

EXISTING AND FUTURE LAND USE

The Existing and Future Land Use Chapter reviews the public input received during the Master Plan update process related to land use, summarizes existing uses and patterns of land use, describes the current zoning structure and related land use regulations, and provides an overview of potential measures to enhance the town's regulations to both protect and promote appropriate residential and commercial/industrial development.

Bradford embraces its rural history and related land uses, seeks to promote and protect the rural, residential nature of much of the housing stock, and seeks to promote an appropriate mix of residential, commercial and industrial development in the Residential Business District.

A HISTORY OF BRADFORD'S DEVELOPMENT

To understand why Bradford looks the way it does today, it is helpful to review how the town has grown and evolved over time. First settled in 1771 and incorporated in 1787, Bradford was originally settled by people exploring the new frontier. The first settlers found a land of rivers, lakes, and forested hillsides, but they quickly set about taming the land and building small farms.

In 1794 the town voted to make Bradford Center the civic and business center of the town, but development was also taking place in the Corners (now Main Street and Route 114) where roads from Henniker, Warner, and Sutton converged. Less than a mile west of the Corners, the Mills were developed. There Todd Pond provided water power, so mills, a hotel, and homes were built.

The railroad came to Bradford in the mid 1800's and drastically changed the town. In 1800, 740 people lived in Bradford, but the population boomed to 1,341 by 1850. The railroads connected Bradford to Claremont and Concord, which in turn connected New Hampshire to Boston and Canada. Bradford became a summer retreat and several large hotels were built to accommodate visitors who came to Bradford for a summer of recreation.

In 1896, the first cottage settlement was built on Lake Massasecum. This is important because as railroad use declined and automobile ownership increased, the nature of summer visits to Bradford changed. When the railroads brought people to town, visitors would build a community based on the hotels in the center of town. In contrast, when people bought summer cottages and camps in Bradford, they traveled independently and spread out from the town center.

Another great change for Bradford, and other small New Hampshire towns, was the disappearance of small east coast family farms. The Industrial Revolution brought many jobs to cities like Concord and

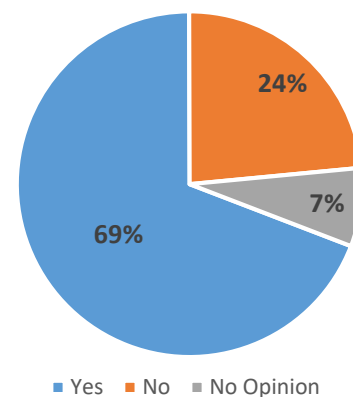
Manchester, and people found they could make a better living in urban areas. In addition, as the west opened up, many farmers left New Hampshire in search of more fertile soil. A nationwide farm depression in the 1920's and the Great Depression in the 1930s also hurt New Hampshire farmers. Bradford's population plummeted from 1,341 people in 1850 to 805 people in 1900, and then only 606 people in 1950.

Since 1950 Bradford's population has increased steadily. In 2000, the population of Bradford was 1,454, slightly higher than in 1850. By 2017 the population was estimated to be 1,668. However, many people work in other towns and cities, making Bradford somewhat of a bedroom community. Bradford also has many seasonal residents who only spend the summers in Bradford. Subsequently, residential land use in Bradford has continued to increase, while the level of commercial and industrial development has increased only marginally. The two main industries that have been in Bradford for some time include mining and timber harvesting. However, farming is no longer a dominant land use in Bradford. Today, Bradford is a small, quiet, primarily residential community, but it will face many growth pressures in the coming years.

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY INPUT

Residents and business owners who responded to the Community Survey and attended the Visioning Session highly value Bradford's rural and historical character, though are concerned about the increasing tax rate with limited new businesses and other offsetting measures being established. Desired commercial establishments include agricultural related businesses, retail shops, arts and craft galleries, and grocery stores, but on a scale that fits with the community's small-town feel. It was noted that the lack of adequate broadband and cell coverage throughout all areas of town is a deterrent for new businesses, and establishing better coverage should be a priority in the future. Since the time of this survey, a tower was activated that increased cellular coverage throughout the area. Currently, commercial and industrial uses are permitted throughout all of Bradford by special exception through the Zoning Board of Adjustment, though nearly 70% of survey respondents were supportive of creating separately zoned area(s) dedicated for these uses. Additionally, 24% were not supportive, and 7% had no opinion. The most desired area for new commercial development is along state owned Route 103 and Route 114, as opposed to the western portions of town which should remain primarily residential.

Should Bradford have separate areas (zones) dedicated for industrial or commercial uses?



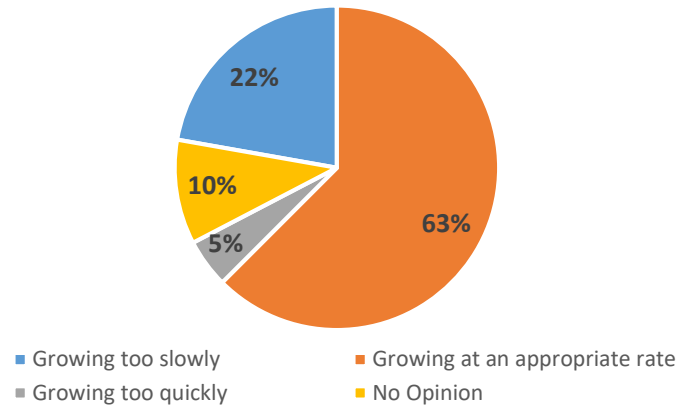
Desire for continued beautification of the downtown area was expressed, including implementation of styling guidelines for new development in the historic districts.

Regarding residential development, 63% of survey participants feel Bradford is growing at an appropriate rate, while 22% feel Bradford is growing too slowly, 5% feel it is growing too quickly, and 10% had no opinion. The majority (55%) were not in favor of establishing a Lake District around Lake Massasecum. The remaining 45% were in favor.

Desired housing styles include single family, elderly and senior housing, conservation subdivisions, and in-law apartments with future development focused on the eastern half of town.

Open spaces and undeveloped lands were also highly valued and priorities should be taken to protect these resources. Other natural resources noted for protection include lakes, rivers, ponds, and other water bodies, aquifers, and fish and other wildlife. Natural recreational opportunities were also highly desired, such as recreational trails and conservation lands.

Which statement best characterizes Bradford's rate of residential growth?



EXISTING LAND USE

With greater accuracy of geographic information system (GIS) technology, the measurement and depiction of municipal geographical attributes can be more easily obtained and analyzed. The NH Office of Strategic Initiative (NH OSI) and the NH GRANIT system estimate the entire acreage of Bradford at 22,994. This figure is comprised of both land acreage (22,549) and water acreage (444.5). For such a small-sized community, within the 27 municipalities of Merrimack County, Bradford ranks an impressive 10th for its water acreage. Since diverse data sources have slightly different data results, the same holds true for a discussion of land use acreages in Bradford, with similar but not identical figures.

From aerial photography and assessing data sources, a more detailed evaluation of the existing land uses in the Town of Bradford enables a view of multiple land use types and how their sizes compare with other land use types. Undeveloped (21,238 acres) lands in town is the highest land use category comprising 92.4% of Bradford's total area. Single Family/Duplex (744 acres) land, representing 3.2% of total area, is the second highest acreage in town, followed by Water (532 acres) at 2.3%, Developed Agriculture (150 acres) at 0.7%, and Road Surface (148 acres or approximately 64.6 miles) at 0.6%. The remaining land use categories fall well under 0.5%. Proportions such as these are indicative of a highly rural community. All findings are displayed in Table 7.1: Existing Land Use.

POTENTIAL CHANGES TO THE RESIDENTIAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The current boundary of the Residential Business District parallels the district highways and streets to a depth of 500 feet, leaving several gaps within the district and splitting several large lots. The **Conceptual Future Land Use Map** provides a snapshot of a proposed extension of the district that encompasses a number of the larger lots as well as the internal gaps. In addition, as described in the Housing Chapter, more varied housing may be promoted with a reduction in lot size and frontage. Finally, a key element in any discussion of additional density in the district is the provision of water quality and quantity.

Table 7.1: Existing Land Use

Land Use	Acreage	Percentage
Single Family/Duplex	744.3	3.2%
Multi-Family	4.3	0.0%
Other Residential	4.0	0.0%
Commercial Retail	25.8	0.1%
Commercial Mix/Other Commercial	24.2	0.1%
Industrial	50.4	0.2%
Institutional	23.7	0.1%
Road Surface	147.5	0.6%
Outdoor Recreation/Developed Parks	24.9	0.1%
Developed Agriculture	150.1	0.7%
Excavation Areas	20.9	0.1%
Cemeteries	1.5	0.0%
Water	532.3	2.3%
Undeveloped	21,237.8	92.4%
Total	22,991.8	100.0%

Source: CNHRPC GIS Land Use Calculations 2019 (See also Land Use and Zoning Map)

Several other land use types are identifiable and noteworthy although their total acreage is small. Industrial (50 acres), all types of Commercial (51 acres), Outdoor Recreation/Developed Parks (25 acres), Institutional (24 acres), and Excavation Areas (21 acres) greatly contribute to the fabric of this rural community.

The Single Family/Duplex (744 acres) lands are found throughout most of Bradford along the town and State Roads. Heavier concentrations of homes include Rowe Mountain Road, the Sunset Hill Road- Hogg Hill Road- Cressy Road triangle, Pleasant View Road, Lake Massasecum community, and Breezy Hill Road.

Commercial Retail and Commercial Mix/Other Commercial (51 acres) locations are found throughout the Residential/Business zone. Most locations are situated along NH 114 and NH 103, yet a few are along High Street, West Main Street, and Old Sutton Road.

The industrial locations in Bradford are found not only within the Residential/Business zone, but also are along Fortune Road, Latvia Lane and Pierce Road.

Developed Agriculture (150 acres) in Bradford is located along Cressy Road, County Road, and Jewett Road, then more sporadically around town along small sections of West Meadow Road, Fairgrounds Road, Howlett Road, Old Coach Road, Center Road, and within the Residential/Business zone along Old Warner Road.

Current and past excavation areas (21 acres) are shown on Pleasant Valley Road, Jones Road, and Marshall Hill Road.

The developed parks of the Outdoor Recreation (25 acres) are mostly situated within the Residential/Business zone where most of the activity of the town takes place.

Undeveloped lands (21,238 acres) comprise the majority of Bradford’s area. With a water area of 532 acres, mostly Lake Massasecum and a small portion of Lake Todd, the town has a wonderful opportunity to maintain its bucolic nature.

ZONING ORDINANCE AND SUBDIVISION/SITE PLAN REVIEW REGULATIONS

The Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment manage land use in Bradford. The Planning Board manages the subdivision and development of land through its zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and site plan review regulations. Some of these regulations are relatively new tools for Bradford. While the subdivision regulations were adopted in 1971, the zoning ordinance and site plan regulations were not adopted until 1989. All have been amended from time to time since they were originally enacted.

ZONING ORDINANCE

The Town of Bradford's zoning ordinance was originally enacted in 1989, and most recently amended in 2017. Zoning ordinances control the way land can be used so that the health, safety and general welfare of the community are protected. Zoning spells out what and where particular uses are allowed within the town. The ordinance sets lot size, frontage and setback requirements, and contains standards for

parking, signs, junk yards, and gravel pits. Bradford has three zoning districts. These districts are described below, and can be seen on the ***Land Use and Zoning Map***.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL USES

Bradford's zoning ordinance requires a Special Exception from the Zoning Board of Adjustment and Site Plan Review from the Planning Board before a commercial or industrial use can be developed within the Residential Rural District.

Without a more specific definition of commercial or industrial uses, or detailed standards or conditions regarding a specific commercial or industrial land use, the existing zoning structure may not adequately protect residential areas within the district from the impact of potentially intensive commercial and industrial operations.

Potential tools to address this issue include the development of a detailed Table of Uses (see discussion on page 7.7) that provides more specifics related to permitted (or not permitted) commercial and industrial uses within the Residential Rural District, and the incorporation of detailed Special Exception Standards for certain uses, notably junkyards. The Zoning Ordinance currently includes specific standards related to kennels.

The Rural Residential zone comprises the majority area of the town, those areas not within the Conservation zone or the Residential/Business zone. The Conservation zone contains forested areas including a section of the tri-town, the Mink Hill area along West and East Dunfield Roads, following down County Road to the Hillsborough/Henniker town line. The Conservation zone contains a second remote, forested area from Deer Valley Road and Old Mountain Road to the Washington town line. The Residential Business zone is located along the entire business area spanning High Street to West Main Street to Old Warner Road, along NH 103 from the Newbury town line to Blaisdell Lake Road, and along NH 114 from the Newbury town line to the southern entrance of Pleasant Valley Road. A few other spurs, such as Jones Road, complete the denser Residential Business zone.

RESIDENTIAL RURAL DISTRICT

This zoning district applies to all areas outside of the town center and at elevations lower than 1,200 feet. Permitted uses in this district are single-family housing, cluster residential development, home businesses, and bed and breakfast establishments. Uses permitted by Special Exception include commercial and industrial development.

Dimensional Requirements for lots in this district are one dwelling per two buildable acres (10 acres for cluster development), 250’ of road frontage, 30’ side and rear setbacks from adjacent properties, a front setback of 50’ from the edge of the right of way or 75’ from the center of an accepted public road, whichever is greater, and a maximum structure height of 35’.

The Residential Rural District is the largest district in Bradford as show in Table 8.1 below.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

This zoning district applies to areas which are above 1,200 feet in elevation. The intent of this zone is to minimize development density so open spaces, forest resources, recreational opportunities, and scenery can be preserved. Permitted uses in this district are (residential) cluster development, single-family housing, forestry, and agriculture.

Dimensional requirements for lots in this district are a minimum of 5 acres (10 buildable acres for cluster development), 400’ of road frontage, 30’ side and rear setbacks from adjacent properties, a front setback of 50’ from the edge of the right of way or 75’ from the center of an accepted public road, whichever is greater, and a maximum structure height of 35’.

RESIDENTIAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

This zoning district applies to most of the town center. Permitted uses in this district are single-family and multi-family dwellings, bed and breakfast establishments, home businesses, and commercial and industrial developments. Mining and excavation uses are also allowed as per the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and RSA 155-E.

Dimensional requirements for lots in this district are one dwelling or business per two buildable acres, 250’ of road frontage, 30’ side and rear setbacks from adjacent properties, a front setback of 50’ from the edge of the right of way or 75’ from the center of an accepted public road, whichever is greater, and a maximum structure height of 35’.

Table 7.1: Bradford Zoning Districts

Zoning District	Acres	Percentage
Conservation District	5,950	23.5%
Residential Business District	740	3.1%
Residential Rural District	16,775	71.5%
Total	22,994	100%

Source: Bradford Zoning Ordinance

In addition to the three zones, Bradford’s zoning ordinance also contains essentially three overlay zones: the floodplain development, wetlands, and shoreland protection ordinances. The floodplain development ordinance, which was adopted in 1988, applies to any development proposed within flood hazard areas. Overlay zones add additional regulations to those that exist in the underlying zone for the purpose of preserving natural features or achieving unique goals. The wetlands ordinance was adopted in 1989 to protect wetland areas. The Shoreland Protection Act is a state law that has been incorporated in the Bradford zoning ordinance. The Shoreland Protection Act governs development in certain shoreland areas. In all cases, the more restrictive regulation prevails. The zoning ordinance also addresses workforce housing (see the Housing Chapter), sign regulation and rules for the development of telecommunication facilities.

SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

Bradford’s subdivision regulations were authorized by Town Meeting in 1971, and last updated in 2014. When a property owner subdivides one parcel of land to create two or more new parcels, approval must be sought from the Planning Board. The purpose of the subdivision regulations is to ensure the orderly and harmonious development of the town and to prevent scattered or premature development that could impact the health, safety, and general welfare of the community. The subdivision regulations outline survey requirements for subdivisions and other lot adjustments, legal processes, and requirements for road construction.

SITE PLAN REVIEW REGULATIONS

The Town of Bradford’s site plan review regulations were authorized by Town Meeting in 1989, and last updated in 2009. The Site Plan Review Regulations apply to the development or expansion of non-residential uses and multi-unit dwellings (defined as any structure containing more than two dwelling units). The site plan regulations also apply to the application of sewage sludge. The purpose of the regulations, as they relate to new developments and expansions, is to ensure that sites are developed in a manner that protects the environment, does not negatively affect other property owners, and is safe and attractive.

Bradford’s site plan review involves examination of issues such as building layout and appearance, natural and man-made features, screening, safety, environmental impacts and effects on community

ZONING ORDINANCE TABLE OF USES

A community’s zoning ordinance typically provides a general description of the uses that are permitted in each zone, and, to what extent (i.e. by right, by exception, etc.) these uses are permissible. While these descriptions provide direction and clarity about what is permitted in each zone, a table of uses is an effective and useful tool that can more clearly define the descriptions of those uses.

A table of uses is literally a chart that describes what use is permitted in each zoning district, but instead of describing a use only as “commercial” or “industrial,” it actually specifically details the types of uses within each of the use categories. Usually in the form of a matrix, uses considered to be “residential” would be defined as single family, duplex, multi-family, and accessory dwelling units under the vertical column, and reading left to right the table would indicate if each specific use would be by right or by special exception. “Commercial” uses would be broken up in a similar manner: retail sales, personal service, restaurants, storage facility, kennels, etc.

Including a table of uses in the zoning ordinance can be an effective mechanism that efficiently conveys specific guidance succinctly to all parties as to whether a particular use is permitted, and in what way.

character. The regulations outline standards for buffers, screening, parking, pedestrian access, erosion and sediment control, lighting, street access, water supply, sewage disposal, and flood hazard areas. They also explain the procedures for plan submission and review.

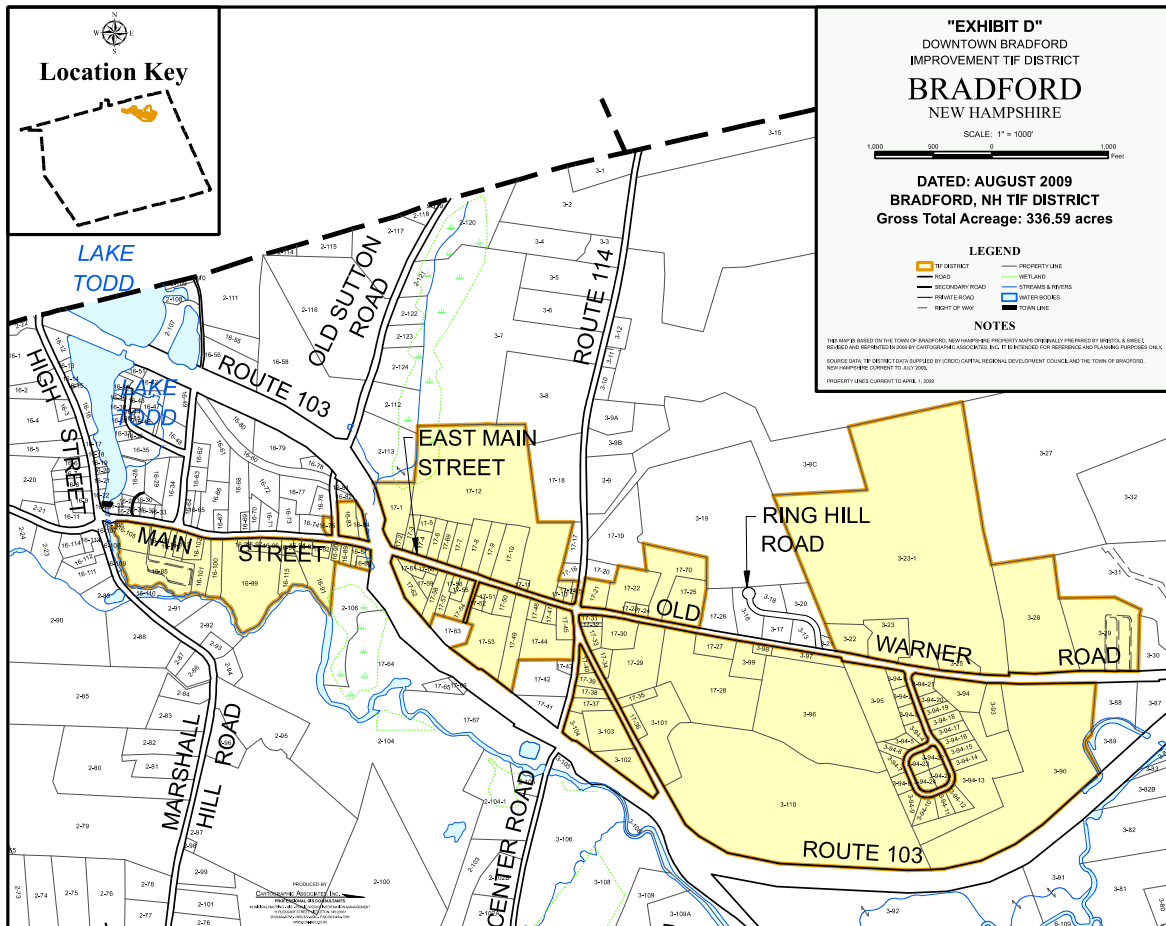
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

Several tools are available in New Hampshire which provide a mechanism for financing local improvements (Tax Increment Finance or TIF Districts) or provide either local property tax relief or New Hampshire Business Profits Tax credits. The following is a summary of these programs, two of which have been approved to date for use in Bradford.

BRADFORD TAX INCREMENT FINANCE (TIF) DISTRICT

In 2009, the town approved the establishment of the downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District to assist in the development of the downtown retail and commercial area of the community. The TIF district is shown below in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1: Downtown Bradford TIF District



Essentially, the development of a TIF supports the funding of specific improvements meant to improve and revitalize a specific area of town. While the TIF has not yet been implemented, the purpose was described as providing a portion of the funding for potential pedestrian and bicycle related

THE ROLE OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

It takes a great deal of effort and momentum to undertake an appropriate level of economic development in a small community. The EDC can take the lead in promoting the use of the Community Revitalization Tax Incentive, the possible future use of the TIF district, and the potential identification of local Economic Revitalization Zones as described above. In addition, the EDC can provide input on the future of the Residential Business District, especially in relation to water issues and the potential for the redevelopment of the Naughton Property. Other key issues include the promotion of improved broadband and cellular services.

improvements as part of a larger effort funded through grants and local funding. Any development costs (for example, a sidewalk project funded by a 20 year bond) undertaken through the program would be funded by the increase of the tax valuation within the TIF district. The TIF district remains in place, and expires in 2029 unless extended by Town Meeting vote.

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION TAX RELIEF INCENTIVE (NH RSA 79-E)

The use of the Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive was approved at 2016 Town Meeting. Following that approval, the Board of Selectmen have the authority to delay any *increase* in

taxes for property owners in the Residential Business District if they replace or substantially rehabilitate their property. Its goal is to encourage the rehabilitation and active reuse of under-utilized buildings.

The program works in the following manner:

- A property owner who wants to substantially rehabilitate a building located in a designated district may apply for a period of temporary tax relief.
- The temporary tax relief, if granted, would consist of a finite period of time (1 to 5 years) during which the property tax on the structure would not increase as a result of its substantial rehabilitation. In exchange for the relief, the property owner grants a covenant ensuring there is a public benefit to the rehabilitation.
- Following expiration of the tax relief period, the structure would be taxed at its full market value taking into account the rehabilitation.

As noted above, the Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive Zone encompasses the entirety of the Residential Business District. It has been utilized several times since the 2016 approval, and could continue to be a strong tool for promoting investment in the Residential Business District.

ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION ZONES (ERZs)

The Economic Revitalization Zone (ERZ) program is enabled in the State of New Hampshire through NH RSA 162-N. The program allows municipalities to establish certain zones in a community where a business can then seek a credit on its New Hampshire Business Profits Tax. To establish a zone or zones, the town may apply to the program (administered by the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development) following a process outlined in NH RSA 162-N:8. The ERZ program currently has \$825,000 available per year for tax credits throughout the State of New Hampshire.

To be eligible for the program, a designated zone must meet one of the following requirements:

- (a) Unused or underutilized industrial parks; or
- (b) Vacant land or structures previously used for industrial, commercial or retail purposes but currently not so used due to demolition, age, relocation of the former occupant's operations, obsolescence, deterioration, brownfields, or cessation of operation resulting from unfavorable economic conditions either generally or in a specific economic sector.

A potential location for an ERZ within a potentially expanded Residential Business District is identified on the ***Conceptual Future Land Use Map***.

SUMMARY

The Existing and Future Land Use Chapter reviews the history of Bradford's development, summarizes community input, and provides a summary of existing land uses throughout town. Of key importance is the interest in retaining the Town's rural nature while promoting an appropriate mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses in the Residential Business District. In addition, key provisions of the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations and Site Plan Review Regulations are summarized, and available economic development tools as well as the role of the economic development committee are outlined. Finally, a number of recommendations related to potential regulatory changes and the use of available economic development tools are outlined, including potential changes to the Residential Business District and the development of a detailed Zoning Ordinance Table of Uses.

OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OBJECTIVE 1: Consider revisions to the Zoning Ordinance which seek to protect Bradford's rural character while allowing desirable development.

- Consider reductions to frontage and buildable lot size requirements in the Residential Business District. Consider the modification of boundaries for greater depth within existing zone.
- Develop a Table of Uses by Zoning District to better protect existing residential areas from incompatible uses, which can adversely impact both the quality of life and property values.
- Consider the development of specific Special Exception criteria or supplemental regulations for certain commercial/industrial uses, including junkyards.
- Consider the use of the Cluster Residential Development option by offering a density bonus for agricultural land protection, forest management, protection of views, trail development, and the protection of additional open space.

OBJECTIVE 2: Continue to protect Bradford's open space and natural resources as outlined in the Natural Resources Chapter.

- Develop and adopt an Aquifer Protection Overlay District that will prohibit or restrict new potential contamination sources from infiltrating the district.
- Continue to promote agriculture and related uses and support the protection of important agricultural resources.

- Consider the use of Density Transfer Credits to redirect development from areas of high ecological value to areas that are more appropriate for higher development densities.

OBJECTIVE 3: Utilize existing and potential economic development tools and incentives to support sustainable economic development efforts in Bradford.

- Support the work of the Bradford Economic Development Committee to promote Bradford's economic base and utilize existing and potential economic development tools. Key tasks of the EDC can include:
 - Explore issues related to water quality and quantity in the Residential Business District.
 - Advertise available commercial properties through the use of the SelectNH.com web portal.
 - Explore the opportunity to reuse the Naughton Property (See the Housing Chapter).
 - Continue to examine options for improved broadband and cell coverage throughout Bradford.
- Promote the availability of the NH RSA 79-E Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive throughout the Residential Business District.
- Consider the designation of specific underutilized commercial areas as an Economic Revitalization Zone (ERZ).
- Revisit the use of the 2009 Tax Increment Finance (TIF) zone.