

Land use is intimately related to community character. Existing land use patterns that have developed over the years are the result of numerous public and private decisions. These patterns may not conform to the current Plan. Patterns of existing land use will in turn affect the location, type and amount of future growth in the community. How we use land represents the physical expression of our community's values, goals, hopes and dreams. Our homes, businesses and recreational opportunities are all dependent upon land use, in turn making this one of the most important aspects of Newmarket's past, present and future.

Virtually every development-related decision that a community makes will have some impact upon the way the land is used. Other chapters of this Master Plan, which discuss housing, community facilities, transportation and economic development, are all in some way related to land use. Any extension of sewer lines or improved transportation infrastructure affects future land use since availability of this infrastructure expands the type of development that can occur. The State of New Hampshire has recently recognized the importance of its own role in the promotion of sprawling land use patterns, and its obligation to combat detrimental land use patterns. Conversely, as development density increases in certain areas, the demand for roadway improvements and municipal water and sewer also increases. Balancing these needs and visions for the future is the role of the Future Land Use chapter of the Master Plan. This chapter looks at existing patterns, and makes recommendations relating to our current land use patterns and how future decisions and policies may affect them adversely or favorably.

When a community makes a decision related to zoning or infrastructure development, it is establishing land use policy. Therefore, it is most important that there be an overall plan for coordinated land use development in order to make optimum use of this limited resource. This chapter will identify Newmarket's existing land use and examine how it has changed over the past 40 years. This analysis will be reflected in the Future Land Use chapter where recommendations will be made to encourage the type of future growth residents of Newmarket would like to see.

The results of a survey of residents in May 2000 revealed a desire for Newmarket to maintain its small town atmosphere, especially downtown, where development of the mills appears to be the primary concern. Residents were also concerned with keeping residential growth under control, and they responded overwhelmingly in favor of impact fees to accomplish this. Many felt that commercial growth must be encouraged to ease the burdens of the taxpayers, though at the same time echoing the desire for a "small town" atmosphere. Of nearly equal concern were the areas of town under which our water supply is drawn, specifically the aquifer along Route 152. This brought forth consideration of the Town purchasing various parcels of land as open space, though many requested more information on the benefits of this approach to water protection. Overall, it appears that Newmarket residents wish to slow the rate of residential growth, focus on downtown restoration, preserve our water supply, and increase the tax base with suitable commercial growth.

The speed of residential growth, although an understandable focus, is not at the heart of the issues that are causing growing pains for communities in the Seacoast region of New Hampshire. A more impor-

tant focus is to insure carefully planned growth that happens in such a way that there is no significant decline in municipal services or negative impact on the Newmarket community identity. Planning literature sources have coined the term “Smart Growth” for this type of growth. Although the recommendations on these issues can be found in the Future Land Use chapter, this chapter tells where Newmarket is and how we got here.

The manner in which Newmarket has accommodated its substantial non-agricultural growth since the end of World War II has been dependent on the interplay between natural and man-made features. Like all of New England, Newmarket has seen a decrease in agriculture with accompanying reforestation and development. The 1980's saw a further decline in agriculture and a slight decline in forested areas, as residential development increased. Newmarket's recent development pattern - occurring outside the town center - has evolved into three distinct forms of land use that are prevalent throughout the region: strip, sprawl and scattered. These land use forms are defined below.

- **Strip** - A strip development pattern occurs along high volume roadways that radiate out from town centers and population clusters. A continuous mixture of residential housing and commercial development of the stop-and-go variety characterizes strip development. Highway access is the primary factor driving this type of development; however, zoning on the local level is also a factor. Many communities set up commercial zoning districts as strips along major roadways. Rigid frontage and lot size requirements promote development that fits this pattern by limiting flexibility and by leading developers to the most economic choice found in this pattern.

A haphazard location of a variety of land uses can result in potential blight, traffic problems, noise problems, and discourage the effective delivery of municipal services. The extension of public utilities becomes difficult in a strip development pattern, because there is no centralization of development; rather, development extends outward along the roadway. This results in excessive utility costs.

- **Sprawl** - A sprawl development pattern usually begins as a strip development pattern followed by a horizontal or lateral expansion of land uses that extend back from the roadway. Once again, the roadway is the dominant land use influence. This expansion is generally characterized by residential subdivisions; however, commercial and industrial uses may be seen in areas where zoning controls are lacking. The final stage of a sprawl development pattern is the gradual filling in process of the vacant land between the major roads and the collector roads as the urban area continues to radiate outward. Visual attributes that denote sprawl are uses dominated by front area parking, large expanses of parking areas without landscaping, lack of pedestrian scale and amenities, and unbroken building facades running parallel to the roadway. These patterns are found throughout the region in areas that are considered non-attractive and decrease surrounding property values.

A well-planned response to sprawl is not anti-development. The response is thoughtful development that is more attentive to the community, the land, the existing infrastructure and the citizens that will be served by the development. The Future Land Use chapter will outline approaches for Newmarket to consider in addressing the negative impacts of sprawl.

Problems associated with a sprawl development pattern include inefficient traffic circulation arrangements, incompatible land uses, and uncoordinated patches of open, undeveloped land (at least in the early stages), and a decrease in surrounding property values. Examples of this can be seen in subdivisions in the same vicinity, all ending in dead end streets with long cul-de-sacs instead of an integrated road network.

A sprawl development pattern can work with a community's long-range planning effort if properly handled through a comprehensive subdivision review and site planning process. Such a process would ensure the provision of adequate public utilities, a coordinated roadway design and layout, plus public amenities such as parks, active recreation areas, greenbelts and other open spaces which help to break up the monotony of continuous development.

- Scattered - The main feature of a scattered development pattern is that no discernible land use pattern can be seen. Rather, a variety of land uses are scattered over a large, rural area. Areas containing a scattered development pattern are low density in nature and are usually lacking a single, dominant land use feature such as a highway, industry, etc. This development form covers the majority of Newmarket's non-downtown land area. The town remains primarily rural in nature, with various land uses spread out intermittently along the landscape.

Scattered development patterns can lead to incompatible land uses in close proximity to each other. Newmarket has made a concerted effort to separate incompatible land uses into distinct zoning districts and to locate such districts in harmony with the landscape and character of the community.

A visual review of land use patterns in Newmarket shows dispersed residential development along major roadways, but limited commercial strip and sprawl development. NH 108 serves as a limited commercial and residential corridor immediately north and south of the downtown. However, the development pressure predicted for this corridor in the 1994 Master Plan has resulted in an increase in strip development, with the addition of gas stations, a fast food franchise, and a chain drugstore. The addition of needed services such as a pharmacy must be managed carefully, so that the Town can avoid the pitfalls of strip development described above, specifically traffic congestion (both vehicle *and* pedestrian), service issues, unattractiveness and general blight. There are many potential sites for future development along this strip that are currently residential uses or open land. Several homes have already been eliminated for commercial uses along Route 108. Newmarket has not seen much adaptive reuse of these, often, historic buildings.

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A summary of existing land use patterns is presented in Table 3-1 and is represented in the Land Use Map (see Appendix A).

The inventory of Newmarket's existing land use was compiled using digitized, generalized land use information prepared by the Strafford Regional Planning Commission. This data is collected for all communities in the region and was updated in Newmarket in 1993. The data was derived from 1989 Soil Conservation service aerial photos and updated through field checks and revised photo interpretation. In May 1998, the New Hampshire Estuaries Project developed a new map of current land use. This map was developed by updating the previous data through field checks and review of approved and completed residential and commercial developments. The Land Use Map and Table 3.1 depict the following land uses:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Industrial and Commercial Complexes
- Mixed Use
- Government
- Institutional
- Educational
- Recreational
- Indoor Public Assembly
- Cemetery
- Mining (sand and gravel)
- Transportation, Communication and Utilities
- Water/Wastewater Utilities
- Solid Waste Utilities
- Agricultural or Open Non-Forest Land
- Brush or Traditional Forest
- Forest

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TABLE 3.1 EXISTING LAND USE NEWMARKET, 2000

Classification¹	Acres 1994	Percent 1994	Acres 2000	Percent 2000
Single Family Residential	1531	19.1	<i>A</i>	<i>N</i>
Multi-Family Residential	193	2.4	<i>W</i>	<i>E</i>
Mobile Home Parks	27	1.3	<i>A</i>	<i>W</i>
Commercial	10	-	<i>I</i>	
Industrial	106	1.3	<i>T</i>	<i>D</i>
Urban Center/Mixed	143	1.7	<i>I</i>	<i>A</i>
Developed Institutional	33	-	<i>N</i>	<i>T</i>
Public/Recreational	59	-	<i>G</i>	<i>A</i>
Agricultural	798	9.9		
Open Space/Vacant	45	-		
Forest	5084	63.0		

Water 1050 Acres

TOTAL LAND AREA 8031 Acres

Source: Strafford Regional Planning Commission - Regional Land Use Study updated 1993
Land Use Map - 2000.

¹ Generalized Classification System Standards are in Appendix B

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Acres figures given in Table 3.2 show estimated change in each land use category between 1953 and 1982.² Comparative data is provided through 1982 Land Use Survey of Rockingham County, produced by the University of New Hampshire utilizing aerial photos and basic GIS techniques³.

TABLE 3.2 LAND USE ESTIMATES AND CHANGES IN NEWMARKET, 1953 TO 1982

LAND USE	1953		1974		1982		1953-	
	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	1982	%
							Acres	
Agriculture	1980	25.6	1160	15	905	11.7	-1075	-54.4
Developed	595	7.7	1860	24.1	3305	42.8	2710	455.4
Forested	4630	60.0	4415	57.2	2990	38.7	-1640	-35.4
Idle	375	4.8	165	2.1	370	4.7	-5	-1.3
Other	150	1.9	115	1.4	140	1.8	-10	-6.6

Source: 1953-1982 UNH Land Survey of New Hampshire

Data is based upon a 5 acre grid cell sampling outlined in the publication Land Use Change: Rockingham County New Hampshire 1953-1982, published by the NH Agric. Experiment Station, UNH January 1987, Research Report #112

1. ²The UNH land use estimation method differs from that used by SRPC. It is impossible to directly compare land use change data for the entire 1953-1993 period due to these differences. If the UNH authors choose to update their data, this will be used for comparison.
2. The UNH technique used a sampling technique in which aerial photos served as the base map and a five-acre grid overlay was developed. The land use located at the center point of each five-acre parcel was identified and that land was awarded 5 acres. This sampling technique, while omitting land uses under 5 acres, allowed the researchers to measure land use changes over the 23-year period. Although less accurate than the SRPC method, it is the only comparative data available over the decades. The variations between this process and the SRPC method also produce differing total land and water acreages.

3.1 EXISTING LAND USE PATTERNS

As in the case of most New Hampshire mill towns, the village center developed at the power source (the Lamprey River) and has remained relatively unchanged with a decrease seen only in the area of industrial and manufacturing developments. The transition in residential development over the past 20 years has spread from the downtown area to the outer fringes; the Bennett Way/Hersey Lane area (located just south of the Town center) is a new center of apartment and condominium development with 274 units completed and 498 approved. Along with the Sewall Farm subdivision, these two areas have the densest development of single-family units (totaling over 110 homes and 97 condos). By far the greatest surge of residential development in the last 40 years occurred in the 1980's up to 1990; nearly 1,426 new dwelling units accounted for a 76% increase in housing units in that 10 years alone (ref. Chapter V., Housing, Table 5.1). Recent subdivisions include Schanda Drive, Piscassic River Village and Durrell Woods, all off Grant Road, Riverbend and Trotter Park off Packers Falls Road, Ladyslipper Drive at the top of Hersey Lane, Stevens Drive off Bay Road by the Lamprey, Lubberland Creek and the Condominiums at Moody Point and, most recently, Gonet Drive off Dame Road and Winslow Drive off Lang's Lane. This brings the total number of approved and completed homes/condos since 1994 to over 350 units. These and other fringe developments have the potential of using large amounts of forested lands if all approvals are built.

Residential

Residential development accounts for approximately 1531 acres or about 19.1% of Newmarket's total land area. As such, it is the predominant use of developed land. The total area of land that is devoted to residential development in relation to the relative lack of commercial/industrial office acreage suggests that Newmarket is a bedroom community for the surrounding metropolitan area.

Developed

The amount of developed land in Newmarket increased dramatically between 1953 and 1993. It is estimated that Newmarket lost over 54% of its agricultural land in this period. Most of that went into residential development. This trend continued at a much slower rate in the late 1980's and early 1990's. The subdivisions listed have continued the steady transition of agricultural and forested land to residential use. *Table 3.1 shows the acreage of various land use categories in comparison to 1994.*

The recent trend of residential development of single-family homes in the moderate-income range has proven to have little benefit to the tax base. It is in the best interest of the town of Newmarket to implement impact fees to mitigate the burden of this kind of development on the taxpayers.

Commercial/Industrial

Newmarket shows little change in its commercial land use pattern since the 1980's. Newmarket's stagnation in certain types of commercial development has been caused in part by its lack of proximity to a major roadway. However, an increase in development along NH 108 is a harbinger of significant change in that area of town. Historically, Newmarket has generally maintained its pattern of concentrat-

ing commercial use in the downtown area; recent economic prosperity has caused rejuvenation in activity downtown, resulting in the renovation of previously boarded over buildings and beautification of parks and public areas. Newmarket's downtown remains the center for shopping, leisure time and business. Nonetheless, residents are still forced to look outside of town for basic services and amenities, such as groceries and clothing, though a much-needed pharmacy has now been added to the menu of services. The downtown continues to develop a higher percentage of "professional services" and fewer basic needs. Due to the majority of Newmarket's commercial and industrial activity occurring within the urban center/mixed used zone, the current land use coverage offers little descriptive data. Only 116 acres, or less than 2% of the land area, have been identified outside of this mixed-use center for commercial/industrial activity.

Newmarket's pattern for industrial development has gone through major changes during the last twenty years. The changes are represented by the addition of two industrial parks and the decline of manufacturing in the downtown "Mill Area". The addition of the industrial parks broke with the historic pattern of concentrating industrial uses in the heart of urban areas. Now industrial uses are located outside the center of town, while much of the space that had been devoted to industry in the center has been left vacant or converted to residential use. Fortunately, there has been significant progress made in the potential use of the Mill complex. With the ownership of the buildings now with the Newmarket Development Corporation, plans for renovation and redevelopment have begun in earnest. Newmarket's downtown is on the threshold of enormous change, and the management of this change will prove to be the greatest challenge facing Newmarket in the next ten years. Refer to the Future Land Use chapter for specific information regarding the Mill complex.

Forested

All land use information available points to the majority of land in Newmarket remaining predominantly forested or reforested agricultural areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recognize market forces generated by existing land use to develop its vision for future land use patterns.
- Recognize existing businesses and land use patterns contribute to the community's character.
- Recognize that general policy goals and statements regarding the overall community do not necessarily apply to the redevelopment of the mill properties.
- Communicate and meet with other entities that have an impact on existing land use and are assisting in the development and preservation of valuable existing land use patterns. Coordinate efforts and solicit recommendations for future decision-making:
 - The Newmarket Tomorrow Committee
 - The Main Street Committee
 - The Newmarket Business Association
 - The Newmarket Development Corporation