current volunteer load from the individuals who continually volunteer their time each year for the Town.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Working in conjunction with the Main Street Program, the Town should develop a system to manage volunteer needs and activities. Appoint a Volunteer Coordinator to lead this effort. The Volunteer

Coordinator would oversee volunteer efforts and streamline the communication system for activities in Durham. The coordinator could utilize the Website, phone line, cable access station, and newsletter to promote upcoming events and encourage participation. This person may also be the Communications Coordinator and potentially the Recreation Director.

- Priority : Within 2 years
2. Increase community events to provide more opportunities for volunteerism. Upcoming events could include a Durham Clean-up Day, Pool Celebration, and Winter Celebration at Wagon Hill.
 3. The Town Council should form a committee with the Volunteer Coordinator and Main Street Program to examine other potential events.

SAFETY COMPLEX

BACKGROUND

The Durham Fire Department is currently housed in a portion of the service building on College Road, just east of the railroad tracks on the UNH campus. The lease between the Town of Durham and UNH will expire in June 2009.

The existing location of the station is considered prime property for expansion of the core UNH campus as highlighted in the 1994 UNH Master Plan. Under the UNH Master Plan, the fire station would become part of the proposed pedestrian core and vehicular traffic will be excluded from College Road. The University has not planned for a future location for the fire station as part of its master plan. In the year 2000 UNH will reassess its Master Plan, and alternate sites for this facility might be considered as part of the campus.

The present station floor space limits and impacts the selection and type of fire apparatus purchased. The station is lacking a “clean/dirty” chemical and blood borne pathogen decontamination room and lacks adequate storage space. The second floor houses administration, living quarters, conference, and fitness facilities and these uses presently exceed capacity.

The existing location is also considered unacceptable for a future facility by the Fire Department due to its close proximity and susceptibility to

catastrophic events from the adjoining rail line. The Fire Department could effectively be shut down in the event of a railroad derailment or hazardous materials incident.

The Durham Ambulance Corps (DAC) is an independent, non-profit, volunteer organization that provides emergency medical care and transportation to the communities of Durham, Lee, Madbury and UNH (see Chapter 7 – Public Utilities and Services for additional information). The DAC is housed, with its two ambulances, in a small building near the Fire Department on College Road. It currently shares space with a UNH repair shop.

With a 5% average increase in the number of calls each year, the DAC anticipates the need for an additional ambulance within the next five to ten years. There is no room in the current facility for this vehicle. The current facility was renovated in 1985 and again in 1997. The station is lacking in several areas, most notably in its need for additional bathroom(s), a second bunk area, emergency power, a conference room, and a living/study area. It is subject to the same location issues as the Fire Department. The DAC's location is also part of the Town of Durham/UNH lease, which will expire in 2009.

Initial discussions have indicated that there are numerous areas in which there might be close cooperation between the Durham Fire Department and DAC in a shared facility. There are duplicate station needs that could be shared and are worthy of further study and support. These duplicate needs include utilities, emergency electrical power, joint conference/meeting rooms; blood-borne pathogen decontamination, and storage.

Due to the above listed factors, a new location for the Fire Department and the Durham Ambulance Corps will be needed by the year 2009 when the lease expires.

Also to be considered is the potential need for a new facility for the Town and University police, should the two departments be merged as a result of the study proposed in Chapter 7 – Public Utilities and Services. If the proposed study recommends the merger of these two departments, these departments, along with the Communications and Dispatch Center, will be in need of a new facility. This facility could be combined with the fire and ambulance functions in a true safety complex serving Durham and the University. This combined facility would result in increased efficiency while allowing departments to remain independent. However, preliminary discussion with the police departments indicate that there is a concern

about having a shared safety complex due to the potential of contamination from each of the facilities, e.g., inadvertent pepper spray release, contaminated fire gear or a single incident bringing all of the emergency services to a halt.

This section considers only the criteria and sites for the location of the Fire Department and Durham Ambulance Corps. However, the need for a secure central location that minimizes response times to all parts of Town and campus is common to the Fire, Ambulance, and Police Departments (the land requirements might change from one acre, to two or possibly three acres depending on the combination of uses supported). The Communications Center would benefit from inclusion in this facility with increased security and the need to update technology.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Consideration should be given to probable emergency services expansion as demands increase for services, especially in the area of emergency medical services. There is a significant potential for expansion because of increased development, an aging population, and an increase in elderly housing.

In the Town's effort to develop a Town center, the safety complex might be an opportunity to provide a prominent architectural landmark that would be a visual asset to the community.

In discussions with the Sense of Community Subcommittee, the Fire Department, the Durham Ambulance Corps, and representatives of the University, the following were considered important aspects for a potential site:

SITE CRITERIA

- approximately one acre in size (or three acres depending on the combination of emergency services located on site)¹
- central location to minimize response times
- proximity to UNH for Ambulance Corps members
- minimal noise exposure to residential neighborhoods
- traffic considerations/access

¹ At the time of publication, the Durham Fire Department has reassessed their needs and have determined that the one-acre projection would not accommodate any future expansion, and would like to see the site criteria for a new safety complex be changed from one acre to two acres in size.

- located east of the railroad tracks to allow access to Town in case of a rail accident
- good distance from the railroad tracks
- desire not to impact taxable lands if possible

POTENTIAL SITES

(See map of Potential Safety Complex Sites)

Pettee Brook Parking Lot

- Pros
 - close to center of Town
 - good access
 - untaxed land
 - even better if combined with the 17 Madbury Road site, possible component for a Town center
- Cons
 - may depend on the future of the Loop Road
 - takes away from Town parking
 - may be subject to flooding

17 Madbury Road

- Pros
 - centrally located
 - open land
 - large parcel
 - even better if combined with Pettee Brook parking lot, possible component for a Town center
- Cons
 - taxable property
 - possible wetlands
 - residential area (Greeks and apartments)

Madbury Road from Garrison Avenue to Pettee Brook Lane

- Pros
 - centrally located
- Cons
 - taxable property
 - residential area (Greeks and apartments)
 - may be too far from the University core for the DAC and UNH police

Strafford Avenue adjacent to the New England Center

- Pros
 - single property large enough for a one-acre site
 - centrally located
- Cons
 - residential area
 - road upgrades needed

Wooded area across from Alumni Center

- Pros
 - centrally located open land
- Cons
 - Minimum 300-foot buffer required between development on UNH land and Davis Avenue neighborhood per Woodside Park development
 - road upgrade needed
 - residential proximity and requires a taking of two to three houses may be too far from the University for the DAC and UNH police

UNH Outdoor Pool site (if pool is shut down)

- Pros
 - centrally located
 - good traffic/access
- Cons
 - considerable wetlands
 - residential area

End of College Road

- Pros
 - not taxable land
 - centrally located
 - does not impact UNH Master Plan
- Cons
 - adjacent to residential area
 - could impact UNH parking

Garrison Avenue Corridor - Madbury Road to Ballard Street

- Pros
 - centrally located
 - good access/traffic
- Cons
 - possible wetlands

C Lot - UNH lot opposite Mill Road Plaza

- Pros
 - good access to all parts of Town
- Cons
 - precious UNH Parking
 - if used, a parking structure would be needed to be created to compensate for the lost spaces

SAFETY COMPLEX ISSUES, GOALS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUE:

A new location for the Fire Department and the Durham Ambulance Corps will be needed by the year 2009 when the lease expires.

GOAL:

The Town and the University should initiate a cooperative effort to begin the planning process for this new facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Both Durham and UNH should continue with the Fire Protection Agreement of January 1, 1997 and set aside funding for a future Fire Department and DAC combined facility.
 - Priority: Within 2 years
2. As part of its Master Plan update in the year 2000, UNH should consider the possibility of alternate sites for the safety complex on its property that might allow for a more central location and minimize response times.
 - Priority: Within 2 years

3. A committee should be established to study the programmatic needs of the future safety complex that would house the Fire Department and the DAC, as well as the police departments and communications center if combined departments are recommended. Potential sites should then be investigated for feasibility and a specific site should be recommended for purchase.
 - Priority: Within 2 to 6 years (after study of potential police departments merger)

SCHOOLS

BACKGROUND

In the decade that has elapsed since the 1989 Master Plan, the Oyster River School District has grown by 679 students. Although this was less than the 1,170 students predicted in 1989, it still represents a major expansion. Many changes were enacted in the school district to try to accommodate this increase in enrollment. Moharimet Elementary School was completed and later expanded, Mastway Elementary School was also expanded, and Oyster River Elementary School was absorbed by the Oyster River Middle School. Growth outpaced the subsequent addition to and renovation at the Oyster River Middle School. Fifth graders were moved to the Middle School to free up space at the remaining two elementary schools. The public was divided on its perceptions of satisfaction with the middle school project and the relocation of the fifth graders. The Town and school district's growth and the strained financial resources were beginning to affect the quality of education that could be offered to students. At the high school level the student population climbed steadily, eventually necessitating the use of ten modular units. An aging infrastructure and cramped and crowded conditions at the high school have resulted in a warning status in the facilities subcategory by the New England Secondary Schools and Colleges accreditation program.

Currently, the Oyster River school district is at 99% of capacity at the elementary schools, 105% of capacity at the middle school, and 106% of capacity at the high school with no building projects approved.

TRENDS AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Durham, Madbury, and Lee comprise the Oyster River School District (ORS D). Presently, 43% of the students in the district come from

Durham, down from 50% ten years ago. Durham spent approximately 65% of its expenditures on the school district in 1998.

It should be noted that the recent court decision regarding education funding may have a significant impact on how cooperative school districts apportion funding responsibility. The current formula used by the ORSD may be ruled unconstitutional and the nature of the cooperative fiscal relationship of the three Towns that make up the Oyster River School District may need to be reconsidered. If this is to happen, there are many different options for change, including redesigning the funding system to one that is constitutionally acceptable, or even the dissolution of the cooperative.

This report assumes no change for the time being.

The following data is taken from the ORSD Long-Range Planning Committee:

Table 2.2. ACTUAL/PROJECTED ORSD ENROLLMENT: 1988 – 2008

Grades	1988 (Actual)	1998 (Actual)	2008 (Scenario A)*	2008 (Scenario B)**
K – 4	681	843	912	973
5 – 8	449	786	770	814
9 – 12	500	680	725	728
Total	1,630	2,309	2,407	2,515

* Scenario A assumes that housing starts stay at 35 per year.

**Scenario B assumes that housing starts will return to the 20-year average in 10 years.

Table 2.3. ACTUAL/PROJECTED ORSD ENROLLMENT: 1969 – 2008

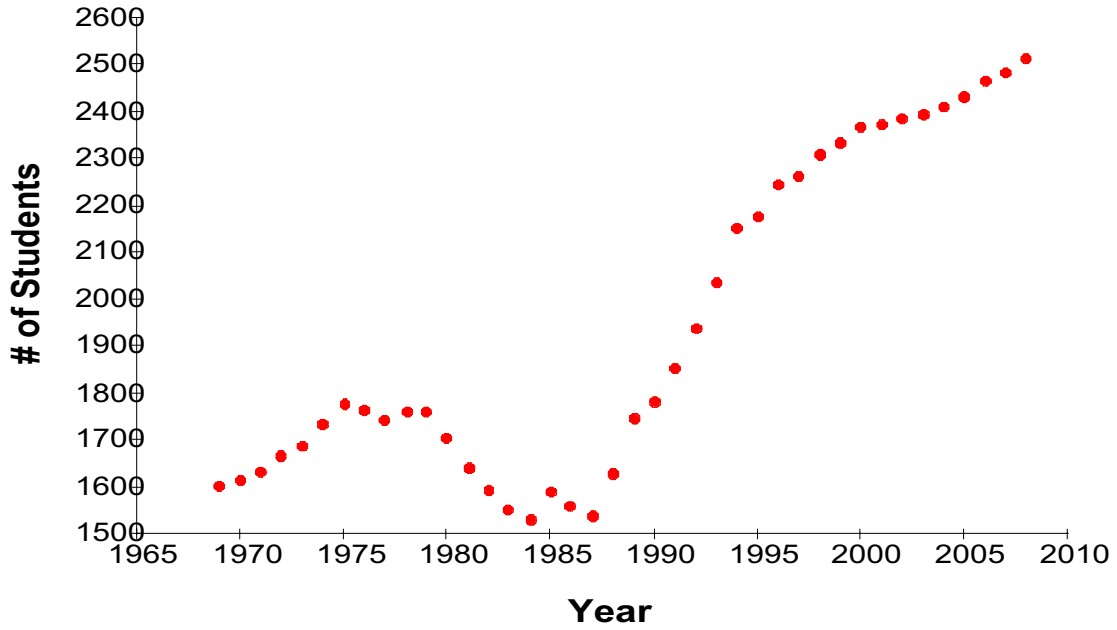
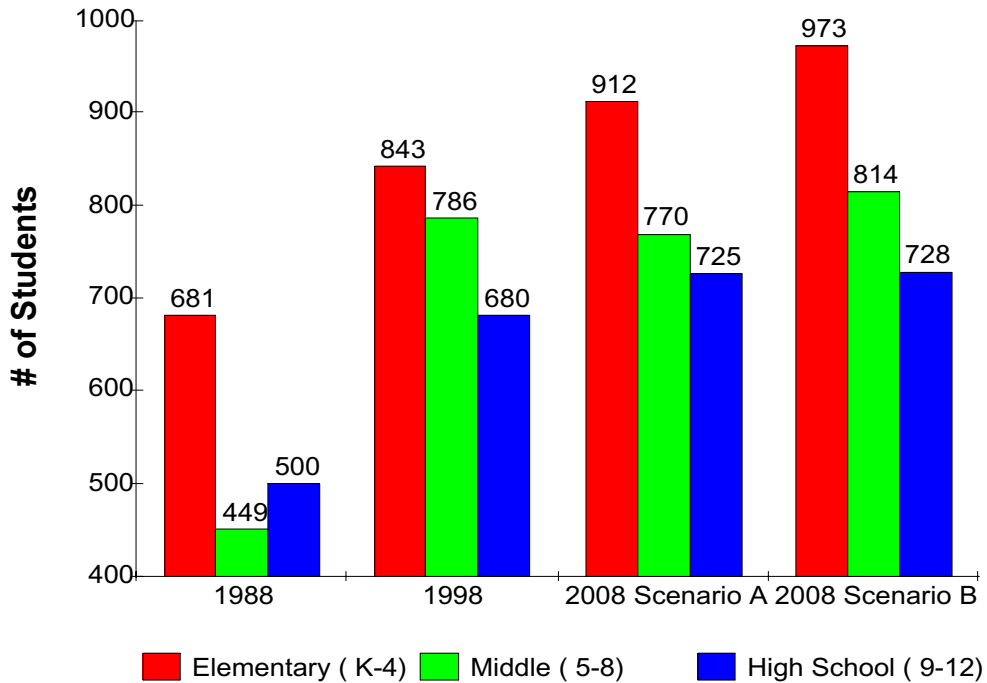


Table 2.4. ACTUAL/ PROJECTED ORSD ENROLLMENT: 1988 – 2008



From the above chart of actual and projected enrollment, clearly the growth in the past ten years (1988-1998) far exceeds the expected modest growth (98 to 206 students) of the next ten years. Although our facilities are still playing catch-up with our past rapid growth, it seems that our future growth rate will be more manageable.

According to school district numbers, there is a need for a new elementary school by the year 2004. The majority of future growth is projected to come from Lee. In addition, residents from the eastern side of Durham are not well served by the current sites. A future decision needs to address both of these situations. The ORSD owns land on Orchard Drive within the Foss Farm neighborhood. In a report by an engineering firm in 1991, this site was described as difficult because of problems with access and septic suitability. Since then, septic regulation and newer technologies for septic designs have changed in the State of New Hampshire. In addition, it may be possible to access this site from Route 108 through an adjacent parcel owned by the University of New Hampshire. This proposed access would avoid bringing busses through the residential neighborhoods surrounding the site. These potential changes may have transformed this

site into a more viable option for an elementary school, which would serve both situations stated above.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY ASSETS FROM THE SCHOOLS

Durham's greatest source of pride, as well as our greatest expenditure, is the district's superb school system. Excellence in education is a large part of our community identity. The importance Durham places on educating its children, the commitment of teachers and parents, and the memories children harbor from their school years underpin our sense of community. In addition, schools provide an important public gathering space for the many activities that sustain and nurture the community: residents vote and hold Town meetings, sign kids up for sports, participate in boy scouts and girl scouts, visit the playgrounds and playing fields, and would probably gather at the school in the event of a major disaster.

The image of the community would be greatly enhanced by school buildings and grounds that are attractive. There will be many opportunities in the future to incorporate aesthetics into new school designs, to the extent that resources and/or hard work will permit.

CHALLENGES OF SCHOOL FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The ORSD's biggest liability is that overburdened school facilities are negatively impacting the quality of education offered to Durham children.

The biggest challenge is to provide the necessary facilities to maintain the tradition of excellence in the Oyster River School District.

SCHOOLS ISSUES, GOALS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUE #1:

The school district currently has a reactive approach to the school growth issue.

GOAL:

Build public support to encourage the school board to create and implement a comprehensive plan to meet children's needs promptly and to

better allocate the largest portion of each community's tax dollar put toward education. Encourage the school board to establish a capital improvement program that will allow for funds to be put aside yearly for major anticipated expenditures such as the high school expansion and the needed elementary school.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Adequately address and plan ahead for our space needs.
2. The Town should continue to work with Oyster River School District to plan for current and future space needs.

ISSUE #2:

There is a need to accommodate a larger high school population.

GOAL:

Provide a state-of-the-art high school facility with room for the expansion of the school district into the next century.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Encourage the Cooperative School District to build a new high school or renovate the existing one, aiming to support a core capacity equivalent to the useful life of the facility. Currently, core capacity is calculated on a ten-year projection model.

ISSUE #3:

Based on long-range forecasts by the district, a third elementary school may be needed by 2004. Durham may be the logical place for a new school since Madbury and Lee already have elementary schools.

GOAL:

A new facility will relieve crowding at the elementary level and allow the return of fifth graders to the elementary schools, which will then lessen crowding at the Middle School.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Use long-range planning data to anticipate and prepare for elementary school growth.
2. Although the School District has approval from the voters to sell the Foss Farm school site via an approved warrant article, encourage the Oyster River School District to begin a new feasibility study for its Foss Farm site on Orchard Drive. Contact UNH to gauge interest in sharing the expense of an access road to Route 108. A new feasibility study is warranted since there may be potential for access via Route 108 and due to the recent improvements in on-site sewage technology. This site will be especially beneficial if future growth is concentrated in Lee or Durham.

OTHER TOWN FACILITIES (GRANGE, OLD TOWN HALL, ETC.)

TOWN HALL

BACKGROUND

As described earlier in this report, several functions have been moved out of the Town Hall and its adjacent site in an effort to provide both the Police Department and the Department of Public Works with up-to-date and adequate facilities. This has resulted in a dispersal of Town facilities. It also affords an opportunity to assess the current Town Hall facility and determine if it effectively meets the needs of the remaining departments and functions.

The existing Town Hall houses the Town Administrator and staff, the Tax Assessor, the Town Clerk, the Business Management Department, and the Planning and Zoning Departments. The building is a charming structure in scale with the residential area. It is surrounded by larger buildings, including the First Savings Bank, the Old Town Hall (courthouse), and the Three Chimney's Inn (Frost Sawyer House).

The residential character of Town Hall carries through to its interior layout. Office spaces are small and the layout does not allow much flexibility. The administrative offices are cramped and do not provide needed storage, or in the case of the Town Clerk, privacy (as noted in Town Facilities Planning 1993-1994). Currently, the Town Council

Chambers, which has many competing demands for its use, can accommodate approximately 25-30 residents for public meetings. For meetings that require more space, an alternate location must be used.

Plans now exist for renovations to the building that would provide added meeting space and minor upgrades. These plans have not yet been acted upon in anticipation of Master Plan recommendations regarding the Town center.

When considered in the context of the Town center issue, one option could be for the existing Town Hall serving as an anchor for an assembly of small to medium-sized buildings, including the library, a community center (with a larger gathering space), and the Old Town Hall with the Durham Historic Association as its sole tenant. These buildings could be located around a Town square or village green on the combined Old Town Hall, existing Town Hall, and Sunoco gas station properties. The existing renovated Town Hall building could provide an element of scale and context for this grouping in keeping with the small-town image cherished by the Town. The effect of this collection of varied structures of similar scale meshing with the Old Town Hall could be greater than the sum of the parts. This provides the landmark architecture needed to establish a lasting image of Durham without tearing down the Town's history or creating a large, out-of-context building. This assembly would utilize the existing buildings and create a civic gathering point in keeping with the stated sense of community.

Another option for Town Hall might be to consider its potential for revenue generation. If the recommended Town center study results in the endorsement of an alternate location from the existing Town Hall location, the existing building could be sold to help fund the purchase of a new site and the construction of a new Town center building.

TOWN HALL ISSUES, GOALS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUE:

The Town Hall could play a major role in creating a Town center, the creation of additional meeting space and civic gathering space, and/or the generation of additional revenue for the Town.

GOAL:

Develop a plan for the future use of the Town Hall.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Town Hall needs to be renovated to allow for greater meeting capacity and more efficient office functions, if recommended by the Town center space needs study. Wait for the results of the Town center study recommendations prior to proceeding with any renovations.
2. Once the Town center study report is issued, assess the appropriateness of the proposed renovations, in light of the recommendations, and determine a course of action.
 - Priority: Within 2 to 6 years

THE GRANGE (H.A. DAVIS BUILDING)

BACKGROUND

The Grange building, opposite the Post Office, currently houses the Durham Art Association and the infant and toddler site for Growing Places Daycare, a non-profit organization. Both tenants' leases have expired, and both are currently tenants at will. The revenue generated by the two tenants totals approximately \$9,700 per year. Operational costs average \$8,250 per year. In 1998 there was an additional cost of \$14,950 for lead paint removal.

Growing Places is currently looking for an alternate site at which to consolidate its operations. The daycare is currently in the fund raising phase for a planned new facility. This planning and funding phase will take some time, but in the near future the Grange will be available for alternate uses.

Beyond the recently completed lead abatement, the building continues to need repairs. Recent inspections by the Code Enforcement Officer found the first and second floors have significant sag for which new support is needed.

The first floor of the building contains a small kitchen, a stage, and a rather large gathering space that could be used as a meeting space, auditorium/performance space, or a movie house. It has a crawl space/basement and has fieldstone foundations that are very much in need of repair by a stone mason. The second floor houses the Durham Art Association and a small office for the Infant Center. If it were in good structural condition, the building seems ideal for a community meeting space. While not having all the components that might be needed for a new community center, it is an existing facility that could be utilized for this function.

There have been discussions of selling the building or moving it to an alternate location; however, this decision should be made in conjunction with the Town center study. This building could play a part in that proposal as an in-Town, centrally located community center, or augmenting a Town Hall/Library complex on the existing Town Hall site. The Library Board of Trustees has also given this building consideration as a possible location for the Town library. Or, the building might be sold to produce funds for a new Town center. However, whether in public or private use, the conservation of the structure is of value to the Town.

GRANGE ISSUES, GOALS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUE:

The Grange presents an opportunity for the Town to fully utilize its resources in an effort to enhance Durham's sense of community.

GOAL:

Develop a plan for the future use of the Grange.

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider the Grange as a useful component when studying the Town center issue. Utilize this facility, if at all possible, in an effort to provide a community gathering place.

OLD TOWN HALL (COURTHOUSE)

BACKGROUND

The Old Town Hall, located at the intersection of Route 108 and Main Street, currently houses the Strafford County District Courthouse and the Durham Historic Association. It is a building of major historical importance for the Town, as it is one of the last vestiges of the Town's history and connection to the Oyster River. It is on the National Register of Historic Places and is part of the Durham Historic District.

In a letter to the President of the Durham Historic Association, New Hampshire's State Architectural Historian, James Garvin, described the building as significant for three reasons:

1. It is an example of “impressive local masonry... made of locally made bricks and hammered granite, recalling the fact that Durham was one of the major brick manufacturing towns of New Hampshire....”
2. It is the rare survivor of an early nineteenth century commercial block. It was originally built as a store by shipbuilder Joseph Coe. “The significance of the structure as the functional heart of old Durham is strengthened by the fact that the Town's post office was located in the building for many years.”
3. “The building is significant as the seat of Durham's government from 1840 until recent times. “

Under the current lease arrangement, the Town receives approximately \$35,000 a year in rent for the use of the building. Maintenance costs have varied in the past three years from \$8,945 in 1997 to \$14,500 in 1998 and \$31,635 in 1999. The high costs of 1999 entailed masonry work, window repairs, and new carpet. Repairs in 1998 included chimney pointing.

From 1990 to 1997 the average maintenance cost was \$7,800 per year. With the potential construction of a new district courthouse in Dover, the Old Town Hall will become available for other uses.

The building currently has no parking. Space for parking should be acquired if possible and cost effective.

The Durham Historic Association has petitioned to lease the whole building from the Town for exhibition and meeting space. The exact proposal for a lease arrangement is not clear at this time. The Historic Association in Durham is “the only group that takes custody of the Town's memories and identity” (quote from Dr. Marion James, Durham Historic Association President). It provides a resource for the community with a value that cannot be measured in rents paid or revenues generated. “The Association has created one of the most interesting and historical collections in the Seacoast area....[I]t provides a repository for Durham's material legacy, and has given the Town a symbol of its own identity.” (James Garvin)

The building also has enormous potential as a component of the Town center as discussed above. This is not inconsistent with the proposal presented by the Historic Association and may be a very good match. An enhanced and renovated Old Town Hall/Durham Museum, similar to the Woodman Institute in Dover or the Portsmouth Athenaeum, would be a significant anchor for a Town center. This building could jointly serve the municipal needs of the Town as well as that of the Historic Association. In conjunction with a renovated Town Hall and a small Town green, this cluster of buildings would provide a civic presence, be highly visible to passersby, and would celebrate Durham's history and its connection to the Oyster River.

On the other hand, should the proposed Town center study recommend an alternate location, this structure has the potential to become an anchor of another type. One could envision the renovation and enhancement of this building for professional offices or business services, or even a restaurant. As noted earlier, parking would be a major constraint on this type of redevelopment. This redevelopment would be in keeping with the surrounding uses and take advantage of a highly visible and heavily traveled location. It would then provide additional tax revenues to the Town and elicit an alternative “image” of Durham.

OLD TOWN HALL (COURTHOUSE) ISSUES, GOALS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUE:

The Old Town Hall could be better utilized for Town and civic functions, particularly when the District Court is relocated.

GOAL:

Determine the best use of the Old Town Hall for the Town of Durham.

RECOMMENDATION:

Before making any permanent changes, wait for the recommendations from the proposed Town center study. After this study has been presented, discuss the impact on the Old Town Hall and its future. Determine the best use for the building, in keeping with those recommendations and the vision of Durham, Gasoline Alley, and Church Hill as described in this chapter and Chapter 3 – Downtown and Commercial Core.

- Priority: Within 2 to 6 years

CRAIG SUPPLY PROPERTY

BACKGROUND

Although not a “Town facility,” a property known as the Craig Supply property has been an eyesore and fiscal drain for Durham for several years. It is located off of Main Street and on the east side of the railroad tracks, adjacent to UNH’s Whittemore Center. The 1.9-acre property was the site of the now defunct Craig Supply Company warehouses and offices at which dry cleaning chemicals were stored. The site became contaminated with tetrachloroethene (PCE) and has since been abandoned. Over \$220,000 in back taxes from this property are owed to the community. Due to liabilities associated with the contamination of the property and the tax and bank liens on the property, the property has and will remain in its current dilapidated state unless the Town steps in and creates momentum for the reuse of this property. An effort to create this

momentum began in 1997 with the Town establishing a diverse committee of interest groups and then applying for funds to assess the contamination of the property and prepare a clean-up plan for the site. This work is being done through “Brownfields” funding through the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES), NH Office of State Planning (OSP), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

IMPORTANT FEATURES FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE

Several trends make this an increasingly important site. The UNH Master Plan envisions a loop road to link the east and west campus and to create a pedestrian-oriented environment on campus. As envisioned, the loop road would tunnel under the railroad through the Craig Supply site.

During its events, the Whittemore Center generates large flows of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The railroad will continue to separate the Whittemore Center from A-lot, which is its main source of parking. However, the Craig Supply property may provide a means of linkage via a tunnel and possibly through other means even more direct than a tunnel.

The UNH Master Plan envisions a performing arts center at the site of the current greenhouses that will generate an additional demand for parking and reinforce the need for improved access and parking in that area.

The start of the Portland-Boston railroad in 2001 will include weekend service for the Durham/UNH train station, which will create additional multi-modal transportation demands and parking demands in the area of the Craig Supply site. Initially train service will be available weekends only; however, the potential exists for weekday service.

There is significant demand from the private sector for quality office space in close proximity to the University. In addition, the University is currently constructing its “entrepreneurial campus” across Main Street from the Craig Supply site. That will likely result in increased demand from additional private office or research space.

In keeping with the vision established under the Federal TEA-21 legislation in which efficiency and convenience of the transportation system are achieved with a multi-modal mix of transportation services such as bus, train, pedestrian, bicycle, and auto usage, it is likely that a bus drop-off and turnaround could be provided in this area to link pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular, bus, and train service.

CRAIG SUPPLY PROPERTY ISSUES, GOALS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUE:

The Craig Supply property is an eyesore for the community, significant back taxes are owed on the property, and the site is contaminated with a dry cleaning chemical.

GOAL:

Achieve the following for the Craig Supply property: clean-up of contamination, attempt to get back taxes through the sale price of the property, and redevelopment of the site with a use that provides long term revenue and/or benefits for the Town.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Continue to seek grants and other sources of funding that will assist in the eventual clean-up of the Craig Supply property.
2. The Town should continue to work with the University and developers from the private sector to negotiate a reuse plan of the property that will achieve the above stated goal.
3. Once a general reuse plan for the site is agreed to by the parties involved, develop a remedial action plan for the clean-up of the site. To achieve redevelopment of the site, ensure that this plan will provide the appropriate liability protections for the future owner.
4. The Craig Supply site should be zoned for office and research uses rather than the current residential zoning. This will allow for redevelopment of the site that is more consistent with the surrounding land uses.
5. The Craig Supply site should be evaluated as to its potential to be a part of a greater office and intermodal transportation facility as shown in Figure 2.1, an architectural rendering depicting a reuse option. The intermodal redevelopment option for the site should ensure that transportation connections and improvements are made in such a way that traffic is not increased and is potentially reduced on residential streets in Durham. Features of an intermodal facility could include:

- Structured parking provided in the location of the current A-lot to serve the Whittemore Center, the train station, the Field House, the performing arts center, and the general University population. The parking structure could include office space that would generate tax revenue for the community and would also screen the parking and enhance the western approach to campus.
- The Craig Supply site is redeveloped with office/commercial buildings that provide tax or other payments to the community. This redevelopment could include uses that supplement activities at the train station, provide incubator space for entrepreneurial campus activities or other office space, provide services for attendees of Whittemore Center events, and accommodate a pedestrian bridge across the railroad tracks to the parking structure.
- Bus and shuttle service from the parking garage at A-Lot to serve the Whittemore Center, the train station, and the redeveloped Craig Supply site.
- The loop road would tunnel under the railroad at Craig Supply property and could include two car lanes, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks that provide improved access from the parking on the west side of the railroad tracks.

Figure 2.1. A REUSE VISION FOR THE CRAIG SUPPLY PROPERTY AND SURROUNDINGS

