

Town of Auburn, New Hampshire

Completed CTAP Community Planning Assessment Summary Report & Questionnaire



Prepared on Behalf of the Town of Auburn

By:

The Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission



SNHPC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community Assessment Report

This report is a summary of the CTAP Community Planning Assessment which was completed using the gathered information from the Community Planning Assessment Questionnaire. This questionnaire is attached at the end of the Final Summary

History and Purpose:

The Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) is in the second year of a five-year process. The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) initiated CTAP to provide support to communities projected to experience growth as a result of the Interstate 93 Expansion Project. The goal of the first phase of the program is to conduct Community Planning Assessments of those municipalities designated by the NH DOT as most likely to be affected by the expected increase in population. There are 26 CTAP-designated communities from Salem to Concord and a Community Planning Assessment has been conducted for each town. Eleven of these municipalities are located within the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission Region and include Auburn, Bedford, Candia, Chester, Deerfield, Derry, Goffstown, Hooksett, Londonderry, Manchester, and Raymond. The primary purpose of the Community Planning Assessment is to identify the policies and regulations these municipalities currently have in place to effectively prepare and manage growth.

Process:

The Community Planning Assessment consists of more than 100 questions. The survey is centered around the following four major planning themes:

- A. – Community Infrastructure and Regional Cooperation
- B. – Environmental Protection, Land Use, and Open Space
- C. – Downtowns, Village Centers, and Community Vitality
- D. - The Local Economy

The Steering Committee of the CTAP determined that the questions developed from these themes should address most of the growth concerns of municipalities affected by the Interstate 93 Expansion Project. The attached Community Planning Assessment for the town of Auburn, New Hampshire was completed through a review by Town officials, planning Board members, and staff at the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission. The results are intended to provide community leaders and municipal officials with a basis to make decisions concerning the implementation of policies to address potential growth issues. These results are identified in this Executive Summary.

Findings:

The major planning needs and weaknesses identified by the Community Planning Assessment prepared for the Town of Auburn, New Hampshire are listed as follows:

- **Lack of Age Restricted Ordinance**
- **Lack of traffic calming techniques**
- **Lack of future utilities planning**
- **Lack of Aquifer protection ordinance**
- **Currently does not provide for range of lot sizes, only 2; Rural and Industrial**
- **Site Plan regulations**
- **Lack of Open Space Plan**

Key Recommendations:

The Community Assessment Report that follows contains an analysis of the findings and recommendations concerning how to best address growth policy initiatives in the Town of Auburn:

- **Update CIP in summer 2007**
- **Use of elderly exemption**
- **Update housing goals to include affordable and workforce housing**
- **Street and lot layout adapted to topography (Subdivision Regulation Road Standards)**
- **Use of access management tools in Rural Planning Area**
- **Include allowance and standards for various lot sizes**
- **Develop Aquifer Protection Ordinance and Wetlands Conservation District**
- **Create regulations within community to protect wildlife or wildlife habitat**
- **Create Open Space Plan**

The town of Auburn is currently in the process of updating its master plan, the most recent one having been completed in 2002. The town's CIP will be updated during the summer of 2007. Current issues that Auburn needs to address include elderly exemption making it possible for elderly to move into, as well as, continue to live in town. Auburn does currently have housing designated for persons 62 years and older. Within the new master plan the Vision and Goals chapter will include providing affordable and workforce housing which will allow for more diverse housing options. Auburn's Road standards require street and lot layout to be adaptive to the topography of the land. By doing so, road networks do not detract from the pleasing aesthetic scenery that Auburn has. One major concern that Auburn needs to address is the standards for various lot sizes. Currently only two standard lot sizes exist, Rural and Industrial. Because of the future increase in population and town growth there needs to be a larger number of lot size standards to accommodate various types of housing, businesses, and industrial. By doing so all types of growth can be allowed but it will be smart growth that won't detract from the town.

Steps need to be taken in Auburn to protect water sources. Important programs such as an Aquifer Protection Ordinance do not currently exist as well as a wetlands conservation district. Water sources are easily affected by new growth of any form so by creating these protection plans it will give the town a foundation to enforce water protection on. Standards should be set, and sites designated that will require specific attention. Along with water sources, wildlife is impacted by loss of land and environment changes. Since wildlife is an important aspect of a functioning ecosystem a wildlife habitat or wildlife protection plan would be a worthy thing for the town of Auburn to develop. Lastly, an Open Space Plan would be important in evaluating the current open land and conservation areas that Auburn has and would allow for them to be prioritized for protection issues that will arise as the expansion of I-93 continues to develop.

CTAP COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Part I

Introduction

The Community Technical Assistance Project (CTAP) was implemented in an attempt to help member communities grapple with potential growth issues due to the expansion of Interstate 93. The first phase of the five-year process was to conduct Community Assessments of those municipalities most likely to experience growth due to the expansion of I-93. The ultimate goal of the Community Assessment process is to determine whether communities have policies and regulations in place to manage potential growth effectively.

The I-93 expansion is projected to last until 2012. In an effort to minimize the effects of potential growth, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) identified 26 municipalities as areas most likely to be impacted. Eleven of these communities are located in the Southern New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission (SNHPC) area and include Auburn, Bedford, Candia, Chester, Deerfield, Derry, Goffstown, Hooksett, Londonderry, Manchester, and Raymond.

Potential growth impacts for these CTAP communities could include, among others, an increase in population, traffic, and a greater demand for housing. Consequently, if growth does occur in some or all of these areas, increased demand in municipal services across the board will be expected. CTAP communities will have to plan accordingly.

More than 100 questions were developed by professional planners and municipal officials involved in the CTAP process in an effort to determine if CTAP communities have policies and regulations in place to adequately address potential growth issues. These assessment questions were answered by reviewing existing town websites, ordinances, regulations, and city policies. These assessment questions were also answered with the

Town of Auburn, New Hampshire

help of municipal planners and other officials in each community. The questions are grouped around the following four themes which were approved by the CTAP Steering Committee according to the overall goals of the program

- Community Infrastructure and Regional Cooperation
- Environmental Protection, Land Use, and Open Space
- Downtown/Village Centers and Community Vitality
- Local Economy

Many of the assessment questions provided insight as to the status of the community's growth policies and the vision of the CTAP community towards its future development. The questions deal with many different planning issues including land use and mixed-use policies, zoning, minimum-lot requirements, historical preservation, open space, environmental protection, housing, water quality, economic development, and transportation. Another purpose of the assessment was to gauge the level at which public participation is present in each of the communities.

Prior to the publication of this report, municipal officials and Planning Board members of the Town of Auburn were asked to review the preliminary findings of the community planning assessment and any possible growth issues that may have come to light as a result of conducting the survey. This was accomplished at a regular scheduled meeting of the Bedford Planning Board. The assessment questions provided discussion venues where municipal officials and planning board members could voice concerns and ask questions.

In developing this report, the SNHPC considered the insights, concerns, and recommendations offered as well as other communications provided throughout the process and has included these where appropriate. As a result, this report should be viewed as a starting point or as a guide for future planning activities and goals. A copy of the Community Planning Assessment prepared for Auburn is attached.

Part II

Theme A

Community Infrastructure and Regional Cooperation

The purpose of this theme was to determine how the CTAP community has planned for the future in terms of the provision and funding for increased municipal services. This may include new facilities and other infrastructure improvements to help meet these needs. In addition, Theme A analyzed how effective communities have been, and will be, regarding regional cooperation with other local municipalities in an effort to better serve constituents. Special attention was given to communication strategies and cooperation initiatives between communities within regions.

Theme A generated 42 questions dealing with the funding and delivery of municipal services, regional cooperation among local governments, housing, and transportation.

The Steering Committee identified a number of broad goals that CTAP-designated communities should strive to accomplish which are outlined below:

Goals

- Promote the establishment of consistent funding approaches to help pay for improved and expanding public infrastructure and services. Local governments should make certain that their funding strategies are adequate to meet the new level of service provision to meet projected growth needs.
- Evaluate the need for regional cooperation between local governments. Regional approaches can often embellish the delivery of public services and environmental quality, avoid the possible duplication of services, and better allocate financial resources.
- Plan for an adequate supply of housing. The housing stock should reflect local needs and priorities and include housing for a range of income levels.
- Implement strategies to promote safe and efficient multi-modal transportation systems.

Findings:

- **The Town of Auburn regularly participates in mutual aid for police and fire, regional school, however there is no public water or sewer**
- **The Town of Bedford does not utilize Tax Increment Financing Districts (TIFD) or the Community Reinvestment and Opportunity Program (CROP) zones to help fund or stimulate infrastructure improvement in specific areas of the community**
- **The Town CIP was last adopted in 1985 for the period of 1985-1990. The CIP is scheduled to be updated the summer of 2007 by the SNHPC**
- **The town has not yet planned for the provision of future utilities**
- **The community has no specific dark skies lighting ordinance**
- **The Town's zoning ordinance allows for cluster development**
- **Currently no regulations that encourage the implementation of traffic calming techniques**
- **Town lacks an inclusionary housing ordinance**

Recommendations:

The Town of Auburn could benefit in the future by considering TIFDs or CROP zones to help fund needed infrastructure improvements within specific areas of the community. Bonds should also be an option in considering future infrastructure development. The town should begin to plan for the provision of future utilities. The Town may also consider the establishment of a Housing Commission to continue to keep abreast of housing issues and strategies. In addition, the town has no specific dark skies ordinance. Developing such an ordinance would be beneficial in helping to reduce overall light glare and improve star gazing within the community.

Theme B

Environmental Protection, Land Use, and Open Space

The purpose of this theme was to determine how the CTAP community has planned for the protection of land in a way that is consistent and compatible with future growth trends. To achieve these goals communities must focus on future land use strategies and determine how these would help to promote the preservation of natural resources, open space, and environmental protection.

Theme B generated 38 questions dealing with natural resources, green infrastructure, parks and recreational opportunities, rural character, and the preservation of agricultural lands and forests.

The Steering Committee identified a number of broad goals that CTAP-designated communities should strive to accomplish which are outlined below:

Goals

- Promote the preservation and protection of natural resources when addressing the economic needs of the community and region.
- Protect natural resources and the environment including ground water, aquifers, wildlife, and wildlife corridors
- Establish and conserve an interconnected green infrastructure and ensure public access to open space, parks, and other recreational opportunities.
- Maintain rural character whenever possible especially forests and farms.

Findings:

- **The existing Master Plan was approved in 2002. The Master Plan is currently in the process of being updated**
- **Auburn Zoning Ordinance allow for cluster development allowing for some mixed use**
- **Existing Master Plan recommends the development of a Village Center Zoning District which would allow for mixed use development. The current zoning regulations do not allow single-family residential and commercial uses to be developed on the same lot, with the exception of home occupations.**
- **Lack of density bonuses for specific types of development**
- **Town has both a Conservation Commission and an Open Space Committee**
- **Currently no Open Space Plan**
- **Lack of Aquifer protection ordinance**
- **Lack of Wellhead protection program**
- **Lack of Wildlife protection regulations**
- **Auburn is part of the Beaver Lake Watershed Partnership with Towns of Derry and Chester**

Recommendations:

Create density regulations that provide structure for various types of development including but not limited to residential, commercial, and industrial. Density regulations will prevent over crowding while still creating development that is confined so as to preserve open space. Since Auburn currently does have a Conservation Commission and an Open Space Committee it would be viable to have them focus on creating an open space plan as well as an Aquifer and Wellhead protection program. The Conservation and Open Space groups could work with the Beaver Lake Watershed Partnership to develop these programs and identify areas to be included in them. The development of a Village Center Zoning District would create further mixed use growth that allows for a diversity of housing and commercial units and is geared towards the creation of a walkable community.

Theme C

Downtown/Village Centers and Community Vitality

The purpose of this theme was to determine how the CTAP community has planned for the development and preservation of vibrant community centers which would include an extensive array of cultural and recreational resources. The overall intent is to enhance public participation by establishing areas for community activities around the downtown or common community center which would add rural character and promote a sense of vitality to the village center.

Theme C generated 16 questions dealing with the development of village center districts and the promotion of walkable downtown areas in an effort to maintain the small town New England community tradition. Special emphasis was given to the development of main streets, historic preservation, and landscaping.

The Steering Committee identified a number of broad goals that CTAP-designated communities should strive to accomplish which are outlined below:

Goals

- Develop or enhance downtowns and village centers through the reuse of existing infrastructure and the rehabilitation of buildings with historic value.
- Promote the development of walkable downtown areas which are consistent with historic patterns.
- Enhance Main streets and promote a small community, New England town atmosphere.

Findings:

- **New Master Plan will recommend accommodating mixed uses in Auburn Town Village and keep them in a compact village center.**
- **There are no designated scenic roads**
- **No formal design guidelines for development**

Recommendations:

The town of Auburn has a “small compact Village Center” as determined by the 2002 Master Plan. This area of town allows for mixed uses in a central area of the community. The updated Master Plan will include recommendations to accommodate mixed uses in the town village. The updated master plan needs to prepare for mixed use so that commercial and similar types of development can be centralized and kept confined to one location in town. This will prevent other areas of town from becoming spotted with commercial use which will ultimately keep residents happy. Another future priority will be to develop a formal design guide for any new structures created in the village center. A formal design guide will prevent unsightly box stores and chains from detracting from the New England town atmosphere that is strived for in village centers.

Theme D

Local Economy

The purpose of this theme was to determine if the CTAP community has enacted policies that promote economic viability, foster a prosperous business environment, and support agricultural development. The development of a strong local economy should result in increased local employment opportunities and livable wages.

Theme D generated 15 questions dealing with the development of economic development strategies, commercial and agricultural development, and tax incentives to attract new business development

The Steering Committee identified a number of broad goals that CTAP-designated communities should strive to accomplish which are outlined below:

Goals

- Support sustainable and balanced economic growth that reflects the current tax base.
- Strengthen local agriculture and forestry through the support of related infrastructure and economic systems.
- Support the development of new jobs and livable wages.

Findings:

- **No economic development plan**
- **No tax incentives or regulatory relief for businesses to locate in community center**
- **Not a Main Street Community**
- **No agricultural inventory**
- **Zoning ordinance does not protect lands appropriate for agriculture or forestry with substantial minimum lot sizes**

Recommendations:

With incoming population around the region, every town is going to have to yield to varying economic growth. Without an economic development plan Auburn could potentially be faced with no economic growth or the wrong types of growth. The town needs to have healthy economic growth to help boost town infrastructure in order to keep it a desirable place to live by providing residents with places to work. Development of an open space plan and zoning ordinance for the preservation of agricultural or forested land will help the Town of Auburn to balance rural aesthetics against economic needs.

Summary

Overall Findings:

While the Town of Auburn has achieved and performed planning to manage growth and prepare for the future, it is clear based upon the response to this community planning assessment, which the Town of Auburn would greatly benefit from the following key recommendations:

- 1) Develop and adopt a town Open Space Plan**
- 2) Develop and adopt Groundwater/Aquifer Protection Ordinance**
- 3) Adopt and implement a Village Center Zoning District**
- 4) Develop and adopt an Economic Development Plan**
- 5) Establish Housing and Agriculture Commissions**
- 6) Draft an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance**

Auburn, NH Community Planning Assessment

Theme A: Municipal Services/Facilities & Regional Cooperation *High quality municipal and educational services and facilities and effective regional cooperation and communication*

A-1 Funding and Delivering Municipal Services and Regional Cooperation

Goals

- Assist local governments in establishing stable, consistent funding approaches for public infrastructure and services.
- Ensure continuation of strong municipal services and schools so that they continue to provide quality services and meet projected growth.
- Develop and support new methods of regional cooperation that enhance local government delivery of public services while ensuring environmental quality.
- Allocate financial resources on a regional basis.

Specific Assessment Questions:

Is your community a member of an RPC?

Yes, Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission.

Do you have appointed commissioners who regularly attend?

Yes, Charles “Stoney” Worster and Jim Fusco have regularly attended. Jim Fusco recently resigned from the Auburn Planning Board and William Herman, the Town Administrator, will be the new representative.

Is your community a participant in any mutual aid agreements for police, fire, water and sewer, solid waste, etc?

Yes, Police and Fire Mutual Aid with neighboring communities; Southern New Hampshire Mutual Aid (fire); no public water or sewer; and the Building Official participate as part of the Public Works Mutual Aid.

Does your community participate in any regional service agreements, including SAUs?

SAU#15 – Contract out of district with Memorial High School in Manchester and Pinkerton Academy in Derry.

Does your community participate in other regional municipal cooperative efforts?

Yes, Storm Water Action Task force.

Do you have an existing procedure for incorporating regional impact into the plan review process?

Yes, but there are no formal procedures in the land use codes. Town relies on RSA 36:54, 36:55 and 36:56

Does your community have an updated Capital Improvements Program in place and if so, when was the CIP last adopted?

The last CIP was adopted in 1985 for the period of 1985-1990. The CIP is scheduled to be updated summer 2007 by SNHPC.

Does your community use Tax Increment Financing, community development funds, or Community Reinvestment and Opportunity Program (CROP) zones to provide infrastructure improvements in specific areas?

No.

Does your community have impact fees and if so, for what type of facilities/services?

Appendix C, Fee schedule for Site Plan Review states “Impact Fees: As determined by the Planning Board or its engineers, “but no written regulation could be found. Section 5.09 of the Site Plan Regulations state that a community facilities impact study is required as part of a major site plan. Historically, the Town does not collect Impact Fees as we have a growth management ordinance.

Does your community charge exactions (or off-site improvements) and if so, for what type of facilities/services?

Section 3.14 Site Plan Review and Subdivision Regulations allows the Town to require the applicant to “bear the entire cost of designing and installing all off-site improvements, and such off-site improvements as bear a relationship to the needs created by the Site Plan and the benefits which will be conferred upon the Site Plan by the improvements. Where off-site improvements will be required solely because of the existence of the Site Plan, yet will benefit other land of extend beyond the Site Plan, apportionment of the expensed between the Town the applicant and where appropriate, other applicants, shall be made by the Board based on consideration of four areas.”

Has your community planned for the provision of future utilities?

Not at this time. Currently there is a plan to extend sewer and water service only in the northwestern part of town where the Wellington Business Park is located.

Does your community require underground installation of utilities?

Section 6.09 of the Site Plan Regulations and 6.14 of the Subdivision Regulations require all electric, cable and telephone systems to be placed underground unless the planning board determines it to be infeasible.

Does your community have an outdoor dark skies lighting ordinance? If so, what ordinance is it a part of?

Not specifically, but Section 3.01 of the Zoning Ordinance - the Nuisance Provision-covers any condition that “endangers the health, safety, peace or enjoyment of the community, or tending to its disturbance or annoyance is prohibited. Section 6.13 of the Site Plan regulation requires lighting that will have minimal as possible sky glow and zero glare off-site.

Are streetlights required or encouraged in any areas?

6.13 Site Plan Review requires outdoor lighting in accordance with the illumination engineering standards. There is no regulation that requires or recommends street lights.

What long-range plans has your community made for meeting its future water supply needs?

Auburn residents are served by private wells for water. There are currently no long range plans in place in town. However, Massabesic Lake, which serves as the water source for Manchester and many surrounding areas, may be a possible water source in the future. The 2002 Master Plan recommends the future extension of water service in the Northwest and Route 28 Planning Areas.

What are your current arrangements for septage disposal—does your town have a specified site and corresponding contract?

Residents have on-site septic systems. Dry lines for sewer are in place in Wellington Business Park.

Has your community planned for its solid waste and recycling needs?

In 1998, the Town of Auburn has a Host Community Agreement with Waste Management of New Hampshire which allows residents to drop-off solid waste and recycling at the transfer station. Waste Management owns and operates the Transfer Station, located at 24 Gray Point Avenue, directly off the Route 28 By-Pass. The Town closed its landfill in 1979. From 1979 to 1998 the town ran an incinerator off Raymond Road to handle solid waste and recycling. Residents can obtain service from private haulers if they desire curbside pick-up or bring it to the transfer station themselves.

A-2 Housing

Goal

- Ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing stock for a range of income levels that reflects regional and local needs and priorities.

Specific Assessment Questions:

How has your community planned for future housing needs?

Single family residential units are allowed by-right in the R, R1, R2 and C2 Districts; Manufactured homes are permitted by-right in the R, R1, and R2 districts; Multi-family dwellings are permitted by-right in R1 and by special exception in R2 and C2; Cluster Residential Developments are permitted by-right in R and R2 and by special exception in R1; Conversion apartments are permitted by special exception in R, R1, R2 and C2; Accessory Dwelling Units are permitted by-right in R, R1, R2 and C2; and Elderly Housing is permitted by-right in R, R1, and R2.

Are the population and employment projections within your Master Plan consistent with regional and state projections?

The Town's 2002 Master Plan utilized the New Hampshire Office of State Planning (now the Office of Energy and Planning) projections which projected a population of 5,390 by 2005. The US Census estimated a population 5,122 in Auburn for 2005, which was very close to the 2005 projection.

Does the community's Master Plan reference and/or make use of the regional housing needs assessment in evaluating the housing needs within the community?

Yes, the 2002 references the regional housing needs assessment. This section will be updated as part of the current master plan update.

Where within your community is new residential growth occurring?

Much of the recent residential development has been occurring in the northeastern and southeastern areas in town identified as Areas 3 and 4 in the Community Survey.

Do the community's land use regulations provide for a wide range of housing types (single-family, duplexes, manufactured homes, apartments, etc.)?

Yes

Are accessory apartments permitted/allowed?

Yes, accessory units are permitted, but are limited for use by immediate family members and not as a rental unit.

Does the community's land use regulations allow multi-family (> or = 2 units per dwelling) residences?

Yes, multi-unit dwellings are permitted by-right in R1 and by special exception in R2 and C2.

Does your community have an age-restricted housing ordinance? If so, it is limited to 55+ or 62+?

The Town's existing zoning ordinance has a provision for Elderly Housing which is defined as person 62 years of age or older, but there is not a specific elderly housing ordinance. (An Elderly Housing Ordinance was on the ballot in March 2007, but failed yes 342/no 423).

Do your community's regulations encourage energy conservation?

Not at present. New home construction must comply with energy codes.

Do your community's regulations encourage housing that meets disabled and/or universal design standards?

See the update in 2007 ZO. Section 7.01.1 of the Zoning Ordinance requires that all construction be in compliance with the most current state codes and standards referenced in RSA 155-A.

Has your community taken any steps (such as tax relief programs) to help senior citizens remain within their own homes?

September 2006 MS-1 Report indicates that there are 48 individuals in Town who are granted an elderly exemption.

Do your Master Plan or land use regulations define affordable and workforce housing? If yes, how are these terms defined?

The Town's 2002 Master Plan defines affordable housing as "housing which can be purchased by utilizing no more than one-third of the gross family income for housing costs, such as mortgage payments, taxes and insurances."

Does your community have an inclusionary housing ordinance or provide bonuses for affordable and workforce housing?

No.

What steps has your community taken to provide and preserve affordable and workforce housing?

The Town's Zoning Ordinance allows Cluster Development (Section 3.11) which are intended to "establish living areas within the Town that provide for a balance of community needs, such as a diversity of housing opportunities, adequate recreation and open space: etc." The Town's housing goals are currently being reviewed and updated as part of the master plan update.

A-3 Transportation

Goal

- Promote safe, efficient, accessible, and diverse multi-modal transportation solutions for services and goods.

Specific Assessment Questions:

Do the provisions of the master plan and zoning ordinance encourage a continuous street network? How is the connectivity of new streets ensured? **The Master Plan has an objective to “Encourage connections with the Town’s existing road network and the potential connection with a town-wide traffic system when reviewing new commercial, industrial and residential development, and access to adjacent communities, including Candia, Chester, Manchester, Derry and Hooksett.” Section 6.03 of the town’s Subdivision Regulations state that “streets shall be arranged to provide for extension or connection of eventual street systems necessary to develop abutting land in future subdivisions” and “street layout shall include access into abutting properties unless such action is not deemed necessary by the Planning Board due to the location or nature of the abutting land.”**

Are cul-de sacs addressed (in the context of the street network of the town) in your regulations? If so, what aspects are regulated?

Cul-de-sacs are addressed in the subdivision regulations. Cul-de-sacs may not be more than 1,200 feet in length and must have a turn around of a 20-foot wide black top road with a minimum turning radius of 40-feet around a central island of loam or undisturbed land (Section 6.03

Does the Planning Board permit design waivers for reduced pavement width and the installation of cape cod curbs?

Construction of curbs is not required per Section 6.08 of the Subdivision regulations. However, Section 6.08 (14) does state that “curbs or edge stones, when provided, shall be in accordance with the policy and specifications agreed upon by the Auburn Planning Board.” The board follows the town engineer’s recommendations with regard to pavement width and curbing. Waivers have been granted to reduce the width on streets that are not considered arterial.

Are dead-end streets permitted and if so, what is the maximum street length allowed?

Subdivision Regulations, Section 6.03 states that dead-end streets are not allowed.

Does the community’s road standards reflect the character and topography of the existing area in terms of slope and sight distance?

Yes, Section 6.03 (6) of the Subdivision Regulations states that “the grades of all streets shall be at least 1% but less than or equal to 8%.

(12) The street and lot layout shall be adapted to the topography. Extensive grading and filling shall be avoided.”

(18) “Sight distances at intersections and at changes in grade shall be designed to be consistent with the latest AASHTO standards. Sight distance calculations may be required at the discretion of the Planning Board.

Do road standards vary depending on anticipated traffic volumes?

No. However, there are different road widths required based on type of development in Section 6.03 of the Subdivision Regulations. The Town Road standard does not vary.

What is the community's policy for issuing building permits on Class VI roads?

Section 3.17 of the Zoning Ordinance requires that all building lots have the minimum road frontage upon a Class V road or better within the Town. A variance may be applied for to obtain permission to build upon a Class VI road, in which case the Planning Board would recommend to the Selectmen that the section of road be upgraded (remove 'to') and that the applicant sign a release of municipal liability. If the road is to be accepted by the Town, a betterment assessment is conducted and (add 'the applicant') must go through the public hearing process. The road must meet Class V standards if the road is to be accepted by the Town.

Has the community considered bicycle or pedestrian transportation on a town-wide scale in the Master Plan or other planning documents?

The Master Plan has a transportation goal to “provide opportunities for a town-wide system of walking and bicycling paths.”

Do the land use regulations require sidewalks or bicycle paths or other pedestrian paths *within* new residential or commercial development?

No

Are trails or other pedestrian connections required or considered *between* developments in the plan review process?

No. However, the Transportation Chapter of the Master Plan has a recommendation under the Transportation and Land Use Planning stating “when reviewing plans for subdivision or site plan review, encourage the interconnection of the developments through the use of sidewalks and/or interconnecting trails.”

Do parking requirements in the community vary by use classification or zoning district? If so, what are they?

Section 6.07 Site Plan Regulations, By Use:

Residential Uses = 3 per unit; Rooming and Boarding Houses = 1 per each sleeping room; hotel, motel and tourist homes = 1 per guest room, plus 1 per employee, plus 1 for each 200 square feet of public meeting room and restaurant space; hospital or nursing home = 1 per bed at design capacity, plus 1 per employee; places of public assembly = 1 per 2 seats in principal assembly room; bowling alleys = 2 per alley, plus 1 per employee; eating and drinking establishment = 1 per 3 seats, plus 1 per employee; drive-in establishment = 1 per 50 square feet of floor space, plus 1 per employee; service station/gasoline station = 2 per service bay, plus 1 per employee, plus 1 per 200 square feet of sales area; retail trade and personal services = 1 per 200 feet of sales area, plus 1 per employee; wholesale trade and warehousing = 1 per employee, plus 1 per 1,000 square feet of floor space; office use = 1 per 400 square feet if gross floor space, plus 1 per employee; industrial use = 1.5 per employee at

the highest expected employee occupancy; and home occupations = 1 per employee, plus dwelling unit requirements.

Does the community permit/ encourage or require sub-compact parking spaces?

No. The minimum required parking space dimensions are 9'-6" wide by 20' deep.

Does the community's parking regulations include maximum as well as minimum parking requirements, i.e., setting a limit on the amount of parking allowed?

No, the Site Plan regulations state a minimum required only.

Do the community's regulations and transportation planning practices encourage the implementation of traffic calming techniques?

No, there are currently no regulations that encourage the implementation of traffic calming techniques.

Do the community's land use regulations require the submission of traffic impact studies or analyses for new and enlarged developments? If so, when is a study required?

Yes, Site Plan Regulations 5.07 requires an access plan showing means of access to the site and proposed changes to existing public streets, including any traffic control devices necessary in conjunction with the site development plan, increases and decreases in traffic volume and patterns generated by the development and sight distances at the point of access on to Town roads.

Does your community encourage alternative transportation? If so, is this accomplished through the land use regulations or other means?

The Master Plan has an objective to "encourage alternative transportation modes, such as a carpooling program and an NHDOT Park and Ride Facility.

If transit or other transportation alternatives exist, does your community encourage or allow transit-oriented development?

Not applicable. At the present time, there are no forms of public transportation in Auburn.

Does the community have access management standards? Are they restricted to a specified area in the community or to specified uses?

Section 6.03 of the Site Plan Regulations - Traffic and Access – requires traffic and circulation to be designed to AASHTO standards. These standards apply to the entire town. The Master Plan recommends the use of access management tools in the Rural Planning Area as a means to reduce the number of access points on local and state roads.

Does the community have a memorandum of understanding with the DOT regarding driveway access on state highways?

Don't know. Applicants apply for driveway permits and the state copies the town on the permit.

Theme B: Environmental Protection, Land Use, and Open Space
Strengthened protection and expanded access to natural resources and open space

Environmental Protection, Land Use, and Open Space Protection

Goals

- Protect natural resources in harmony with meeting economic needs of the community and the region.
- Protect natural resources and environmental health, including ground water and aquifers, wildlife, and wildlife corridors.
- Establish and conserve an interconnected green infrastructure.
- Ensure convenient and nearby public access to open space, parks, and recreational opportunities.
- Maintain unique and diverse rural character of the community and region by protecting and preserving farm and forestlands.

Specific Assessment Questions: *Land Use*

Does your Master Plan have a vision chapter and a land use chapter?

The current Master Plan has a land use chapter, but does not have a vision chapter. The updated Master Plan, which is in progress, will have both.

Has your community updated your Master Plan within the last five years? If not, how old is your plan?

The existing master plan was approved in March 2002. The Master Plan is currently in the process of being updated.

In what ways is your zoning ordinance consistent/or not consistent with the recommendations and projected land uses in the Master Plan? **The ZO provides controls to preserve character within Auburn and this is consistent with the Master Plan. 3.11 outlines cluster development requirements and the ZO has not been amended to allow a mixed use, village district.**

Does your community's zoning ordinance allow innovative land use techniques as listed in RSA 674:21? If so, which ones?

Yes. Cluster Development (Section 3.11); Accessory Dwelling Unit (Section 2.01); Phased Development - Phasing of Subdivisions (Subdivision Regulations, Section 4.06.4); Environmental Characteristics Zoning – Watershed Protection Regulations (Section 3.14) The Master Plan Recommendations encourage the use of innovative land use tools in order to preserve natural resources.

Do the community's land use plans and regulations establish minimum densities to promote efficient use of land?

The town only has one density calculation and does not provide density bonuses for certain types of development.

Does the community have different land use plans for villages, town center districts, other neighborhoods, and open, less dense rural areas?

No, the Town only has one Master Plan that addresses the whole community.

Do your community's regulations provide for a range of lot sizes? If so, what are they?

No, there are only two: Rural and Industrial = 3 acres; R1, R2 and Commercial = 2 acres.

Does your Master Plan and land use regulations encourage higher density development where water, sewer, and other infrastructure currently exist?

The Master Plan encourages further expansion of water service in the Northwest and Route 28 Planning Areas as a means to encourage commercial and industrial development. Lot size reductions are also recommended, provided that water service (and possibly sewer) is extended.

Does the community's Master Plan encourage, and the zoning ordinance provide, for at least one or more zoning districts that allow a mix of residential and commercial uses?

The Master Plan recommends the development of a Village Center Zoning District which would allow for mixed use development. The current Zoning Regulations do not allow single-family residential and commercial uses to be developed on the same lot, with the exception of home occupations (home shops, offices and businesses).

Do the community's land use plans encourage traditional neighborhood development or the development of new villages?

The Master Plan recommends the development of a Village Center Zoning District, which would consider a reduction in lot sizes as an incentive to attract desired uses and enable the development of affordable housing.

Does your community's zoning ordinance allow backlots?

No.

Does your community's zoning and/or development patterns locate nonresidential uses along major roadways or are those uses concentrated at intersections of major roads in a "village" or node?

Yes, the zoning and development patterns locate the Commercial and Industrial development along major roads, such as Route 101, Route 28 Bypass and the intersection of Route 121 (which included Chester Road and Manchester Road) and Raymond Road.

Does your community have an historic resources inventory? Historic district(s)?

Demolition delay bylaw?

The Town has not conducted a historic resources inventory. However, a Historical and Cultural Resource Inventory was conducted by the SNHPC as part of the REPP Program. It was updated in 2004. The updated Master Plan will include goal, objectives and recommendations to address this.

Are there any brownfield are located in the community and does the community have any local plans to redevelop them?

No

Does the community provide a property tax exemption for alternative energy installations per RSA 72:61-74?

No

Specific Assessment Questions: *Natural Resources*

What strategies and actions is the community taking to protect natural areas?

The Town developed Cluster/Open Space subdivision regulations in an effort to protect natural areas and has a Watershed and Wetland Protection Ordinance in place which limits development within the watershed protection area. The Town also has an active Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee.

Does the community have a Natural Resources Inventory? If yes, when was the last inventory conducted?

The Town has not completed a town-wide natural resources inventory, but there have been natural resource inventories completed by UNH students as part of studies completed for the Cohas Brook Preserve (2005) and Preston Brook Watershed (2002) areas.

Are there any local boards or commissions active in environmental protection?

Yes, the Town has a Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee.

Does your community participate in the National Flood Insurance Program?

Yes.

Does the community's land use regulations prohibit development within the floodplain and if so, how?

Section 3.15 – Flood Plain Development Regulations – require all developments in the special flood hazard area to obtain a building permit and to meet specific requirements in an effort to minimize flood damage.

Do the community's land use regulations require best management practices in its drainage, sedimentation and erosion control measures and if so, what examples are included?

Yes, the Site Plan Regulations Section 7.0 – Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control Regulations. – includes the requirement for use of BMPs. All measures must meet, at a minimum, the Best Management Practices set forth in the “Stormwater Management and Erosion Handbook for Urban and Developing Areas in NH” by NHDES and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Do the regulations require the submittal of drainage calculations and stormwater management plans?

Yes, a drainage report with calculations showing the volume, peak discharge, and velocity of present and future runoff are required (7.06 Completed Application requirements)

Does the community have regulations for erosion and sediment control during construction as well as post-construction?

Yes, Section 7.09 of the Zoning Ordinance – Maintenance and Inspection – covers post-construction.

What storm interval(s) are required for drainage analysis calculations?

Section 7.05 Design Standards – states that “measures shall be taken to control the post-development peak rate runoff so that it does not exceed pre-development runoff for the 14 year storm event in a duration of 20 minutes and for additional storm event frequencies as specified in the design criteria Stormwater Management and Erosion Handbook for Urban and Developing Areas in NH”

Has the community adopted a stormwater management ordinance?

No, just as stated in the Site Plan Regulations. The town is working on the development of the Ordinance as part of our NPDES permit. Auburn is an MS4 community.

Does the community have regulations for gravel excavating operations?

Yes, Section 3.23 – Excavation and Soil Removal – is included in the Zoning Ordinance. A permit and site plan review is required.

Has the community adopted a Wetlands Conservation District?

No, but the Town has a Watershed and Wetland Protection Ordinance.

Does the community have wetland buffer or setback requirements and if so, what are they?

Yes. Any development within the Watershed Protection Area must maintain a 125-foot setback from the edge of bodies of water, including wetlands. This ordinance is also applicable to streams, brooks streams, and any other water bodies. Within the watershed protection area no septic systems, lawns, yards, or driveways are permitted. Only structures that are normally associated with water related uses or that are related to transportation are permitted in the watershed protection area. The Zoning Board may grant a special exception from the 125-foot setback, reducing the buffer to a minimum of 75 feet, if the applicant can show conclusively that the proposed construction will not adversely impact the watershed area. Additionally, the Planning Board has the ability to waive the buffer during site plan and subdivision approval, in which case, a functional analysis may be required.

Have prime wetlands been inventoried and mapped within the community? Are there regulations in place protecting prime wetlands?

No, the Town has not conducted a prime wetland study nor have they been mapped or inventoried. The two studies mentioned above by UNH Students for Cohas Brook and Preston Brook make recommendations for prime wetland designations for wetlands within the study areas.

Does the community have an Aquifer Protection Ordinance?

No.

What mapping source is the basis of the district?

N/A

Has the community developed a Wellhead Protection Program and local regulations?

No.

Does the community have land use regulations in place to protect surface water resources?

Yes. The Town has the Watershed Protection Regulations.

Does the community have Shoreland or Riparian Buffer regulation in place?

Yes, same as above plus State Shoreland Protection Act.

Does the community's land use regulations utilize LID¹ performance standards and/or encourage use of environmentally-friendly techniques and materials, such as porous pavement?

No.

Has the community adopted the recommendations found in the Land Conservation Plan for New Hampshire's Coastal Watersheds, the Wildlife Action Plan, or the Natural Services Network? If not, would the community like more information about these plans?

No. The Master Plan Update that is in progress will incorporate the Wildlife Action Plan and Natural Services Network into the Natural Resources Chapter.

Has the community adopted regulations to protect wildlife or wildlife habitat?

No.

What actions, if any, has the community taken in cooperation with neighboring communities to protect wildlife or wildlife habitat at the regional scale?

Auburn is part of the Beaver Lake Watershed Partnership with Towns of Derry and Chester.

¹ LID is "low-impact development", a series or network of stormwater techniques and performance standards that utilize the natural environment to reduce the impacts of development.

Specific Assessment Questions: *Open Space Preservation*

Does the community have an Open Space Plan? When was the plan last updated?

No.

Does the community's Master Plan consider the protection and preservation of wildlife habitats?

No. The Master Plan Update that is in progress will incorporate the Wildlife Action Plan and Natural Services Network into the Natural Resources Chapter.

Do the community's zoning districts require a minimum amount of open space in each development?

Yes. The subdivision regulations (Section 6.06(1) Open Space) states that "in any non-clustered subdivision where land to be subdivided consists of a parcel containing 40 acres or more, and if it is the opinion of the Auburn Planning Board that the impact of said subdivision, when developed, would create a need for open space in that area, then the applicant will be required to dedicate 5% of the total area of the subdivision for the benefit to the subdivision for open space."

Cluster Subdivisions requires that 50% of the clustered development area shall remain as open space (Section 6.16.8 Subdivision Regulations).

Do the community's land use regulations require developers to connect open spaces to existing greenways and other open space destinations within the community?

No, but the 2002 Master Plan lists "potential linkages to existing open space, to recreational facilities, to greenway trails, to open space in cluster subdivisions and to similar areas in adjacent communities and properties" as one of the suggested criteria for creating a comprehensive preservation strategy.

Do the community's land use regulations allow/require/or promote conservation subdivisions? Are conservation subdivisions mandatory in any zoning district within the community? If so, what is the acreage requirement? Is a density bonus offered?

Cluster Subdivisions are permitted in the Zoning Ordinance, Section 3.11. These are not mandatory in specific districts. They are not mandatory in any district.

Does the community's land use regulations require new development to consider existing natural landscape features in the design of the site?

Yes. Site Plan Regulations Section 4.07 calls for the preservation of existing features.

What funding mechanisms has the community approved to acquire open space? (For example, bonds, the dedication of current use penalty taxes, capital reserve fund or conservation fund for land protection and acquisition, other mechanisms)?

Current use penalty tax goes toward conservation of land.

If your community dedicates current use penalties for land protection and acquisition, what is the percentage?

100 percent

Does your community have an open space committee and/or an active local land trust?

Open Space Committee

Theme C: Downtown/Village Centers and Community Vitality
Vital, diverse, safe, and participatory communities with rural character, vibrant community centers, and a wide range of cultural and recreational resources

C-1 Downtowns and Village Centers

Goals

- Target and support new development and redevelopment of existing downtowns and village centers, reusing built infrastructure, and rehabilitating buildings of historic value.
- Promote walkable downtowns and villages consistent with historic patterns within the community and region.
- Maintain small community New England “feel” with vibrant community centers and main streets, and historic preservation of buildings and landscape.

Specific Assessment Questions:

Does your community have an established traditional compact center or village area? If so, how many are there and what are they commonly named?

As stated in the 2002 Master Plan, Auburn has a “small compact Village Center.” However, the existing village center is not distinct. The Master Plan identified the creation of a more distinct Village Center, which would allow a mix of uses and provide a central area for the community to gather, as a goal.

Does your community’s zoning support these areas?

No. The zoning would need to be amended to support this.

Does your community have in place a Village Master Plan or Village Plan Alternative Ordinance?

No.

Does your community have a policy to locate new public buildings near the community center?

No

Are there public places that encourage community gathering such as parks, central plains/greens, or community centers?

Yes, there are several locations in town in which public gatherings may occur, including: Town Hall, Auburn Village School; Griffin Free Library; Apple Tree Park; Sandy Acres Recreational Area; Circle of Fun Playground; and the outdoor ice skating rink.

Does your community have an infill development policy² or ordinance in place?

No.

Are residential uses and mixed uses encouraged or allowed within the central village or traditional downtowns area?

Yes, the Town's current zoning allows residential and commercial uses in the C-2 district, which includes the Town Village area. However, there are no mixed use provisions that allow these uses to occur on the same lot or within the same building, with the exception of home occupations.

Does your community have a sign ordinance? What are its dimensional/ and other key provisions?

Yes, the Town has a Sign Ordinance, Section 3.08 of the Zoning Ordinance. Signs along Town roads shall have a maximum sign area of not more than 16 square feet, and signs along State roads shall have a maximum sign area of not more than 32 square feet. Signs are not permitted within 50 feet of the roadway; at the corner of any public ways within a radius of 150 feet from the point where the center lines of the way intersect; within 300 feet of any public park, public playground or other public grounds, if within view from any portion of the same; and within 600 feet of the edge of the roadway of any Interstate or State highway.

Only one sign is permitted per lot.

Has your community designated scenic roads? If so, how many and what are they named?

No.

Does your community have design guidelines for new commercial and residential development? If so, are these guidelines advisory or mandatory?

The Town does not have formal design guidelines for development. However the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Regulations (Section 3.06) includes a design review phase which is a discussion between the applicant and Planning Board to discuss the details of the design and engineering details of a project. This is a public meeting in which a public notice is posted and abutters and other associated parties are notified of the design review hearing via certified mail.

Is the maximum size and scale of new development as permitted in the community's zoning ordinance an appropriate scale for the community?

Yes, they seem appropriate, given the minimum lot size requirements, maximum height and maximum building and impervious surface areas. The maximum building height for buildings in the industrial zone is 42 feet or 3 stories. The minimum lot size is 3 acres and the maximum impervious surface coverage is 40% of the lot. In the R, R-1 and R-2 zoning districts, the maximum building height is 35 feet or 3 stories; the minimum lot sizes are 2 and 3 acres; and the maximum

² Infill development is defined by EPA as "a strategy for accommodating growth and preventing sprawl through greater density and efficiency in land use development." Examples include rear lot development, redevelopment in existing developed areas, etc.

building coverage is 5%. The C-1 and C-2 Districts allow a maximum building height of 35 feet or 3 stories; the minimum lot size is 2 acres; and the maximum lot coverage is 40%.

Does your community's ordinance require the installation of street trees and landscaping for new and enlarged developments, both along existing roads and on roads to be constructed?

No. There are landscaping requirements in both the subdivision (section 6.07) and site plan regulations (section 6.20) which require the installation and preservation of landscaping and natural features.

Does your community's ordinance encourage the preservation of existing trees within the right-of-way of existing and proposed roadways?

No. There are no specific references to the preservation of trees along the right-of-ways of existing and proposed. However, both the site plan (4.07 and 6.20) and subdivision regulations (6.07) call for the preservation of existing features, to the greatest extent practicable, which includes trees.

Does your community's ordinances preserve and enhance stone walls, both along the rights-of-way of roadways and across the landscape? If so, what ordinances are used to accomplish this?

There is nothing that specifically identifies the preservation of stone walls, but it seems it may be covered under Landscaping in Section 6.20 of the Site Plan Regulations which calls for the preservation of "natural and scenic features, including historic buildings, historic spots and similar irreplaceable assets." The Subdivision regulation Section 4.10 also reiterates this.

C-2 Vibrant Communities

Goals

- Support and encourage safe and diverse communities with a wide range of cultural and recreational resources.
- Foster an atmosphere wherein community members are actively involved and participate in civic life in their communities.

Specific Assessment Questions:

Are the citizens within your community active in community planning and growth initiatives? **Yes**

To what extent are community residents and business owners aware of your community's Master Plan?

SNHPC is currently working with the Planning Board on the Master Plan Update. A Community Profile was held in November 2006 in which approximately 70 residents attended. A community survey was also mailed out in June 2006, which had a response rate of roughly 16 percent. All Master Plan Workshop meetings are posted on the Town website and in public locations. There is also the "Vigilant Auburn Citizen's" group that posts upcoming meetings and information on their group site.

How does your community encourage public involvement and recruit new board members?

Primarily by posting public notices in Town facilities and website, announcements at public meetings, Town newsletter, word of mouth. Information is also provided via the Auburn Village Crier which is a monthly newsletter, delivered to each resident.

Theme D: Local Economy

Strengthened economic, business, and agricultural development that provides local employment and livable wages

D-1 Economic Vitality and Business Development

Goals

- Support sustainable and balanced economic growth and tax base.
- Support broad-based business development that provides local employment and livable wages.

Specific Assessment Questions:

Does your community have an economic development plan?

No. The Town does not have an economic development plan, but the master plan includes some information on the Town's economic base. The Town also has the Auburn Development Authority, which works to bring economic development into Town.

Does your community participate in the Main Street program?

No.

Where does your Master Plan anticipate or specify new nonresidential development to take place?

The Master Plan states that the existing commercial and industrial areas (Northwest and the NH Route 28 Bypass) can accommodate future growth. It also suggests that these areas be considered for expansion prior to identifying any new areas for non-residential development.

Where is most of your community's new commercial or industrial growth occurring?

In the areas identified in the 2002 Master Plan as the Northwest and the NH Route 28 Bypass Planning areas.

Is residential development permitted in retail or commercial areas?

Yes. Residential development is permitted in the C-2 zoning district.

Does the community provide tax incentives for businesses to locate in the community center or other priority areas, e.g. RSA 79E tax relief for downtown improvements?

No

Does the community provide regulatory relief for businesses that locate in the community center?

No

Has the community identified anchors (such as a post office or municipal building) which could be used to spur economic activity within the community center?

The Town Hall, library, school and small-scale commercial and retail establishments are all located within the Village Center.

D-2 Agriculture and Rural Working Landscapes

Goals

- Strengthen local agriculture and forestry by supporting related infrastructure and economic systems.

Specific Assessment Questions:

What strategies for protecting farmland are in your Master Plan?

None. There are no large-scale farming operations in Auburn.

How does the community's Master Plan and zoning ordinance define agriculture?

The Zoning Ordinance defines an agricultural use as: land for the use of cultivating soil, producing farm, forest or horticulture crops/dairy and/or raising livestock, poultry or other farm animals, subject to the restrictions and regulations of the Town of Auburn and State of Health and Sanitary Code and the Best Management Practices as published by the UNH for Animal Husbandry. The agricultural uses are broken down into three categories: Commercial Agriculture, Non-Commercial Agriculture and Produce Stand.

Does the zoning ordinance protect lands appropriate for agriculture and forestry with a substantial minimum lot size that discourages single-family tract housing and preserves large sites for forestry or agricultural uses?

No.

Does the community map the location of farms and prime agricultural soils?

No, but the updated Master Plan will include a map of important farm and forest soils.

Do the ordinances require HISS³ mapping or county soils where on-site septic systems are required?

The subdivision regulations require that soil types and boundaries based upon a site survey or Soil Conservation Service Data be submitted. Where private systems are proposed, the subdivided must perform on-site soil tests.

Does your community have an Agricultural Inventory?

No.

Do your community's ordinances require the mapping of prime soils for agricultural in development proposals?

No.

Does your community have any districts that are restricted for agricultural uses only?

No.

³ HISS stands for high intensity soils mapping, a site-specific requirements for soils analysis.

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Does your community have an agriculture commission?

No.

Does your community reference the right-to-farm law in its zoning ordinance?

No.

Other possible questions to ask the audience during the presentation of results—

How much do you know about CTAP? Would you like to know more?

What planning tools would be helpful to your community?

What did you think of this survey, and how do you think the town could use this information?