

Master Plan Update



Somersworth, New Hampshire

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An Introduction to the Master Plan Update

Somersworth's last Master Plan was completed in 2000. Since that time there has been much change in the City resulting from significant investment by both the private sector and by the City itself.

City Has Undergone Significant Change Since Last Master Plan

The City has recently been undergoing significant development and redevelopment that is indicative of the various social and economic opportunities that Somersworth provides. These activities have included:

- Re-location of City Hall into a renovated bank building and reusing old City Hall for the Somersworth Historical Society museum;
- Re-location of the Police Department into a new modern, more efficient building;
- Renovation of a riverside mill building into over 50 residential units and a variety of small businesses;
- Expansion of retail development along the southern section of the High Street corridor and numerous medical offices/facilities along Route 108;
- Establishing a connector road from High Street to Route 108;
- Development of business parks such as Gator Rock Industrial Park and Enterprise Drive;
- New recreational opportunities such as the Oaks Golf Course and the Willand Pond recreational facility;
- Upgrades to the wastewater treatment and water treatment facilities; and
- Land acquisition for conservation purposes (Salmon Falls Road, Cook Road, etc.).

City Establishes Vision 2020 Committee and Initiates Master Plan Update

There are a number of challenges still facing the City including the continued revitalization of the downtown, protection and management of its open spaces and natural resources and provision of an efficient transportation system.

In recognition of these and other challenges and the potential for positive future change, the City set aside funding for an update to the 2000 Master Plan by developing a "Growth and Development Strategy". Subsequently, the City Council appointed a Vision 2020 Committee to guide a process toward a more vital and vibrant Somersworth with following guiding principles:

- Translating strategic goals into practical plans;

- Encompassing a comprehensive revitalization plan for community-wide improvements;
- Examining ways to revitalize economic growth;
- Facilitating a community conversation to develop a road map toward a sustainable Somersworth;
- Striving towards excellence in the City’s public education system; and
- Promoting tolerance and diversity for all.

It soon became apparent that the Vision 2020 Committee could act as the “Sounding Board” for the Master Plan Update. In cooperation with City staff and the planning consulting team, it was decided that the first step in the process should be a community-wide forum to gauge the sentiment of the community about its assets and challenges.

City Holds Public Forum to Hear from the Public

On March 21, 2009 the City held a public forum to allow residents to identify and rank in importance the City’s strengths and challenges. Based on the forum discussions there were several themes that emerged and a number cut across both strengths and challenges. The top ranked strengths included:

1. Good location—between 2 hospitals, near ocean, & mountains,
2. Salmon Falls River—history and potential
3. Development/redevelopment of waterfronts
4. Strong sense of history
5. Strong sense of community with involved citizens

The top five challenges included:

1. Sustainable development
2. Downtown draw & better appearance of downtown
3. Downtown revitalization
4. High level of absentee landlords on residential properties
5. Increase citizen involvement

Based on these results, the participants recognized that while development and redevelopment on the downtown waterfront has been an asset, the challenge still remains to improve the quality of downtown as well as to continue downtown revitalization. The participants also recognized that Somersworth has a strong sense of community and involvement, but that it will be a challenge to increase citizen involvement in the community.

City Conducts Charrette to Focus on Downtown Revitalization

On September 12, 2009 the City conducted an all day Charrette to focus on strategies to improve and revitalize Somersworth downtown. This process involved a major citizen input session in the morning with a team of planning and design professionals. This team then spent the next 5-

6 hours coming up with recommended policies and projects that could be implemented by the City with the purpose of revitalizing the downtown. Some of the proposed actions and conceptual plans included:

- A waterfront walkway along the Salmon Falls
- Redesigning the downtown Shopping Plaza to establish a presence on Main Street
- Capturing “1 in 20” cars on High Street to stop/shop in downtown
- Specific zoning changes, and
- Model streetscape and mini park design

Many of these recommendations became part of the Growth and Development Strategy.

Acknowledgements

This Master Plan Update was the result of the effort of many individuals in the city and included:

Vision 2020 Committee

Matt Hanlon, School Board Representative, Chair
Jennifer Soldati, Citizen Representative, Vice Chair
Rene Philpot, Appointed by Chamber of Commerce
Dana Hilliard, Citizen Representative
Jonathan McCallion, City Council Representative
George Snyder, Planning Board Representative
Peter Houde, School Board Representative
Superintendent Karen Soule, SAU 56
Harry Irwin, ZBA Representative

City Staff

Robert Belmore*, City Manager
Craig Wheeler*, Director of Development Services
David Sharples, City Planner
Tracy Gora, Administrative Assistant

* Also Vision 2020 Committee

The following document represents an update of the City’s 2000 Master Plan and that its main feature is the Growth and Development Strategy.

A Vision for Somersworth—2020

Somersworth will be a vibrant and highly sought after community in which to live, work and play that celebrates its history, culture, diversity and industrial roots.

Goals

To make the vision a reality, the City will aggressively pursue the following goals:

1. Make the downtown a livable, walkable, vibrant focal point for the city and region that is physically attractive, socially and culturally energized and offers the opportunity for a diversity of business activity.
2. Take a leadership role to build a sustainable community for current and future generations.
3. Actively manage growth that is consistent with the city's vision and master plan and provides for a balance of residential, recreational, business, industrial and institutional activities.
4. Preserve and protect its open space and natural resources in balance with economic, business and employment opportunities for its citizens.
5. Promote business development that encourages entrepreneurs, locally-based businesses and quality employment opportunities for all.
6. Grow great neighborhoods that provide a variety of housing opportunities to accommodate its diverse citizenry while respecting the city's natural and cultural heritage.
7. Strive for educational excellence.
8. Offer a variety of recreational opportunities for all age groups.
9. Provide a variety of transportation facilities and services including auto, pedestrian, bicycle and rail that connect the city's neighborhoods, businesses and services to the community and region, in concert with regional plans and opportunities.
10. Provide community services in an efficient and effective manner.

11. Identify and preserve buildings, streetscapes, individual sites and open spaces that contribute to the unique historic character and cultural assets of Somersworth.

A Growth & Development Strategy

To achieve the vision and implement the goals the following objectives are recommended:

Goal 1: Make the downtown a livable, walkable, vibrant focal point for the city and region that is physically attractive, socially and culturally energized and offers the opportunity for a diversity of business activity.

1.1. Continue an aggressive program to upgrade the streetscape and public infrastructure to make the downtown an attractive place to live, visit, work and do business. These upgrades will be comprehensive and include:

- Street furniture
- Street trees and landscaping
- Well designed and landscaped mini-parks that serve as visual focal points at important locations throughout the downtown and particularly at major entry points
- Sidewalks and street pavement
- Traffic calming
- Historically appropriate façade improvements
- Pedestrian and bicycle enhancements

1.2. Consider establishing a tax increment financing or betterment district to help fund downtown improvements.

1.3. Adopt downtown specific design standards that ensure all buildings fit the architectural scale and historic character of the downtown and nearby buildings. Explore the possibility of zoning that emphasizes appropriate building design rather than just permitted uses (e.g., a form based code).

1.4. Develop a clear signage/wayfinding system that is attractive and guides residents and visitors into and through the downtown. Such a system would provide:

- Gateway signage
- Parking and directional signs
- Private business signage that is consistent with the historic architectural character of the downtown.



- 1.5. Undertake short-term projects that will improve the quality of the downtown environment and celebrate its heritage including:
 - Community plantings in strategic locations through collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, the SHS vocational program and Strafford County Cooperative Extension. This could be an expansion of the Adopt-A-Spot Program.
 - Creating a program for public art that would continue the mural project on Constitutional Avenue.
 - Placing historic interpretive signs/markers in appropriate location through a collaboration of the Somersworth Historical Society, the City of Somersworth and private businesses.
 - Undertaking a “gateway” design competition that would be specific to the entrance to the downtown at the Berwick Bridge Crossing and the intersection of High Street and Washington Street.

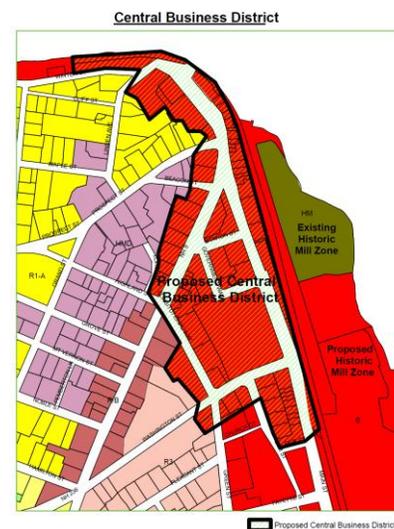
- 1.6. Develop a long term marketing strategy that establishes a distinct identity and image for the downtown. This strategy will include:

- Developing a logo that captures the spirit and energy of the “new” Somersworth
- Preparing website and promotional materials that “sell” downtown Somersworth
- Empowering local artisans and others to provide events and activities that enrich the culture of the community
- Encouraging downtown uses that provide activities for all ages

- 1.7. Employ incentives and innovative zoning techniques to encourage the full utilization and revitalization of existing buildings and encourage infill buildings where there are gaps in the streetscape.

- Explore adopting the provisions of RSA 79-E – the downtown revitalization tax relief incentive program to incentivize downtown development and redevelopment.
- Amend zoning to encourage more mixed uses and full reuse of existing structures. Specifically:

- a. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include a new downtown zone between Washington Street and High Street bordered by Main and Constitution that would be a mixed use Central Business District



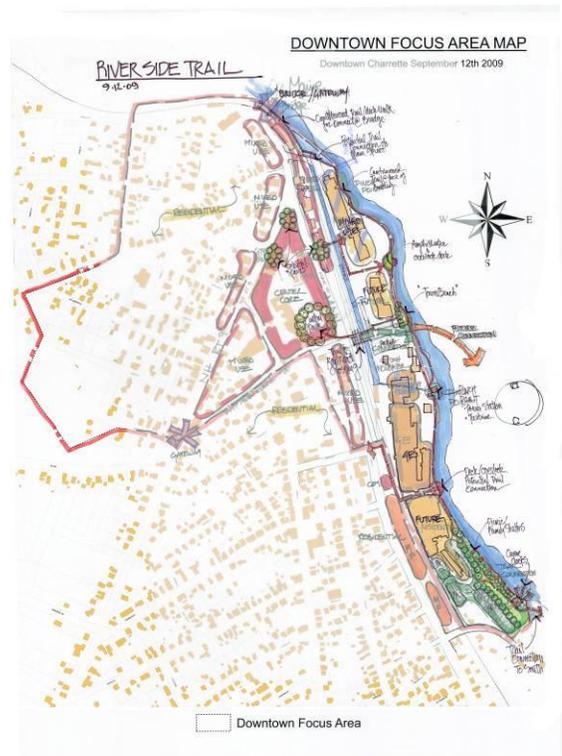
- b. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to extend the Historic Millyard District south between the railroad and the Salmon Falls River to approximately Depot Street

1.8. Actively pursue the growth and enhancement of diverse retail activities that serve residents of all ages and encourage through-travelers to stop and buy goods and services.

- Establish a campaign: “Capture 1 in 20 vehicles to buy downtown!”
- Identify programs/promotions/design features to compel individuals to shop downtown Somersworth
- Work with downtown businesses to develop and implement a collective downtown business advertising campaign
- Consider establishing a one-way traffic pattern between Main, High and Washington Streets to reduce downtown congestion and enhance the visibility and commercial viability of businesses on Main and Washington Streets.

1.9. Promote downtown vitality by encouraging and maintaining a vibrant mix of uses that ensure a balance of daytime and evening activity while preserving the quality of life for downtown residents.

- Encourage locally-owned and unique businesses that foster the creative economy
- Strengthen the mix of retail uses.
- Seek out and work with businesses and enterprises that provide opportunities for young college educated individuals.
- Provide zoning and other incentives in the downtown for developers to provide exhibit and performance spaces.



1.10. Prepare a Salmon Falls River Riverfront Plan from the Berwick Bridge to the municipal boundary with Rollinsford that:

- Encourages maximum public access,
- Ensures appropriate public use of the riverfront area, and
- Recognizes the needs of the property owners and the City of Somersworth.

1.11 Establish an active program for downtown business retention.

- Continue to communicate with GE about future plans and workforce requirements. Explore a partnership with GE to establish a technology center and/or incubator space for emerging businesses in the current vacant areas of the GE buildings. (e.g., NH-CDFA tax credit to GE for real estate donation against their Business Profits Taxes?)
- Explore the potential for a relationship/partnership between GE and UNH Industrial Research Center (a “Measurement Science Center”) to explore mutually beneficial new technologies and opportunities.
- Meet regularly with other downtown businesses to ensure that their business needs are being met.

1.12 Continue to encourage and undertake major capital projects and revitalization efforts through grants, public money and private initiative to create value and opportunity in the downtown. In the short term these include:

- Context sensitive design and construction of the Berwick Bridge
- Renovation of the former police building

Longer term these should include:

- Vehicular and pedestrian access to the riverfront from the downtown such as at Washington Street,
- Renovation and reuse of the vacant mill buildings,
- Revitalization of the downtown Somersworth Plaza to encourage new buildings directly on Main Street that add a mix of retail, office and residential opportunities with building designs that are compatible with the historic character of Main Street.



Goal 2: Take a leadership role to build a sustainable community for current and future generations.

2.1 Lead by example – seek to make city government services as energy efficient and sustainable as possible.

- Continue ongoing efforts to reduce energy consumption in municipal buildings that provide a reasonable return on the dollars invested. Pursue programs to make city operations more energy efficient—including vehicle right-sizing and usage.

- Reduce, reuse and recycle materials used to conduct city business wherever it is financially practical.
- 2.2 Develop and implement a community energy improvement and sustainability program to:
- Continue to apply the building energy standards established by the current version of the energy code established by the International Code Council.
 - Seek ways to reduce light and noise pollution and incorporate natural landscape practices that use native species and mitigate stormwater runoff.
 - Encourage all residents, businesses and city departments to reduce energy consumption by at least 10% over 2000 levels by 2020
 - a. Identify goals for reducing water consumption, limiting waste production, improving energy efficiency, and reducing fossil fuel consumption.
 - b. Provide guidance for municipal departments and facilities on methods and techniques for incorporating environmental practices into municipal projects.

Such a program could be through a collaboration of the city with local businesses, the ICLEI (International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives)-Local Governments for Sustainability, and Clean Air-Cool Planet.

- Explore local renewable energy production opportunities including hydro, solar and biomass.
 - Build and maintain transportation infrastructure that encourages non-vehicular travel (i.e., walking and bicycling) particularly in neighborhoods.
 - Actively promote use of public transportation and alternative means of transportation.
- 2.3 Explore establishing programs that encourage the use of locally produced goods and products that use local resources and can be marketed locally and outside Somersworth.
- Promote local food production and sales through a program of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and a farmers market that includes artisans and other local products.
 - Explore a visible long term location to hold a farmers market.
 - Establish a program to encourage the purchase of local goods and services.
 - Audit the zoning and land use regulations to ensure that there are no barriers to agricultural activity.
- 2.4 Recognize the shift in the traditional business model that will rely on a “knowledge economy and creative economy”

- Consider a program to build a Wi-Fi network throughout the City
- Ensure that city and business institutions are prepared to work with businesses that are small and entrepreneurial in nature.
- Support the “eCoast” initiative to promote the Seacoast area for entrepreneurial businesses.

Goal 3: Actively manage growth that is consistent with the city’s vision and master plan and provides for a balance of residential, recreational, business, industrial and institutional activities.

3.1 Implement regulatory amendments that are consistent with the master plan and the state’s policy for “Smart Growth”. Such regulatory amendments should contribute to a sustainable Somersworth and work to have new development:

- Minimize impervious cover and the generation of stormwater runoff volume,
- Protect surface waters, wetlands and natural drainage areas from development,
- Use native vegetated plantings for landscape materials,
- Establish an ongoing street tree planting and replanting program, and
- Encourage more compact development forms.

3.2 Promote a Corridor Improvement Program for High Street (between the Dover City line and Blackwater Road) that improves the environmental and aesthetic quality of the corridor consistent with Somersworth’s community character and considers:

- Existing zoning,
- Dimensional requirements,
- Building design and landscape standards,
- Upgrades to all street infrastructure including street and sidewalk pavement, drainage, landscaping and signage within the public right-of-way,
- Strategic locations for landscaping improvements to improve the aesthetics and increase pedestrian-friendliness of the corridors,
- Parking—amount and location; including encouraging the placement of parking areas behind or beside buildings, and
- Access management.

3.3 Encourage development of high quality professional offices and complementary mixed uses along defined major corridors such as Route 108 and High Street.

Goal 4: Preserve and protect open space and natural resources in balance with economic, business and employment opportunities for its citizens.

- 4.1 Prepare an Open Space Plan that that prioritizes parcels for acquisition and preservation, assesses the most appropriate uses for City-owned parcels, and explores greenway linkage opportunities between these parcels.
- 4.2 Review and revise the city’s development regulations to ensure that important natural resource areas are adequately protected from development Such regulations could:
 - Require the design of stormwater management systems to minimize impact to water quality and maximize habitat value.
 - Minimize runoff by using infiltration devices and permeable pavements.
 - Limit impervious surfaces and maximize green spaces.
- 4.3 Recognize the role of water resources for drinking water, recreational opportunities and providing an aesthetic/cultural quality to the community.
 - Continue to work closely with the City of Dover and the NH DES to restore the water quality of Willand Pond and the natural integrity of the adjacent shorelands and wetland resource areas.
 - Identify and promote a “green infrastructure” of interconnected natural resources that includes important shorelands, wetlands, wildlife habitat and flood prone areas. Such an infrastructure can be implemented through both regulatory and non-regulatory means such as acquiring conservation easements and fee acquisition of key properties
- 4.4 Seek grants and open space protection partners to acquire important open spaces and natural resource areas.



Goal 5: Promote business development that encourages entrepreneurs, locally-based businesses and quality employment opportunities for all.

- 5.1 Continue to encourage the establishment of business incubator space in Somersworth as opportunities arise – potentially in downtown mills spaces - to support new startup businesses. (See also Strategy 1.9)
- 5.2 Seek to retain and attract businesses that provide quality jobs and improved tax base. (See also Strategy 1.11)

Goal 6: Grow great neighborhoods that provide a variety of housing opportunities to accommodate its diverse citizenry while respecting the city's natural and cultural heritage.

- 6.1 Examine the possibility for revising the city's zoning ordinance to provide for more compact, affordable residential development that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. (See also Strategy 3.1)
- 6.2 Encourage greater opportunities for homeownership and owner occupied rental properties.
- 6.3 Explore the use of flexible zoning techniques to negotiate creative mixed use housing in association with commercial development and redevelopment. (See also Strategy 1.6)
- 6.4 Continue to be a member of Tree City USA and to plant street trees city-wide.
- 6.5 Promote walkable neighborhoods by providing sidewalks, trails and public recreation.

Goal 7: Strive for educational excellence.

- 7.1 Continue to properly maintain and upgrade school facilities to ensure that there is a positive and safe physical learning environment for all students.
- 7.2 Provide challenging programs and curricula for grades 1-12 to ensure that Somersworth's students are well educated and are capable of meeting the challenges of today and the future.
- 7.3 Ensure students have access to high technology programs and equipment to prepare for the Technology Age.
- 7.4 Ensure that there are adequate post-secondary educational opportunities, including adult education, that meet the needs of the community.

Goal 8: Offer a variety of recreational opportunities for all age groups.

- 8.1 Periodically examine the city's recreational resources and seize opportunities to upgrade/expand recreational areas that are geographically distributed throughout the city based on master plan recommendations.
- 8.2 Expand recreational opportunities along the Salmon Falls River. (See also Strategy 1.10)

- 8.3 Continue to consult with teen groups and seek their input regarding their specific interests.

Goal 9: Provide a variety of transportation facilities and services including auto, bus, pedestrian, bicycle and rail that connect the city’s neighborhoods, businesses and services to the community and region, in concert with regional plans and opportunities.

- 9.1 Consider development of a city-wide bicycle and pedestrian plan.
- 9.2 Continue to encourage the provision of adequate sidewalks for pedestrians and paved shoulders for bicycles on all streets in and near the downtown.
- 9.3 Seek to enhance the main travel corridors into the city to act as attractive “gateways” by providing proper signage, street trees, and focal point landscaping. (See also Strategy 3.2.)
- 9.4 Revise subdivision regulations to require new commercial and residential development to contain a more interconnected street network to facilitate vehicular and non-vehicular movement to and through development.
- 9.5 Consider updating the City’s Street Standards to reflect current design practices and conditions. The standards should reflect unique requirements related to:
- Historic districts,
 - Residential subdivision,
 - Roadway functional classification and design speed, and
 - Commercial/industrial areas versus residential areas
- 9.6 Review site plan, zoning and subdivision ordinances to make them more bicycle-friendly including bicycle parking requirements, roadway design standards, and easements/right-of-way for bicycle and pathway projects

Goal 10: Provide community services in an efficient and effective manner.

- 10.1 Explore creative funding tools to implement needed master plan and capital improvements recommendations. These tools may include tax increment financing districts, betterment districts, impact fees, the downtown revitalization tax relief incentive program made available through RSA 79-E as well as state and federal funding opportunities.
- 10.2 Continue to pursue best management practices for all city operations.
- 10.3 Continuously engage the community in establishing priorities for provision of services and physical improvements.

Goal 11: Identify and preserve buildings, streetscapes, individual sites and open spaces that contribute to the unique historic character and cultural assets of Somersworth.

11.1 Continue to pursue completion of the detailed historic resource inventory and

11.2 Upon completion of the historic resource inventory, prioritize issues of concern for continued historic preservation, regulatory protection, and possible designations to the National Register of Historic Places. Funding for this effort should be pursued using Certified Local Government (CLG) funds from the NH Division of Historic Resources.

11.3 Develop a program to preserve and enhance the City's neighborhoods and cultural qualities. Such a program could:

- Expand and support spaces for cultural activities and events, including affordable space for artists and venues and space for performances, public art and exhibitions. (See also Strategy 1.4.)
- Include young people in arts and cultural opportunities in educational, recreational, and social settings.
- Engage businesses with the arts and cultural community.



Growth & Development Strategy Implementation Matrix City of Somersworth, NH		Revised	2/2/2010				
<p>The following program has been prepared to assist the City in the process of implementing the Growth & Development Strategy. The implementation program organizes the strategies by each of the eleven goals and identifies the entities that will have the lead responsibility for carrying out the actions. The program also identifies a time period or priority for implementation. The following are the time periods for implementation:</p> <p>Ongoing (O) - Actions which are continuous or are already being carried out Immediate (I) - Actions which should be undertaken in 1-2 years Short Term (S) - Actions which should be undertaken within 3-5 years Long Term (L) - Actions which will take more than 5 years to be initiated or completed.</p>						** Key to abbreviations at bottom of matrix	
VISION <i>Somersworth will be a vibrant and highly sought after community in which to live, work and play that celebrates its history, culture, diversity and industrial roots.</i>							
		Priority	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Source	Responsible Party	Community Partners	Status
Goal 1	Make the downtown a livable, walkable, vibrant focal point for the city and region that is physically attractive, socially and culturally energized and offers the opportunity for a diversity of business activity.						
1.1	Continue an aggressive program to upgrade the streetscape and public infrastructure to make the downtown an attractive place to live, visit, work and do business. These upgrades will be comprehensive and include: Street furniture, Street trees and landscaping, Well designed and landscaped mini-parks that serve as visual focal points at important locations throughout the downtown and particularly at major entry points, Sidewalks and street pavement, Traffic calming, Historically appropriate façade improvements, Pedestrian and bicycle enhancements.	O/I			DPW/DDS		
1.2	Consider establishing a tax increment financing or betterment district to help fund downtown improvements. Adopt downtown specific design standards that ensure all buildings fit the architectural scale and historic character of the downtown and nearby buildings. Explore the possibility of zoning that emphasizes appropriate building design rather than just permitted uses (e.g., a form based code).	I			CC/DDS		
1.3	Develop and maintain a clear signage/wayfinding system that is attractive and guides residents and visitors into and through the downtown. Such a system would provide: Gateway signage, Parking and directional signs, Private business signage that is consistent with the historic architectural character of the downtown.	S			PLNR/PB		
1.4	Undertake short-term projects that will improve the quality of the downtown environment and celebrate its heritage including: Community plantings in strategic locations. This could be an expansion of the Adopt-A-Spot Program, Creating a program for public art that would continue the mural project on Constitutional Avenue, Placing historic interpretive signs/markers in appropriate locations, Undertaking a "gateway" design competition that would be specific to the entrance to the downtown at the Rt. 9/Berwick Bridge Crossing and the intersection of High Street and Washington Street.	I/S			DDS/2020		
1.5	Develop a long term marketing strategy that establishes a distinct identity and image for the downtown. This strategy will include: Developing a logo that captures the spirit and energy of the "new" Somersworth, Preparing website and promotional materials that "sell" downtown Somersworth,	O			DDS	C of C/SHS/Coop-Extension Historical Society/Businesses	
1.6		O			DDS	C OF C	

		Priority	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Source	Responsible Party	Community Partners	Status
	Empowering local artisans and others to provide events and activities that enrich the culture of the community, Encouraging downtown uses that provide activities for all ages.						
1.7	Employ incentives and innovative zoning techniques to encourage the full utilization and revitalization of existing buildings and encourage infill buildings where there are gaps in the streetscape.						
	Explore adopting the provisions of RSA 79-E – the downtown revitalization tax relief incentive program - to incentivize downtown development and redevelopment.	S			PLNR		
	Amend zoning to encourage more mixed uses and full reuse of existing structures. Specifically:	I			PLNR/PB		
	a. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include a new downtown zone between Washington Street and High Street bordered by Main and Constitutional that would be a mixed use Central Business District.						
	b. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to extend the Historic Millyard District south between the railroad and the Salmon Falls River to approximately Depot Street.						
1.8	Actively pursue the growth and enhancement of diverse retail activities that serve residents of all ages and encourage through-travelers to stop and buy goods and services.						
	Establish a campaign to: “Capture 1 in 20 vehicles to buy downtown!”	S			DDS	C OF C	
	Identify programs/promotions/design features to encourage individuals to shop downtown Somersworth, e.g. Buy local or 10% shift	S			DDS	C OF C	
	Work with downtown businesses to develop and implement a collective downtown business advertising campaign,	S/O			DDS	C OF C	
	Explore a one-way traffic pattern between Main, High and Washington Streets to reduce downtown congestion and enhance the visibility and commercial viability of businesses on Main and Washington Streets.	I			CC/DDS		
1.9	Promote downtown vitality by encouraging and maintaining a vibrant mix of uses that ensure a balance of daytime and evening activity while preserving the quality of life for downtown residents.	O			DDS		
	Encourage locally-owned and unique businesses that foster the creative economy,						
	Strengthen the mix of retail uses,						
	Seek out and work with businesses and enterprises that provide opportunities for young college educated individuals,						
	Provide zoning and other incentives in the downtown for developers to provide exhibit and performance spaces.	S			PLNR		
	Explore development of a downtown “central” park behind the old City Hall and running northerly to Washington Street.						
1.10	Prepare a Salmon Falls River Riverfront Plan from the Rt. 9/Berwick Bridge to the municipal boundary with Rollinsford that:	L			DDS		
	Encourages maximum public access,						
	Ensures appropriate public use of the riverfront area, and						
	Recognizes the needs of the property owners and the City of Somersworth and encourages a public-private partnership.						
1.11	Establish an active program for downtown business retention.	O			DDS		
	Continue to communicate with GE about future plans and workforce requirements. Explore a partnership with GE to establish a technology center and/or incubator space for emerging businesses in the current vacant areas of the GE buildings. (e.g., NH-CDFA tax credit to GE for real estate donation against their Business Profits Taxes),					GE	
	Explore the potential for a relationship/partnership between GE and UNH Industrial Research Center (a “Measurement Science Center”) to explore mutually beneficial new technologies and opportunities,					GE/UNH	
	Meet regularly with other downtown businesses to ensure that their business needs are being met.						
1.12	Continue to encourage and undertake major capital projects and revitalization efforts through grants, public money and private initiative to create value and opportunity in the downtown.						
	In the short term these include:						
	Context sensitive design and construction of the Rt. 9/Berwick Bridge,	I			DPW	NHDOT/MEDOT	
	Renovation of the former police building,	O			DDS		
	Explore opportunities to upgrade the existing rail system to expand services.	S			DDS		
	Longer term these should include:						
	Vehicular and pedestrian access to the riverfront from the downtown such as at Washington Street,	L			DDS	Private	
	Renovation and reuse of the vacant mill buildings,	O			Private		
	Revitalization of the downtown Somersworth Plaza to encourage new buildings directly on Main Street that add a mix of retail, office and residential opportunities with building designs that are compatible with the historic character of Main Street.	L			DDS		

		Priority	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Source	Responsible Party	Community Partners	Status
Goal 2	Take a leadership role to build a sustainable community for current and future generations.						
2.1	Lead by example – seek to make city government services and buildings as energy efficient and sustainable as possible.	O			CC/CM		
	Continue ongoing efforts to reduce energy consumption in municipal buildings that provide a reasonable return on the dollars invested. Pursue programs to make city operations more energy efficient—including vehicle right-sizing and usage,						
	Reduce, reuse and recycle materials used to conduct city business wherever it is financially practical.						
2.2	Develop and implement a community energy improvement and sustainability program to:						
	Establish a city sustainability/energy committee to champion energy improvements	I			CC/2020		
	Continue to apply the building energy standards established in the current version of the energy code published by the International Code Council,	O			DDS		
	Seek ways to reduce light and noise pollution and incorporate natural landscape practices that use native species and mitigate stormwater runoff,	S			SC		
	Encourage all residents, businesses and city departments to reduce energy consumption by at least 10% over 2000 levels by 2020.	S			SC		
	a. Identify goals for reducing water consumption, limiting waste production, improving energy efficiency, and reducing fossil fuel consumption.						
	b. Provide guidance for municipal departments and facilities on methods and techniques for incorporating environmental practices into municipal projects.						
	Such a program could be achieved through a collaboration of the city with local businesses, the ICLEI (International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives)-Local Governments for Sustainability, and Clean Air-Cool Planet.	S			SC	Local businesses, ICLEI, Clean Air-Cool Planet	
	Explore local renewable energy production opportunities including hydro, wind, solar and biomass,						
	Build and maintain transportation infrastructure that encourages non-vehicular travel (i.e., walking and bicycling) particularly in neighborhoods,						
	Actively promote use of public transportation and alternative means of transportation.						
2.3	Explore establishing programs that encourage the use of locally produced goods and products that use local resources and can be marketed locally and outside Somersworth.						
	Promote local food production and sales through a program of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and a farmers market that includes artisans and other local products,	S			DDS	C O F C	
	Explore a visible long term location to hold a farmers market,	S			DDS	C O F C	
	Establish a program to encourage the purchase of local goods and services,	S			DDS	C O F C	
	Audit the zoning and land use regulations to ensure that there are opportunities for agricultural activities.	S			PLNR/PB		
2.4	Recognize the shift in the traditional business model that will rely on a “knowledge economy and creative economy”	O/S			DDS	C O F C	
	Consider a program to build a Wi-Fi network throughout the City,						
	Ensure that city and business institutions are prepared to work with businesses that are small and entrepreneurial in nature,						
	Support the “eCoast” initiative to promote the Seacoast area for entrepreneurial businesses.						
Goal 3	Actively manage growth that is consistent with the city’s vision and master plan and provides for a balance of residential, recreational, business, industrial and institutional activities.						
3.1	Implement regulatory amendments that are consistent with the master plan and the state’s policy for “Smart Growth”. Such regulatory amendments should contribute to a sustainable Somersworth and work to have new development:	O/I			PLNR/PB		
	Minimize impervious cover and the generation of stormwater runoff volume through low impact design						
	Protect surface waters, wetlands and natural drainage areas from development,						
	Use native vegetated plantings for landscape materials,						
	Establish an ongoing street tree planting, replanting and maintenance program, and						
	Encourage more compact development forms such as open space development.						
3.2	Promote a Corridor Improvement Program for High Street (between the Dover City line and Blackwater Road) that improves the environmental and aesthetic quality of the corridor consistent with Somersworth’s community character and considers:	L			DDS		
	Existing zoning,						
	Dimensional requirements,						
	Building design and landscape standards,						

		Priority	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Source	Responsible Party	Community Partners	Status
	Upgrades to all street infrastructure including street and sidewalk pavement, drainage, landscaping and signage within the public right-of-way,						
	Strategic locations for landscaping improvements to improve the aesthetics and increase pedestrian-friendliness of the corridors,						
	Parking—amount and location; including encouraging the placement of parking areas behind or beside buildings, and						
	Access management.						
3.3	Encourage development of high quality professional offices and complementary mixed uses along defined major corridors such as Route 108 and High Street.	L			PLNR/PB		
Goal 4	Preserve and protect open space and natural resources in balance with economic, business and employment opportunities for its citizens. (See also strategy 3.1)						
4.1	Prepare an Open Space Plan that that prioritizes parcels for acquisition and preservation, assesses the most appropriate uses for City-owned parcels, and explores greenway linkage opportunities between these parcels.	O			PLNR/CONCOM		
4.2	Recognize the role of water resources for drinking water, recreational opportunities and providing an aesthetic/cultural quality to the community.	O			PLNR/CONCOM		
	Continue to work closely with the City of Dover and the NH DES to restore the water quality of Willand Pond and the natural integrity of the adjacent shorelands and wetland resource areas,					City of Dover/NHDES	
	Identify and promote a “green infrastructure” of interconnected natural resources that includes important shorelands, wetlands, wildlife habitat and flood prone areas. Such an infrastructure can be implemented through both regulatory and non-regulatory means such as acquiring conservation easements and fee acquisition of key properties.						
4.3	Seek grants and open space protection partners to acquire important open spaces and natural resource areas.	O			PLNR/CONCOM		
Goal 5	Promote business development that encourages entrepreneurs, locally-based businesses and quality employment opportunities for all.						
5.1	Continue to encourage the establishment of business incubator space in Somersworth as opportunities arise – potentially in downtown mills spaces - to support new startup businesses. (See also Strategy 1.9)	O			DDS	C OF C	
5.2	Seek to retain and attract businesses that provide quality jobs and improved tax base. (See also Strategy 1.11)	O			DDS	C OF C	
Goal 6	Grow great neighborhoods that provide a variety of housing opportunities to accommodate its diverse citizenry while respecting the city’s natural and cultural heritage.						
6.1	Examine the possibility for revising the city’s zoning ordinance to provide for more compact, diverse residential development that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. (See also Strategy 3.1)	S			PLNR/PB		
6.2	Create greater opportunities for home ownership and owner occupied rental properties.	L			DDS		
6.3	Explore the use of flexible zoning techniques to negotiate creative mixed use housing in association with commercial development and redevelopment. (See also Strategy 1.6)	L			PLNR/PB		
6.4	Continue to be an active member of Tree City USA and to plant and maintain street trees city-wide.	O			PLNR		
6.5	Promote walkable neighborhoods by providing sidewalks, trails and public recreation.	O			DDS/DPW		
6.6	Upgrade, strengthen and enforce a Somersworth multi-unit housing code. For example, consider an inspection program for multi-family rentals	I			DDS		
Goal 7	Strive for educational excellence.						
7.1	Properly maintain and upgrade school facilities to ensure that there is a positive and safe physical learning environment for all students.	O			SAU		
7.2	Provide challenging programs and curricula for grades K-12 to ensure that Somersworth’s students are well educated and are capable of meeting the challenges of today and the future.	O			SAU		
7.3	Ensure students have access to high technology programs and equipment to prepare for the Technology Age.	O			SAU		
7.4	Ensure that there are adequate post-secondary educational opportunities, including adult education, that meet the needs of the community.	O			SAU		
Goal 8	Offer a variety of recreational opportunities for all age groups.						
8.1	Periodically examine the city’s recreational resources and seize opportunities to upgrade/expand recreational areas that are geographically distributed throughout the city based on master plan recommendations.	O			REC		
8.2	Expand recreational opportunities along the Salmon Falls River. (See also Strategy 1.10)	O			REC		
8.3	Continue to consult with teen groups and seek their input regarding their specific interests.	O			REC		

		Priority	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Source	Responsible Party	Community Partners	Status
Goal 9	Provide a variety of transportation facilities and services including auto, bus, pedestrian, bicycle and rail that connect the city's neighborhoods, businesses and services to the community and region, in concert with regional plans and opportunities.						
9.1	Pursue development of a comprehensive regional traffic management plan that seeks solutions to local and regional traffic issues into and through Somersworth. This effort would include:						
	Improved traffic movement along Route 108 and the entire length of Route 9/High Street	O			DPW		
	Potential one-way traffic pattern in the downtown	I			DDS/DPW		
	Improving traffic flow into and through both downtown Somersworth and downtown Berwick.	O			DPW/DDS & Berwick	MEDOT/NHDOT	
9.2	Consider development of a city-wide bicycle and pedestrian plan.	L			PLNR/PB		
9.3	Continue to encourage the provision for and maintenance of adequate sidewalks for pedestrians and paved shoulders for bicycles on all streets in and near the downtown.	O			PLNR/DPW		
9.4	Seek to enhance the main travel corridors into the city to act as attractive "gateways" by providing proper signage, street trees, and focal point landscaping. (See also Strategy 3.2.)	L			DDS/DPW		
9.5	Consider updating the City's Street Standards to reflect current design practices and conditions. The standards should reflect unique requirements related to:	O			PLNR		
	Historic districts,						
	Residential subdivision,						
	Roadway functional classification and design speed, and						
	Commercial/industrial areas versus residential areas.						
9.6	Review site plan, zoning and subdivision ordinances to make them more bicycle-friendly including bicycle parking requirements, roadway design standards, and easements/right-of-way for bicycle and pathway projects.	O			PLNR/PB		
Goal 10	Provide community services in an efficient and effective manner.						
10.1	Explore creative funding tools to implement needed master plan and capital improvements recommendations. These tools may include tax increment financing districts, betterment districts, impact fees, the downtown revitalization tax relief incentive program made available through RSA 79-E as well as state and federal funding opportunities. (See also Strategy 1.7)	O			CM		
10.2	Continue to pursue best management practices for all city operations.	O			CM		
10.3	Continuously engage the community in establishing priorities for provision of services and physical improvements.	O			CM		
Goal 11	Identify and preserve buildings, streetscapes, individual sites and open spaces that contribute to the unique historic character and cultural assets of Somersworth.						
11.1	Continue to pursue completion of the detailed historic resource inventory.	O			PLNR/HDC		
11.2	Upon completion of the historic resource inventory, prioritize issues of concern for continued historic preservation, regulatory protection, and possible designations to the National Register of Historic Places. Funding for this effort should be pursued using Certified Local Government (CLG) funds from the NH Division of Historic Resources.	L			HDC		
11.3	Develop a program to preserve and enhance the City's neighborhoods and cultural qualities. Such a program could:	S/O			2020	C of C	
	Expand and support spaces for cultural activities and events, including affordable space for artists and venues and space for performances, public art and exhibitions, (See also Strategy 1.4.)						
	Include young people in arts and cultural opportunities in educational, recreational, and social settings,						
	Engage businesses with the arts and cultural community.						
	Key to "Responsible Party" Abbreviations:						
	CC= City Council CM= City Manager C of C= Chamber of Commerce ConCom= Conservation Commission DDS= Department of Development Services DPW= Department of Public Works HDC= Historic District Commission MEDOT= Maine Dept. of Transportation NHDOT=New Hampshire Dept. of Transportation PB= Planning Board PLNR= City Planner Rec= Recreation Department SAU= School Department SC= Sustainability/Energy Committee 2020=2020 Committee						

A Summary of Somersworth Today

Population

Somersworth continues to grow at a steady pace, but the rest of the county is growing faster

Somersworth’s population grew to 11,918 in 2007 from 11,477 in 1990 according to the NH Office of Energy & Planning (OEP). See Figure 1. With the exception of the decade of the 1970’s, Somersworth’s population has grown at a slower rate than that of Dover and Rochester as well as both Strafford County and the State. Between 1990 and 2007 Somersworth’s growth did not exceed 4% while Strafford County grew at greater than 6%. The only nearby city that grew at a slower pace as shown in Figure 1 was Portsmouth which actually lost population in recent decades due primarily to military base closings or employment reductions.

Figure 1: Somersworth’s Recent Population Growth

	Census Population			OEP Est		OEP Projections		
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	2010	2020	2030
Somersworth	9,026	10,350	11,249	11,477	11,918	12,080	12,480	13,350
Dover	20,850	22,377	25,042	26,884	28,703	29,310	30,450	31,250
Rochester	17,938	21,560	26,630	28,461	30,823	31,560	34,290	36,650
Portsmouth	25,717	26,254	25,925	20,784	20,610	21,320	22,730	24,390
Strafford County	70,431	85,404	104,233	112,233	122,504	124,490	134,210	142,890
State of NH	737,578	918,827	1,109,117	1,235,550	1,315,000	1,365,140	1,470,010	1,565,040

Percent Increase	1970-80	1980-90	1990-2000	2000-07	2000-10	2010-20	2020-30
Somersworth	14.67%	8.69%	2.03%	3.84%	5.25%	4.72%	10.51%
Dover	7.32%	11.91%	7.36%	6.77%	9.02%	6.09%	6.62%
Rochester	20.19%	23.52%	6.88%	8.30%	10.89%	11.25%	16.13%
Portsmouth	2.09%	-1.25%	-19.83%	-0.84%	2.58%	10.29%	14.40%
Strafford County	21.26%	22.05%	7.68%	9.15%	10.92%	9.56%	14.78%
State of NH	24.57%	20.71%	11.40%	6.43%	10.49%	11.79%	14.64%

Somersworth as % of	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	2010	2020	2030
County Population	12.82%	12.12%	10.79%	10.23%	9.73%	9.70%	9.30%	9.34%

Source: US Census and NH Office of Energy and Planning

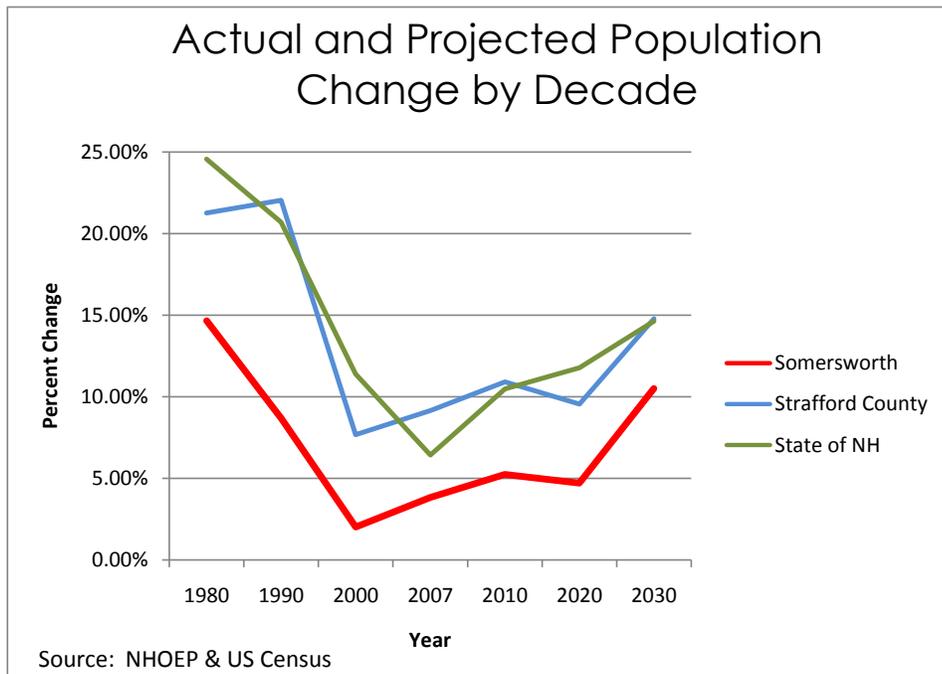
OEP projections suggest that Somersworth will continue to grow at a moderate pace, potentially exceeding 13,000 people by the year 2030 as shown in the above Figure 1. With the exception of Rollinsford, Somersworth has had the slowest rate of growth (5.95%) in Strafford County between 1990 and 2007 as shown in Figure 2. Both Dover and Rochester grew at almost 3 times the rate of Somersworth. In relation to the rest of Strafford County, Somersworth’s population continues to be an ever smaller percentage of the total county population, indicating that other towns have and will continue to see more residential growth. See Figure 3. Somersworth has the highest population density in the county at 1,216 persons per square mile. Dover is the second most dense at 1,075 persons per square mile. These facts suggest that the density of residential development in both Somersworth and Dover are pushing more recent residential development to less densely developed communities in the county and region.

Figure 2: Strafford County Population

Municipality	Total Population			Change	
	U.S. Census		OEP Estimate	1990-07 # Increase	1990-07 Percent
	1990	2000	2007		
Middleton	1,183	1,440	1,861	678	57.31%
Barrington	6,164	7,475	8,354	2,190	35.53%
Strafford	2,965	3,626	3,992	1,027	34.64%
New Durham	1,974	2,220	2,563	589	29.84%
Madbury	1,404	1,509	1,765	361	25.71%
Milton	3,691	3,910	4,604	913	24.74%
Farmington	5,739	5,774	6,883	1,144	19.93%
Durham	11,818	12,664	13,985	2,167	18.34%
Lee	3,729	4,145	4,412	683	18.32%
Rochester	26,630	28,461	30,823	4,193	15.75%
Dover	25,042	26,884	28,703	3,661	14.62%
Somersworth	11,249	11,477	11,918	669	5.95%
Rollinsford	2,645	2,648	2,641	-4	-0.15%
Strafford Co.	104,233	112,233	122,504	18,271	17.53%

Source: US Census and NHOEP

Figure 3: Comparison of Population and Projections



Source: NHOEP & US Census

Age Distribution

Like the rest of New Hampshire, Somersworth is getting older

Somersworth, like the rest of New Hampshire is aging. The median age has risen from 27.3 in 1970, to 28.7 in 1980, to 31.2 in 1990 reaching 34.9 years of age by 2000 as shown Figure 4. This corresponds to the increase in persons who are 65 years of age and older which has risen from 8.7% of the city's population in 1970 to 12.0% in 2000. This increase in the age indicates that the younger generation is either not staying in the community or not being drawn to it at the same pace as it was forty years ago. This aging population trend is shared with the County as well as the entire state.

Figure 4: Median Age and Age Distribution

2000 Census Data	Median Age	% Persons Under 19 yrs.	% Persons 65 yrs. and over
Somersworth	34.90	28.60	12.00
Strafford Co.	34.40	28.20	11.20
State of NH	37.10	27.80	12.00

Source: 2000 US Census

Residency

Residents that moved to Somersworth in the late 1990's tended to come from area communities in a higher proportion than elsewhere in the state

The US Census provides an indicator of the mobility of the population by determining if each household lives in the same or a different home at the time of the Census (2000) as compared to five years earlier. As shown in Figure 5, Somersworth residents tend to stay in their community for a shorter period than the state as a whole, but remain within the county longer than the rest of the state.

Figure 5: Length of Residency in 2000

	Same House in 1995	Different House in Same County in 1995	Different House & Different County in NH in 1995	Lived in another state in 1995
Somersworth	48.6%	31.1%	7.6%	12.6%
State of NH	55.4%	22.3%	6.9%	14.0%

Source: 2000 US Census

Place of Birth

Somersworth has a higher proportion of native born residents than the state of New Hampshire

According to the 2000 census, 97.4% of the people who live in Somersworth were born in the United States and 56.5% were born in New Hampshire, indicating a less mobile population than comparable figures for the state (94.7% & 43.3% respectively).

Education

Although educational attainment is lower than the state averages, school enrollments appear to be stabilizing in spite of anticipated population growth.

The residents of Somersworth have a slightly lower level of high school graduates than the county or state and the percentage of college graduates is nearly 10% below the state average. See Figure 6. On the other hand, high school educational attainment is significantly higher than what was reported in the 1990 census when 74.7% of the adults over 25 had received a high school diploma and 13.6% were college graduates or higher.

Figure 6: Educational Attainment

	High School Grad or higher	College Grad or higher
Somersworth	84.4%	18.8%
Strafford County	86.4%	26.4%
State of New Hampshire	87.4%	28.7%

Source: 2000 US Census

School Enrollment

While school enrollments have fluctuated over the years, 2008 enrollments were nearly identical to those in 1980

Historically, total school enrollment has both risen and fallen over the past twenty-eight years as shown in Figures 7 and 8. In 1980 total enrollment was 1,764 students. It dropped by 17% to 1,464 students in 1990 but rose by 30% to 1904 in the year 2000. In the fall of 2008 the total enrollment had dropped by 7% to 1,777.

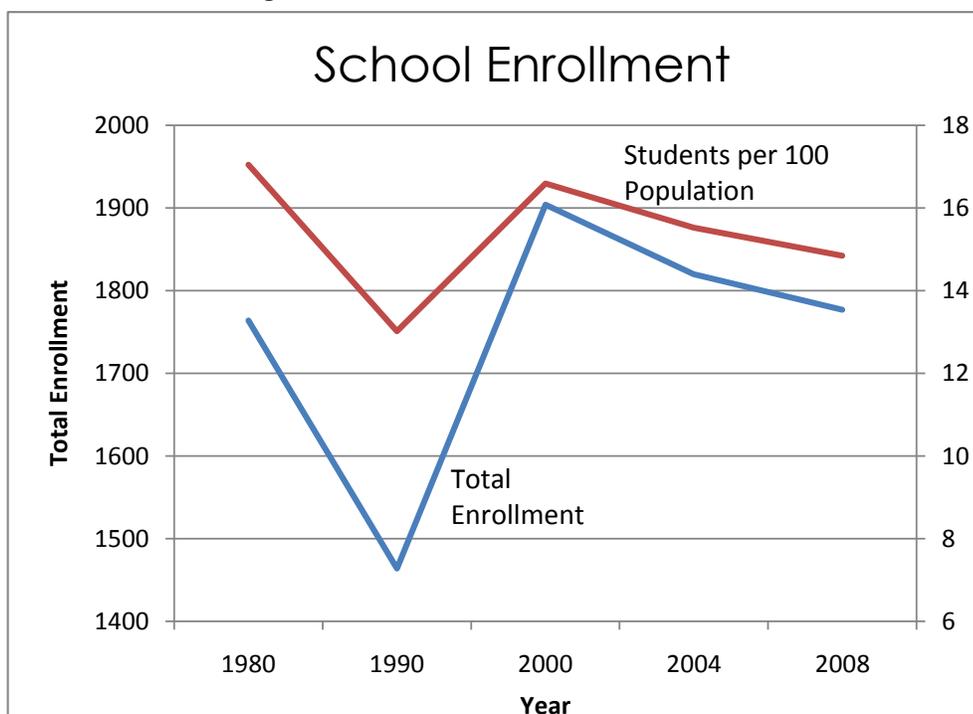
Figure 7: Recent Somersworth Fall School Enrollments

Year	Pre-School	Kindergarten	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	Total Enrollment
2008	14	112	525	537	589	1777
2004	12	126	504	577	601	1820
2000	15	117	561	601	610	1904

Source: NH Department of Education

Interestingly, the 1980 and 2008 enrollments are nearly identical (Figure 8), yet the city's population has risen by nearly 16% over the intervening twenty-eight years. This trend shows a real decline in the number of school age children from 17 students per 100 population in 1980 to 14.8 per 100 population in 2008. Should this trend continue school enrollments will likely remain close to what they are today, even if the city achieves the population of 13,350 as projected by OEP for 2030.

Figure 8: Historical Enrollment Trends



Housing Characteristics

Housing Supply

Continues to grow but at a slower rate than the rest of the county or the state of New Hampshire.

The housing supply in Somersworth increased by nearly 80% between 1970 and 2007 to a total of 5,262 housing units as shown in Figure 9 below. This growth rate is substantially lower than the increases experienced for the county and state both of which experienced increases of over 100%.

Figure 9: Number of Housing Units

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	% Increase 1970-2007
Somersworth	2,927	4,014	4,719	4,841	5,262	79.77%
Strafford Co.	22,012	30,757	42,387	45,539	51,694	134.84%
State of NH	280,962	386,381	502,247	547,024	606,292	115.79%

Source: US Census & NHOEP

Household Size

Since 1970, household size has dropped by 0.82 persons per household.

Somersworth household size has been decreasing since 1970 and reached 2.26 persons by 2007 as shown in Figure 10. Statewide, the average household size has dropped by 0.46 persons per household since 1970. Somersworth’s household size has dropped even more, by 0.82 persons during that same time period. This is consistent with the trend for Strafford County which dropped by 0.83 persons.

Figure 10: Household Size

Persons per Household	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007
Somersworth	3.08	2.58	2.38	2.37	2.26
Strafford County	3.20	2.78	2.46	2.46	2.37
State of New Hampshire	2.63	2.38	2.21	2.26	2.17

Source: US Census

Housing Tenure

Somersworth has a higher rate of dwelling unit occupancy than either the county or state and a significantly higher percentage of renters.

Of Somersworth’s 4,841 housing units almost 97 % are occupied indicating a very strong residential real estate market as shown in Figure 11. Not surprisingly, there are very few seasonal dwellings—less than 1%. On the other hand, Somersworth has a significant rental sector at almost 44% compared to the county which has 35.5% and significantly higher than the state.

Figure 11: Housing Tenure

	Total	Occupied	Vacant	Seasonal	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
Somersworth	4,841	96.80%	3.20%	0.50%	56.70%	43.30%
Strafford Co.	45,539	93.50%	6.50%	4.00%	64.50%	35.50%
State of NH	547,205	86.80%	13.20%	10.30%	69.70%	30.30%

Source: US Census

Housing Composition

Somersworth has a nearly fifty percent higher level of multi-family housing compared to the state and county.

With almost 45% of its housing stock in multi-family housing, Somersworth has a significantly higher percentage of this type of housing, and a correspondingly lower supply of single family housing as compared to the county or state as shown in Figure 12. By comparison the county has less than 33% multi-family housing, but over 56% in single family. This high level of multi-family housing corresponds with the generally higher level of rental housing compared to the county. The supply of manufactured housing in Somersworth is similar to that of the county, but almost 50% higher than the state. The construction of new homes in Somersworth over the past seventeen

years has been stronger in the single family sector than the multi-family. Manufactured homes in Somersworth actually declined in number during that time period.

Figure 12: Housing Composition

Housing Type	1990	2000	2007	Change 1990- 2007	2007 Percent of total
Somersworth					
Single Family	1979	2159	2422	122.39%	46.03%
Multi-Family	2170	2185	2334	107.56%	44.36%
Manufactured Housing	570	497	506	88.77%	9.62%
Total	4719	4841	5262	111.51%	
Strafford County					
Single Family	22073	25095	29115	131.90%	56.32%
Multi-Family	14883	15355	16923	113.71%	32.74%
Manufactured Housing	5431	4996	5656	104.14%	10.94%
Total	42387	45539	51694	121.96%	
State of NH					
Single Family	297777	341299	383795	128.89%	63.30%
Multi-Family	164184	169396	183436	111.73%	30.26%
Manufactured Housing	35334	35544	39061	110.55%	6.44%
Total	497295	546239	606292	121.92%	

Source: US Census & NHOEP

Age of Housing

A higher percentage of Somersworth's housing stock was built before 1960 than either the county or state.

On a percentage basis, more of the housing stock in Somersworth was built before 1960 than either the county or state as shown in the figure below. In fact, almost 30% of Somersworth's housing stock was built prior to 1930. These numbers indicate that the city has a relatively older housing stock compared to the county or state. See Figure 13. New homes were constructed in the 1970's at a pace comparable to the county and state. However, since 1980, housing construction in the city has been at a lower rate than the county or state.

Figure 13: Year Housing Units Built

	Pre- 1939	1940- 1959	1960- 1979	1980- 1999	2000- 2007
Somersworth	29.00%	20.90%	24.97%	17.12%	8.00%
Strafford Co.	21.95%	13.60%	23.46%	29.09%	11.91%
State of NH	21.33%	12.13%	25.17%	31.48%	9.89%

Source: 2000 US Census and NHOEP Database

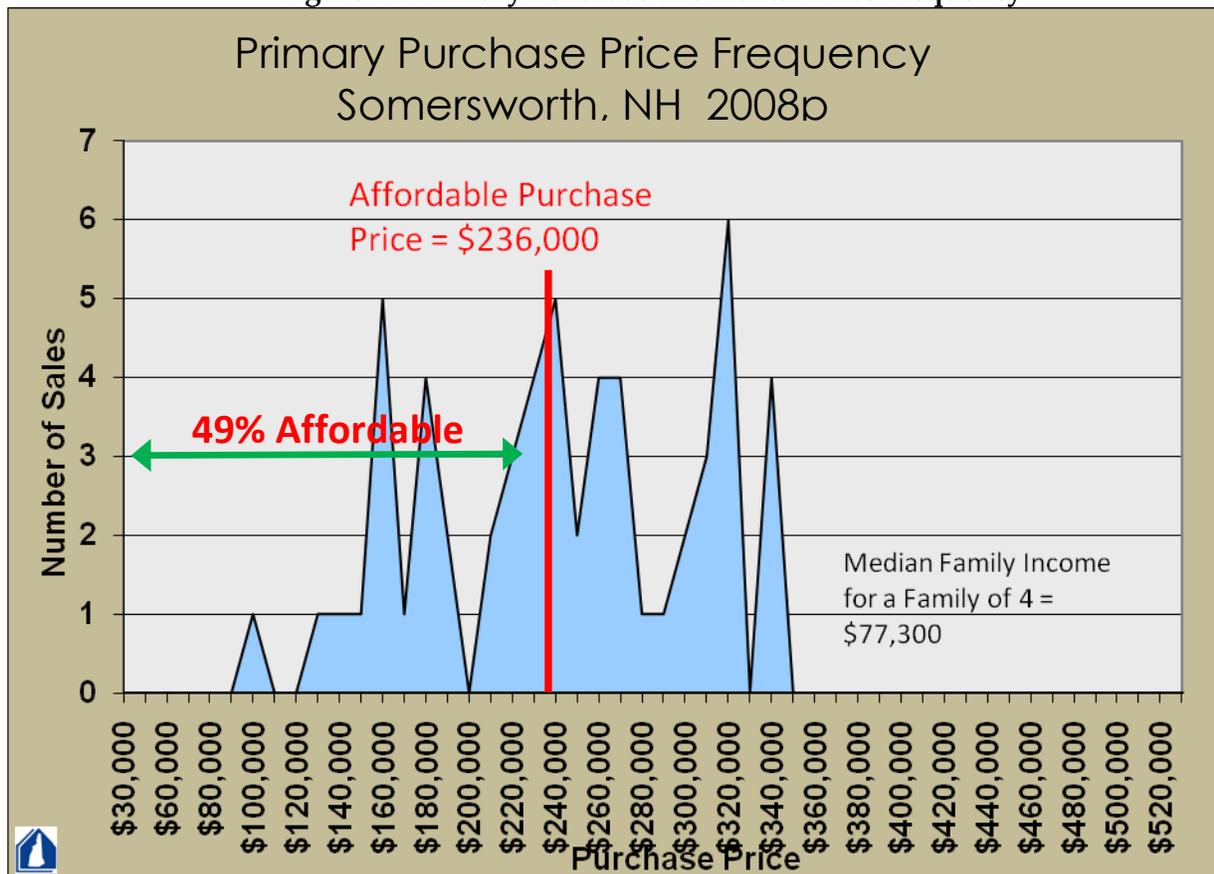
Affordable Housing Supply

Based on the new workforce housing statute (RSA 674:58-61) Somersworth appears to have an adequate supply of housing that is affordable.

In 2008, the New Hampshire Legislature adopted a new workforce housing statute (RSA 674: 58-61) that requires municipalities to provide opportunities for the development of both ownership and rental housing that is affordable to households of specified income ranges. Affordable ownership housing needs to be priced so that a family of four whose income is at 100% of the median income for the area. For Somersworth, the 2008 target income is \$77,300. At that income an affordable home should cost no more than \$236,000. Figure 14 below illustrates that almost half of the housing units for sale in 2008 were within that price range.

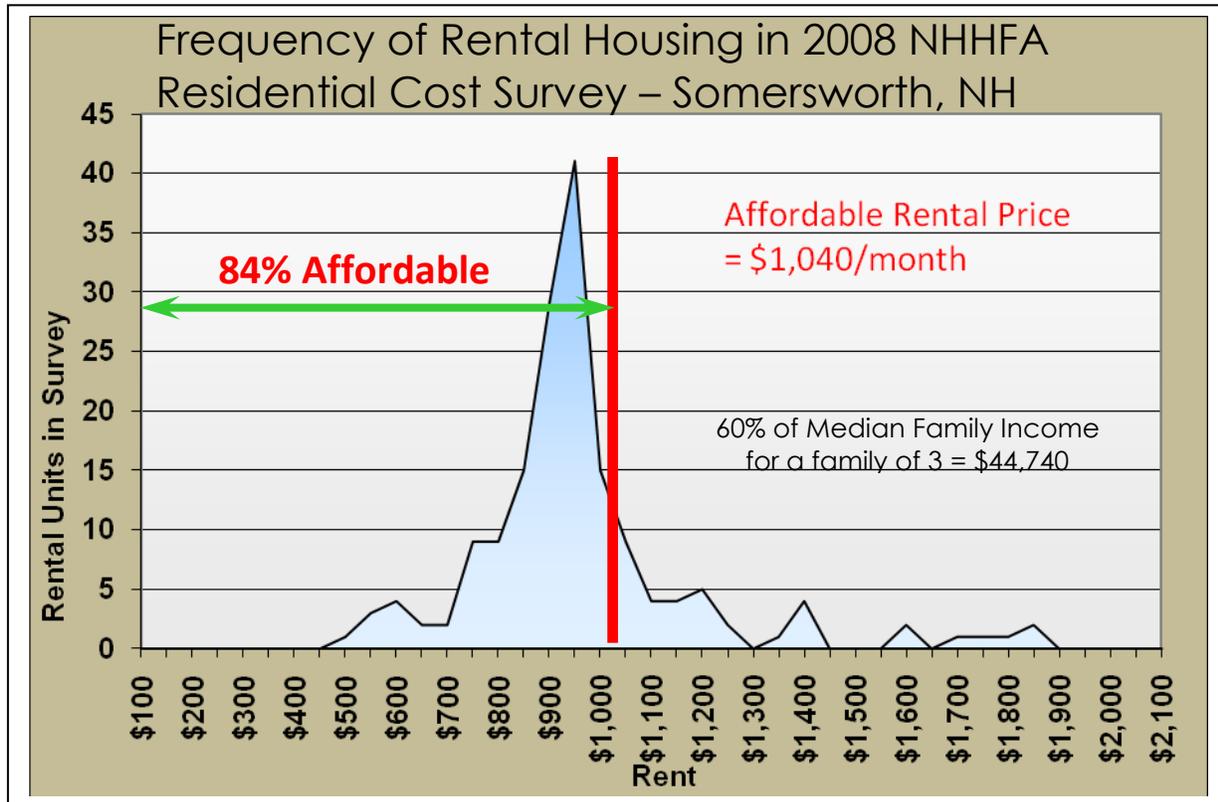
Affordable rental housing is defined in the statute as housing that can be rented for no more than \$1,040 per month based on a family of three persons that earns no more than 60% of the median income for the area. The figure below shows that 84% of the rental units surveyed in 2008 were affordable based on the state statute definition.

Figure 14: Primary Purchase and Rental Price Frequency



57 Units Surveyed

Data Source: NH Housing Finance



166 Units surveyed

Data Source: NH Housing Finance

Somersworth’s Residential Assessment Figures ***City has an ample supply of reasonably priced housing***

The City’s 2008 equalized valuation figures indicate that out of a total of 2,269 single family homes, 1,560 (69%) are valued at \$236,000 or less. Equalized valuation figures for condominiums show that of the 101 condominium units listed in Somersworth, only seven are valued at more than \$236,000. This means that 93% of the condominiums are affordable according to the state’s workforce housing standard.

There are 535 manufactured homes listed in the City Assessor records and all of them are valued below \$236,000. Viewing the ownership and rental surveys completed by the NH Housing Finance Agency and the City’s assessing data, it appears that the city has an ample supply of reasonably priced housing based on the affordability standards established by the new workforce housing statute (RSA 674: 58-61).

Socio-Economic Characteristics

Household Income

Between 1990 and 2000 Somersworth's median household income grew at a slower pace than the surrounding communities, the county and the state.

From 1990 to 2000 Somersworth median household income increased by 30% or \$9,853 reaching \$42,739 as shown in Figure 15. While this trend provides a positive indicator for the city, the percentage increase is less than the surrounding communities, the county and the state.

Figure 15: Median Household Income

	Somersworth	Dover	Rochester	Strafford County	State of NH
1990	\$32,886	\$31,507	\$30,807	\$32,812	\$36,329
2000	\$42,739	\$43,873	\$40,596	\$44,803	\$49,467
% Change 1990-2000	+30.0%	+39.2%	+31.8%	+36.5%	+36.2%

Source: 1990 & 2000 US Census

Percent of Individuals below Poverty Level

For the decade between 1990 and 2000, both Somersworth and Rochester had significantly larger numbers of people below the poverty level than the county and state.

From 1990 to 2000 the percentage of people living in poverty in Somersworth increased by almost 30% as shown in Figure 16, higher than both the county and the state. Only Rochester had a higher increase while the county and the state were significantly lower. By contrast during this same period Dover had a decrease in the percentage of people living in poverty.

Figure 16: Changes in Percentage of People Living Below the Poverty Level

	Somersworth	Dover	Rochester	Strafford County	State of NH
1990	6.8%	9.4%	6.3%	8.2%	6.4%
2000	8.8%	8.4%	8.4%	9.2%	6.5%
% Change 1990-2000	+29.4%	-10.6%	+33.3%	+12.2%	+1.6%

Source: 1990 & 2000 US Census

Marital Status

Marital status comparable to the state

In 2000 there were 8,923 persons living in Somersworth who were age 15 or older. Of those residents, 24.1% have never been married; 52.6% are currently married; 1.5% are married but currently separated; 6.7% are widowed and 15.2% are divorced. Compared to the state, Somersworth has a somewhat lower percentage of married individuals and a somewhat higher percentage of divorced persons as shown in Figure 17 below.

Figure 17: Martial Status

	Never Married	Currently Married	Married but Separated	Widowed	Divorced
Somersworth	24.1%	52.6%	1.5%	6.7%	15.2%
New Hampshire	24.9%	57.3%	1.4%	5.9%	10.5%

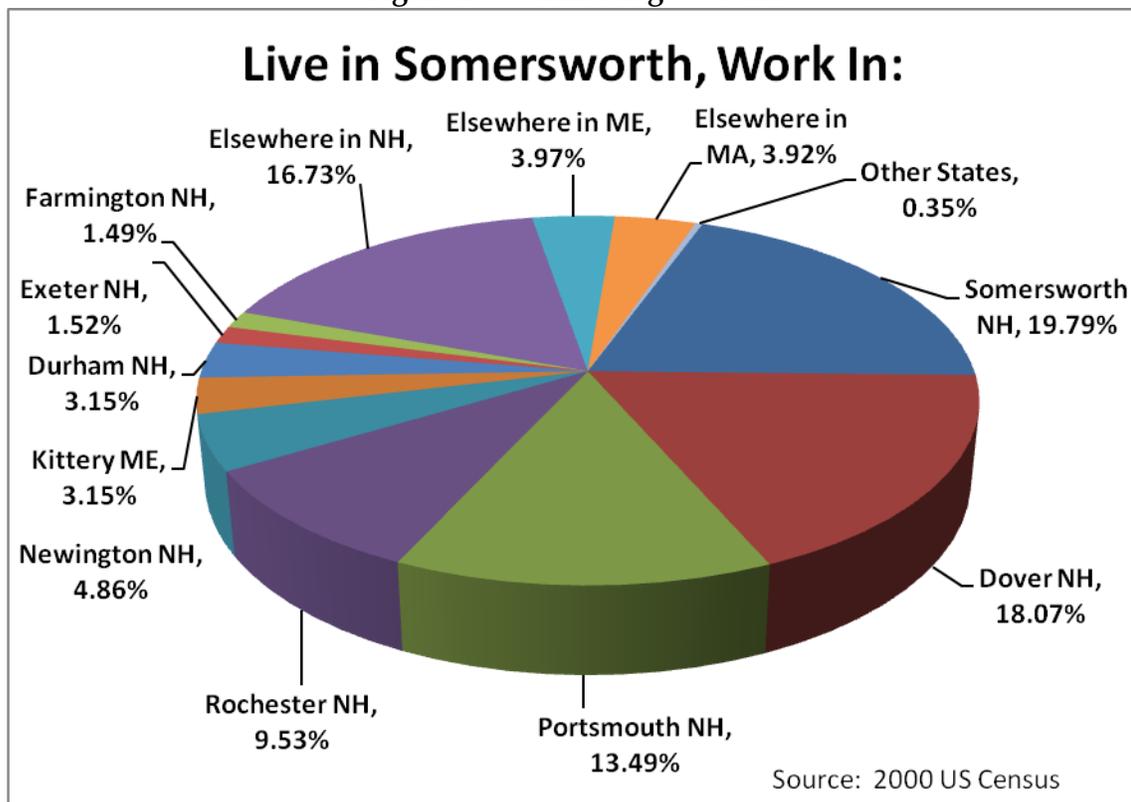
Source: 2000 US Census

Commuting Patterns in 2000

Only 20% the working residents of Somersworth work in the city.

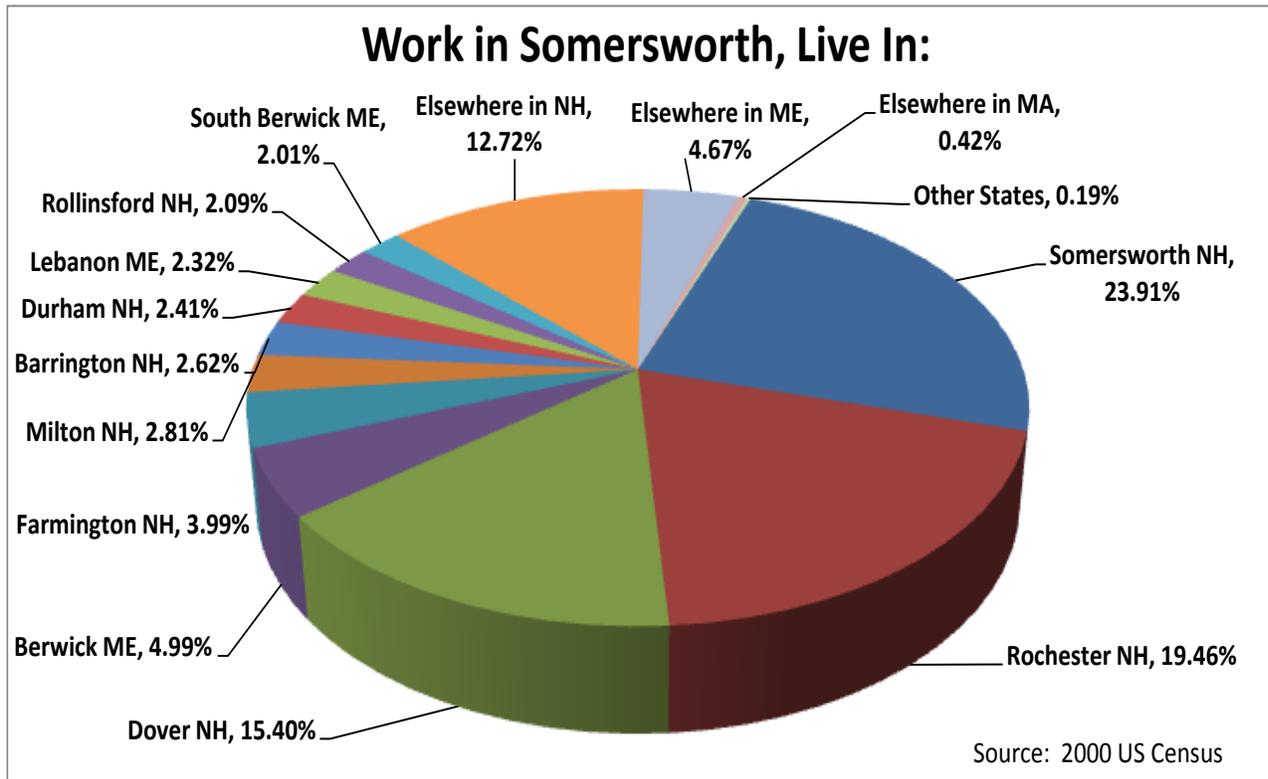
As shown in Figure 18, 55% of the workers who live in Somersworth work in the Seacoast region and less than 20% work in Somersworth. Almost 25% commute to more distant jobs in New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Maine.

Figure 18: Commuting to Work



Given the geographic proximity of surrounding large population centers, it is not surprising that nearly 60% of the people who work in Somersworth commute locally from Somersworth, Dover and Rochester as shown in Figure 19. Almost 24% of Somersworth’s workers live in Somersworth. About 18% of Somersworth workers travel from more distant homes in New Hampshire, Maine and Massachusetts.

Figure 19: Source of Somersworth’s Workers



Economic Conditions

Change in Employment

Some of the largest gains in employment in Somersworth have been in health care/social assistance, wholesale trade and retail trade over the past seventeen years.

Figure 20 displays the changing nature of employment in Somersworth since 1990. The greatest gains in employment have been in health care/social assistance (almost 360%), wholesale trade, state government, real estate, retail trade, and accommodation and food services. Employment in these categories has more than doubled in less than twenty years. The greatest losses have been in Manufacturing and a general category of “Goods-Producing Industries. These two categories have fewer than half the number of employees in 2007 that they had in 1990.

Figure 20: Change in Employment

NAICS Code Industry Category		Average Annual Employment					Percent change 90-07
		1990	1995	2000	2005	2007	
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	146	254	344	471	523	358.22%
42	Wholesale Trade	58	108	81	216	162	279.31%
	State Government	10	8	8	23	26	260.00%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	16	30	35	42	41	256.25%
44	Retail Trade	608	908	1,154	1,290	1,452	238.82%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	123	143	232	211	264	214.63%
102	Service-Providing Industries	1,702	2,257	2,557	3,196	3,447	202.53%
54	Professional and Technical Service	63	51	96	109	114	180.95%
81	Other Services Except Public Admin	180	252	293	280	257	142.78%
	Total Government	428	431	476	534	526	122.90%
	Local Government	385	402	438	481	471	122.34%
	Total, Private plus Government	4,592	4,791	4,555	4,909	5,078	110.58%
	Total Private	4,164	4,360	4,079	4,375	4,552	109.32%
56	Administrative and Waste Services	211	225	n	155	182	86.26%
	Federal Government	33	21	31	29	28	84.85%
52	Finance and Insurance	99	67	42	55	74	74.75%
101	Goods-Producing Industries	2,462	2,103	1,522	1,180	1,105	44.88%
31	Manufacturing	2,326	1,980	1,389	1,041	1,020	43.85%
11	Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	0	n	n	n	n	
21	Mining	0	0	0	0	0	
23	Construction	136	n	n	n	n	
22	Utilities	0	n	n	n	n	
48	Transportation and Warehousing	n	63	16	16	9	
51	Information	n	n	n	n	20	
55	Management of Companies/Enterprises	0	n	n	n	n	
61	Educational Services	n	n	29	28	n	
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	n	69	45	202	278	
99	Unclassified Establishments	n	0	0	n	n	

Source: Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau, NH Employment Security, Concord, NH
n = data does not meet disclosure standards

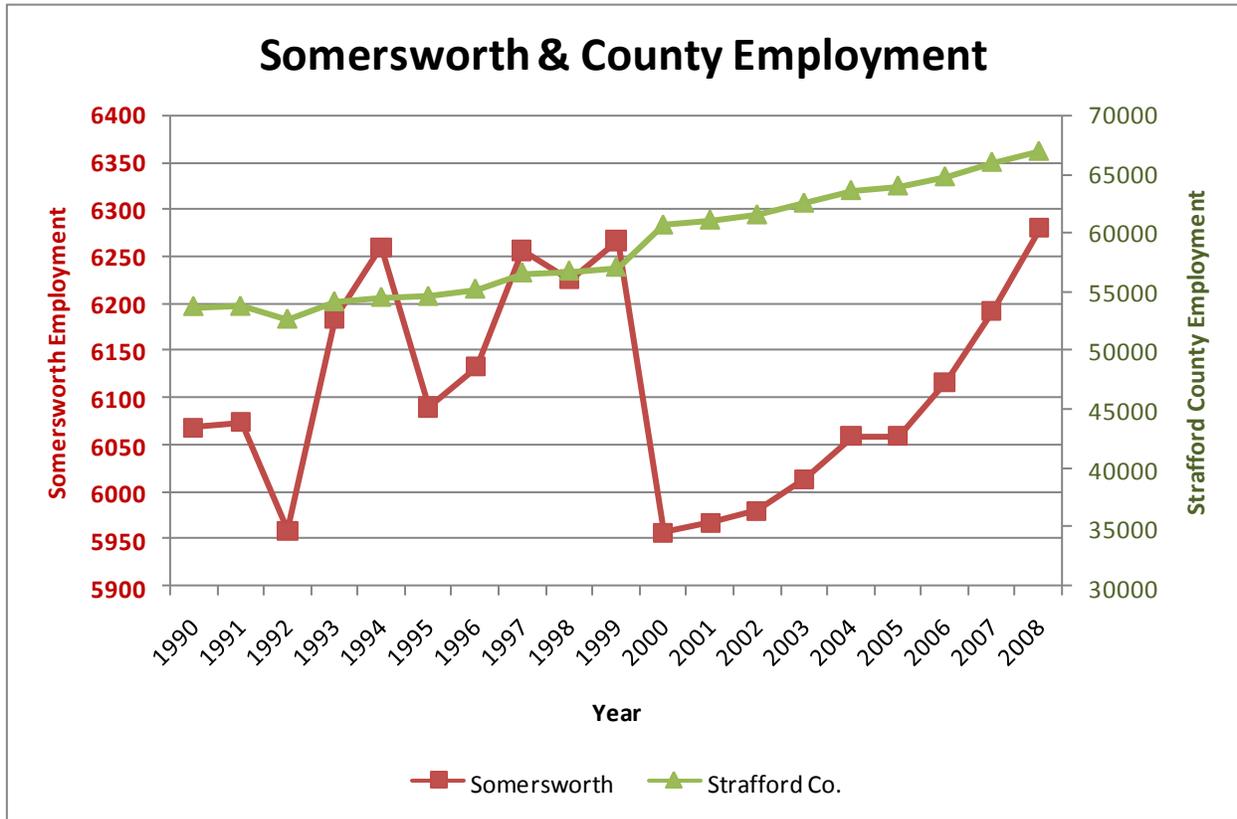
Conversely, it is interesting to note the low level or lack of employment in several categories as shown in Figure 1 including agriculture, forestry, mining, construction, transportation and educational services.

Employment Levels

Somersworth lost more than 300 jobs in 1999, but regained them by 2008

The level of employment is another important indicator of economic conditions in a community. Figure 21 shows the total employment for both the city and county from 1990 to 2008. Strafford County's employment has steadily climbed over this time period to a 2008 high of nearly 67,000. Somersworth had a peak employment in 1999 of 6,267 but lost more than 300 jobs in 2000. By 2008 that loss had recovered to a new high of 6,280.

Figure 21: Local and County Employment Trends



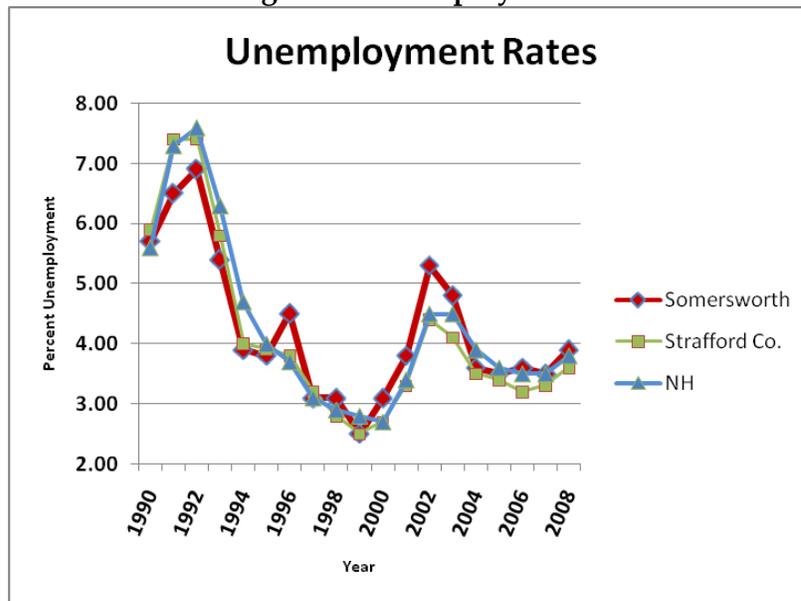
Source: NH Employment Security

Unemployment rates for the city, county and state parallel each other fairly closely over time. Figure 22 shows this relationship with Somersworth’s unemployment fluctuating more than the county and state. This more noticeable change may be attributable to two factors:

- Somersworth has a smaller number of employees so that a relatively minor change can influence the unemployment level more than for the county and state which have a significantly higher employee base; and
- Until recently Somersworth had a relatively large number of workers in manufacturing jobs that are more sensitive to economic downturns than service-oriented jobs.

Detailed data for Somersworth is not yet available to explain the impacts of the current economic downturn. Monthly reports from the NH Department of Employment Security (NH Economic Conditions, May, 2009) indicate that the unemployment rate for the Rochester-Dover NH-ME metro area (which includes Somersworth) increased from 3.5 % unemployment in March, 2008 to 6.7% in March, 2009. This represents employment losses of 1,100 people. The largest losses have occurred in construction, manufacturing, trade/transportation & utilities, retail trade, and professional/business sectors. For example, Trelleborg Sealing Solutions recently announced that it will cease production with the loss of 91 jobs. The monthly report from NHES also indicates that education and health care has actually gained in employment over the past year.

Figure 22: Unemployment Trends



Source: NH Employment Security

Employment by Business Type

Retail trade, manufacturing and health care comprise nearly 60% of the total employment in Somersworth

Figure 23 displays the employment profile for the city in 2007 from the NH Employment Security office. It is organized in rank order based on the percentage of employees in each employment category and serves as a good summary of the nature of employment in the city. Almost 50% of Somersworth’s employees are either in retail trade or manufacturing with retail trade comprising almost 30% of the workforce. This figure reflects the large number of recently established retail business such as along High Street. With respect to individual income, these workers may not compare favorably to other business sectors such as manufacturing and health care.

Figure 23: Somersworth Employment

Somersworth Employment by Industry Classification		
Industry	City of Somersworth	Percent of Total
Total, Private plus Government	5,078	
Total Private	4,552	
Retail Trade	1,452	28.59%
Manufacturing	1,020	20.09%
Health Care and Social Assistance	523	10.30%
Local Government	471	9.28%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	278	5.47%
Accommodation and Food Services	264	5.20%
Other Services Except Public Admin	257	5.06%
Administrative and Waste Services	182	3.58%
Wholesale Trade	162	3.19%
Professional and Technical Service	114	2.24%
Finance and Insurance	74	1.46%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	41	0.81%
Federal Government	28	0.55%
State Government	26	0.51%
Information	20	0.39%
Transportation and Warehousing	9	0.18%

Source: NH Employment Security

Businesses by Type

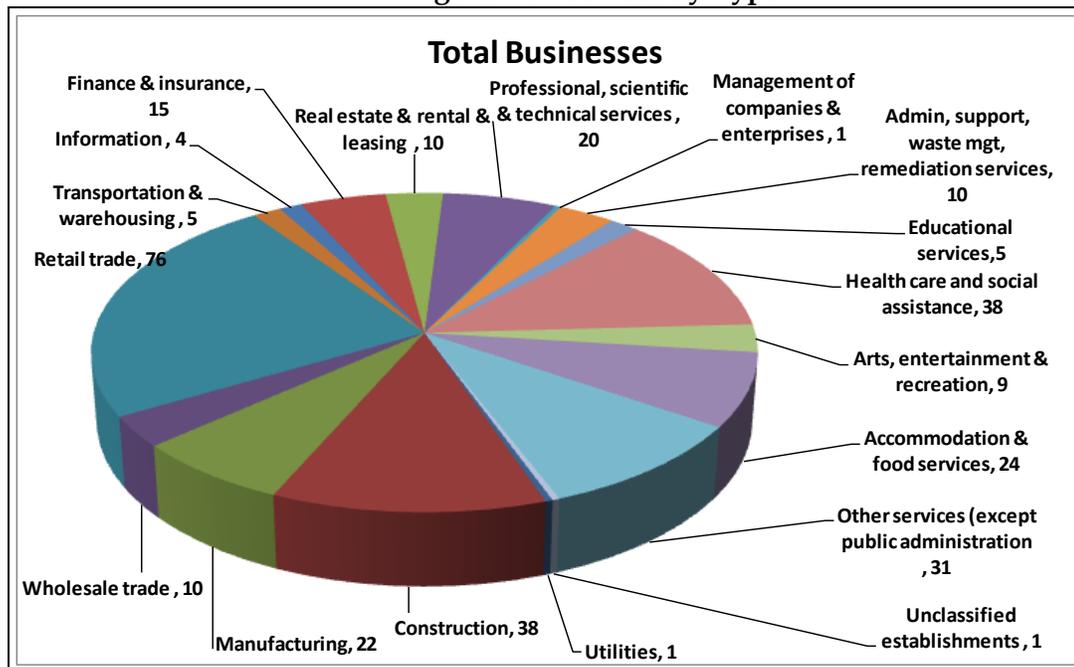
From 1998 to 2006, 70 new businesses established in Somersworth

According to the 2006 U.S. Census County Business Patterns there were a total of 320 businesses in Somersworth employing 4,905 people with an annual payroll of \$157,113,000. In 1998 there were 250 businesses that employed 4,689 people with annual payroll of \$111,350,000. During that eight year period there were seventy new businesses established in the city with a net gain of 216 employees. This information is summarized in Figure 24. Of the new businesses the largest number were created in the following categories:

- ◆ 17 Retail
- ◆ 14 Construction
- ◆ 10 Health care and social assistance
- ◆ 8 Professional, scientific and technical
- ◆ 7 Finance and Insurance
- ◆ 6 Accommodations and food service

Two business categories actually lost ground between 1998 and 2006. There were two fewer manufacturing businesses and three fewer wholesale trade establishments in 2006 as compared to 1998. This data is different from the employment by business category in that it shows the number and type of businesses that are based in Somersworth. It helps to understand the categories of products and services that are available and therefore the city's economic strengths. This information is not updated annually so there are no current statistics to show how the current economic conditions are influencing these businesses.

Figure 24: Business by Type



Source: US Census – 2006 County Business Patterns

Sector Analysis: Strengths and Weaknesses

One way to examine economic strengths in a community is to compare the percentage of employees by business type (North American Industrial Classification System or NAICS) to figures for the county and state. By comparing the percentages of a given business category in Somersworth to the county or state we can determine what the local economic strengths are. If Somersworth has a higher percentage of employment in a business category compared to the county or state, then that category should be viewed as a business sector strength or specialty. The higher the level of strength, the more it may be viewed as an “exporting” business category – meaning that that industry serves a larger market than the city itself. Conversely, if a business category has a significantly lower percentage of employment in a category than the county or state, then it is a net importer of those goods and services – relying heavily on other geographic locations.

This percentage comparison technique is called a Location Quotient (LQ) Analysis. When the percentage share comparisons between city/state or county/state are evaluated, an LQ greater than about 1.25 tells us that it is a net exporting business category. If the LQ is less than about 0.75 then it is a net importing category. LQ figures between 0.75 and 1.25 suggest that the business category is generally providing the goods and services of that business category that are needed for the local area.

Because Somersworth’s economy is intertwined with the businesses and economics of the region, undertaking a location quotient analysis just for Somersworth may be informative but not as reliable as a county-wide comparison to state figures. Figure 25 is an LQ analysis specifically comparing Somersworth to the state. It does highlight the particular strengths of the city (exporting industries) including retail trade and manufacturing and those industry categories (importing industries) that rely more heavily on the region for specific goods and services such as health care.

Figure 25: Business Sector Strengths

Somersworth Location Quotient Analysis				
2007 Employment Data		City of		Location
NAICS		Somersworth	Percent of	Quotient
Code	Industry	Employment	Total	City/State
Export Industries				
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	278	6.11%	3.08
44-45	Retail Trade	1,452	31.90%	1.78
31-33	Manufacturing	1,020	22.41%	1.57
81	Other Services Except Public Admin	257	5.65%	1.56
Import Industries				
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	523	11.49%	0.79
56	Administrative and Waste Services	182	4.00%	0.78
42	Wholesale Trade	162	3.56%	0.68
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	41	0.90%	0.62
72	Accommodation and Food Services	264	5.80%	0.59
54	Professional and Technical Service	114	2.50%	0.45
52	Finance and Insurance	74	1.63%	0.31
51	Information	20	0.44%	0.20
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	9	0.20%	0.08

Source: NH Employment Security

The Strafford County-State location quotient analysis as shown in Figure 26 provides a better understanding of exporting and importing industry categories. What the analysis shows is the categories where Somersworth and the County have particular strengths – refer to the “Exporting Industries” portion of Figure 26. These strengths indicate that there is a concentration of businesses and employee skill sets that the region has acquired. It also highlights categories where there may be opportunities to grow and fill voids in underrepresented business categories which are highlighted in the “importing industries” portion of Figure 26.

The other advantage of looking at the county/state LQ analysis is that we have a finer breakdown of businesses to evaluate. When there are a small number of businesses in a city, the state and federal agencies that track economic data will not report that information to protect the confidentiality of individual businesses. Consequently by using data for the entire county, we have more employees and employers to evaluate and can see a finer level of detail to see what the city and county strengths are.

Strong “Export” industries listed in Figure 26 include management and technical consulting; transportation equipment manufacturing; machinery, textiles and telecommunications. Businesses that are underrepresented in the county and point to potential business opportunities are listed in Figure 26 as “Importing” industries. Examples include computer systems design; scientific research; electronics and appliance stores; publishing companies; sporting goods, hobby and

Figure 26: County Business Sector Strengths

Strafford County Location Quotient Analysis					
2007 Employment Data				City of	
NAICS Code	Industry	Somersworth Employment	Percent of Total	Location Quotient County/State	
Export Industries					
5416	Management and technical consulting services			3.30	
5619	Other support services			2.99	
336	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing			2.94	
5611	Office administrative services			2.82	
333	Machinery Manufacturing			2.40	
111	Crop Production			2.35	
313	Textile Mills			2.16	
562	Waste Management and Remediation Services			2.16	
517	Telecommunications			2.13	
326	Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing			1.76	
515	Broadcasting (except Internet)			1.71	
339	Miscellaneous Manufacturing			1.70	
314	Textile Product Mills			1.53	
5419	Other professional and technical services			1.52	
5614	Business support services			1.48	
812	Personal and Laundry Services			1.35	
445	Food and Beverage Stores			1.33	
52	Finance and Insurance	74	1.63%	1.30	
811	Repair and Maintenance			1.27	
621	Ambulatory Health Care Services			1.26	
446	Health and Personal Care Stores			1.26	
Self-Sufficient Industries					
493	Warehousing and Storage			1.24	
11	Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	n		1.22	
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	523	11.49%	1.16	
454	Nonstore Retailers			1.16	
622	Hospitals			1.16	
323	Printing and Related Support Activities			1.14	
51	Information	20	0.44%	1.12	
444	Building Material and Garden Supply Stores			1.11	
624	Social Assistance			1.11	
447	Gasoline Stations			1.10	
81	Other Services Except Public Admin	257	5.65%	1.10	
441	Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers			1.09	
56	Administrative and Waste Services	182	4.00%	1.09	
5413	Architectural and engineering services			1.08	
54	Professional and Technical Service	114	2.50%	1.03	
541	Professional and Technical Services			1.03	
31-33	Manufacturing	1,020	22.41%	1.03	
623	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities			1.02	
44-45	Retail Trade	1,452	31.90%	1.02	
452	General Merchandise Stores			1.02	
561	Administrative and Support Services			1.01	
72	Accommodation and Food Services	264	5.80%	1.00	
332	Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing			0.99	
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	9	0.20%	0.99	
424	Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods			0.94	
713	Gambling, Recreation, Amusement Industries			0.90	
238	Specialty Trade Contractors			0.90	
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	278	6.11%	0.86	
531	Real Estate			0.85	
711	Performing Arts and Spectator Sports			0.84	
5617	Services to buildings and dwellings			0.84	
23	Construction	n		0.83	
453	Miscellaneous Store Retailers			0.83	
485	Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation			0.80	
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	41	0.90%	0.80	
236	Construction of Buildings			0.79	
5411	Legal services			0.75	
Importing Industries					
814	Private Households			0.71	
484	Truck Transportation			0.70	
813	Membership Associations and Organizations			0.69	
5613	Employment services			0.68	
442	Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores			0.68	
61	Educational Services	n		0.66	
611	Educational Services			0.66	
327	Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing			0.63	
5412	Accounting and bookkeeping services			0.62	
518	Data Processing and Related Services			0.62	
42	Wholesale Trade	162	3.56%	0.57	
237	Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction			0.57	
5615	Travel arrangement and reservation services			0.57	
5418	Advertising, PR and related services			0.55	
21	Mining			0.53	
423	Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods			0.52	
448	Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores			0.52	
334	Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing			0.50	
451	Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores			0.50	
511	Publishing Industries (except Internet)			0.49	
443	Electronics and Appliance Stores			0.48	
55	Management of Companies/Enterprises	n		0.46	
551	Management of Companies/Enterprises			0.46	
331	Primary Metal Manufacturing			0.44	
311	Food Manufacturing			0.44	
5417	Scientific research and development services			0.38	
712	Museums, Historical Sites, Zoos, and Parks			0.34	
5415	Computer systems design and related services			0.34	
425	Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers			0.33	
5414	Specialized design services			0.31	
321	Wood Product Manufacturing			0.29	
5616	Investigation and security services			0.23	
488	Support Activities for Transportation			0.22	
523	Financial Investment and Related Activities			0.08	

book stores; clothing stores, and; durable goods wholesalers.

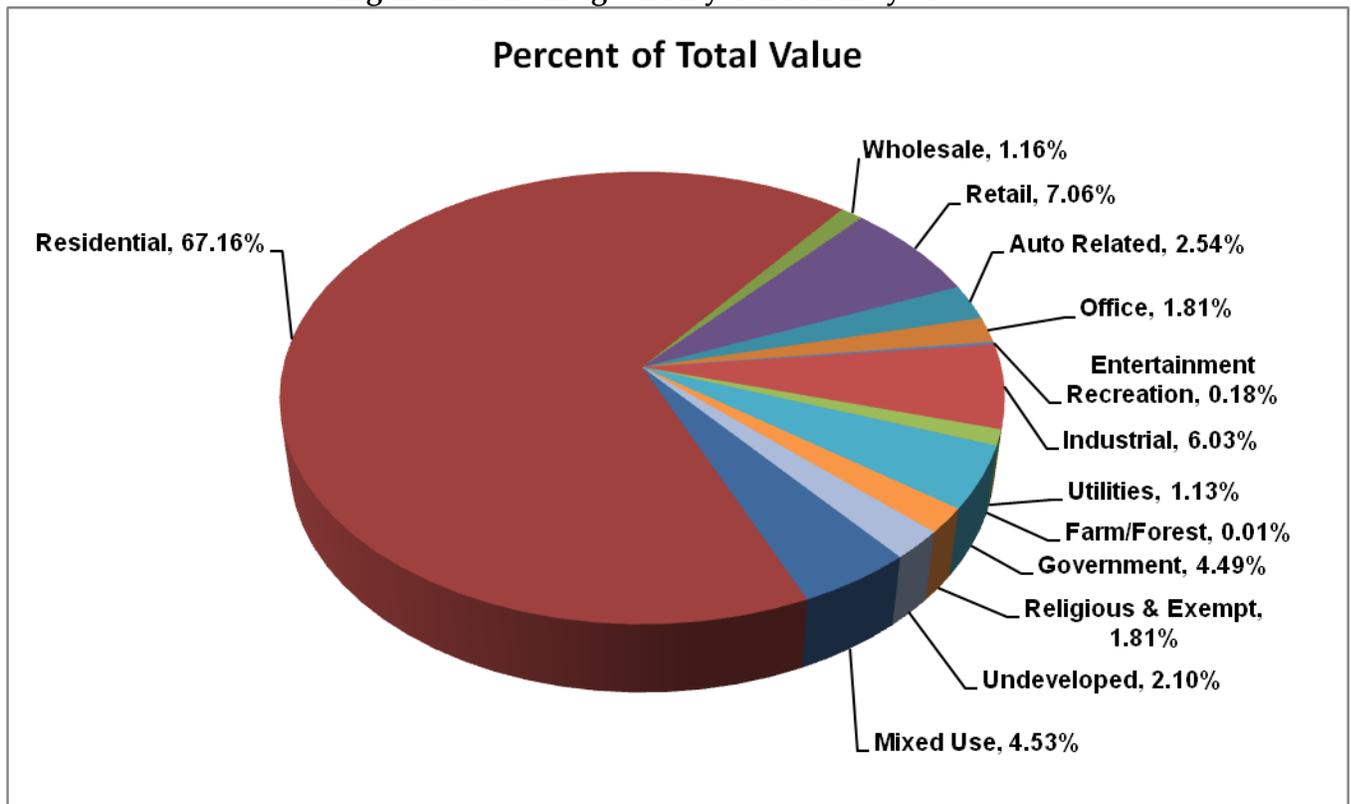
City Valuation and Taxes– Land Use Mix and Value

City Valuation

Residential properties comprise 67% of the total assessed value of the city.

Based on the 2008 Assessor’s Office records there are 4,149 parcels of land in Somersworth with a total value of \$972,084,410. The Equalization Rate for 2008 was 93.1%, meaning that all of the property in Somersworth is valued at \$1,044,129,334. The percentage of total assessed value, broken down by property use, is displayed in Figure 27. By far the largest use category contributing to the city’s valuation is residential at over 67%. The next highest are retail at just over 7% and industrial at just over 6%.

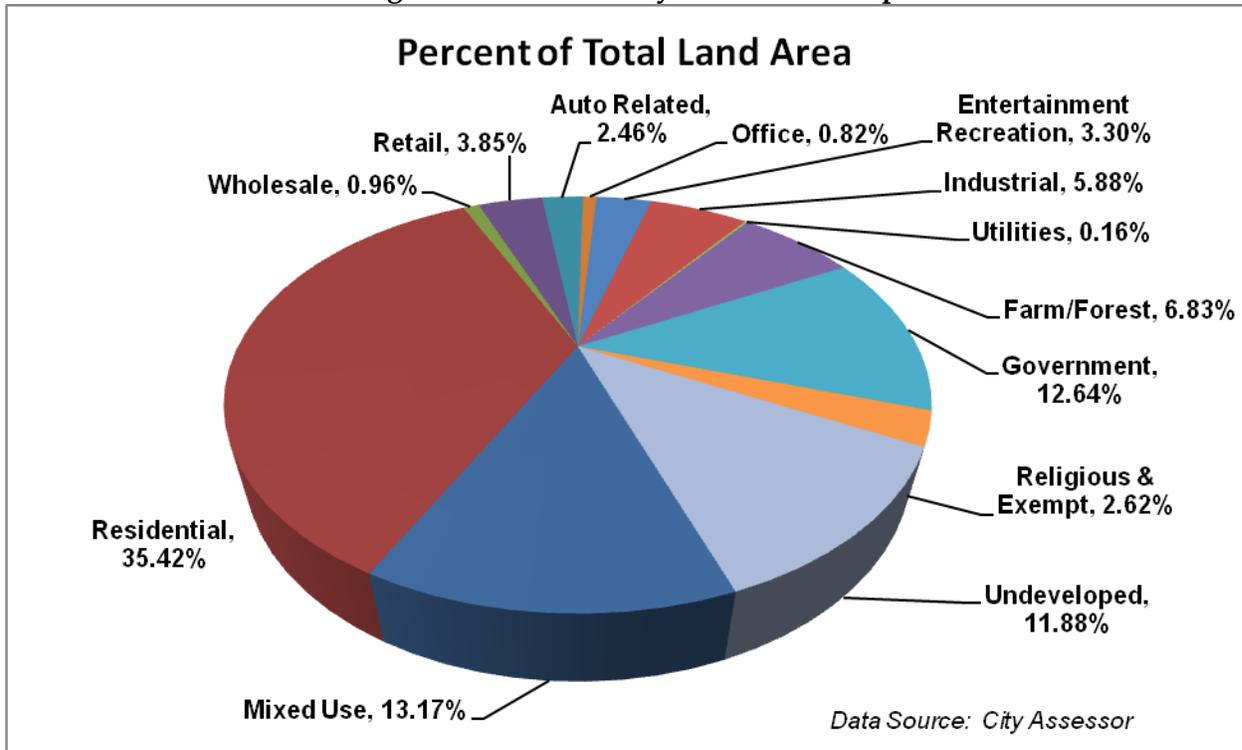
Figure 27: Percentage of City Valuation by Use



Source: City Assessor

The 2008 assessor’s data also enables us to look at the percentage of total city land area used for different purposes. This breakdown is displayed in Figure 28. Of the total land area in Somersworth, 35.4% is used for residential purposes, almost 12% is undeveloped, 14.1% is commercial and industrial, and 13.2% is a mix of residential and non-residential.

Figure 28: Valuation by Land Area (tax parcels)



Local Taxes

Somersworth's gross valuation and tax rank are among the lowest in the state.

When compared to communities of similar population size and density, Somersworth has one of the lowest tax rates and assessed values per capita in the state. Figure 3 illustrates the tax burden per capita for communities that are of similar size to Somersworth. Berlin has the lowest valuation of all 234 municipalities in the state (2004 rank #1) and one of the lowest tax rates per person at \$1,220. Somersworth is only slightly higher at \$1,352 per person (2004 rank #36).

Because Somersworth has one of the highest population densities in the state, at 1,216 persons per square mile, we also compared the city's tax situation to the eight other high-density communities in the state. See Figure 29. Compared to these communities, Somersworth ranks the lowest in valuation, although it has the lowest per capita tax rank (tax burden). Manchester, with more than twice the population density of Somersworth, has a slightly higher tax rate per person than Somersworth.

Figure 29: Per Capita Taxes for Communities Similar in Size to Somersworth

	2007 Population	Population /Sq.Mi.	2005 Taxes /capita	2005 Tax Rank	2004 Valuation /Capita	2004 Valuation Rank
Lebanon	13,611	338	2,431	188	114,077	139
Hooksett	13,218	365	2,019	140	109,292	125
Claremont	12,898	299	1,532	53	50,842	3
Windham	12,682	475	2,280	176	158,199	187
Pelham	12,440	473	1,731	95	112,327	136
Somersworth	11,918	1,216	1,352	30	72,706	36
Amherst	11,563	341	2,773	205	138,029	166
Hanover	10,896	222	2,369	182	155,681	184
Raymond	10,786	375	1,592	61	77,628	42
Berlin	10,287	167	1,220	15	35,853	1

Data Source: NHOEP

With taxes of about \$2,700 per person, Portsmouth, Newcastle and Hampton have among the highest taxes in the state. By comparison, Somersworth’s 2005 per person tax burden was less than half that, at \$1,352 as shown in Figure 30.

Figure 30: Per Capita Tax Rates for Higher Density Communities in NH

	2007 Population	Population /Sq.Mi.	2005 Taxes /capita	2005 Tax Rank	2004 Valuation /Capita	2004 Valuation Rank
Manchester	108,580	3,290	1,365	34	85,970	62
Nashua	87,150	2,829	1,680	88	95,597	98
Portsmouth	20,610	1,312	2,568	195	166,057	190
Newcastle	1,022	1,277	2,798	207	554,563	232
Somersworth	11,918	1,216	1,352	30	72,706	36
Salem	29,703	1,197	1,767	102	140,002	170
Hampton	15,185	1,100	2,705	202	180,660	197
Dover	28,703	1,075	1,698	91	90,744	80
Derry	34,200	966	1,801	109	81,466	55

Data Source: NHOEP

Land Use and Natural Resources

An Overview

Somersworth has over 50% of its Land in Open Space.

Although Somersworth is relatively densely populated much of its land is still open. This open land consists of city-owned parks and open space areas as well as open farmlands, wetlands and woodlands

Both Important Natural Resources and Developed Areas Tend to Follow North-South Pattern.

The large expanse of open space follows the major forest and wetland resource areas associated with north-south flowing brooks—Blackwater, Tate’s, Peters Marsh and Twombly Brooks. Much of the densely developed areas including residential, commercial and industrial have developed along, or adjacent to, two major north south roadway—NH Route 9 (High Street) and NH Route 108.

Twenty –five percent (25%) of City is Residential; Much Smaller Portions are Industrial and Commercial

Much of Somersworth’s historical residential area is concentrated near the city’s downtown core; industrial development is along the Salmon Falls River or west of the NH Route 108 Corridor; commercial development tends to be concentrated in the downtown or along the southern portion of High Street.

Somersworth has Variety of Natural Resource Areas

- Much of Somersworth covered with sand and gravel.
- About 2.5% of Somersworth is in agricultural activity and Farmland Soils.
- The city’s Water Resources include a mix of streams, ponds, floodplains and groundwater. The major features are: Lily Pond, Willand Pond and the Salmon Falls River.
- There are over 1,500 acres of Hydric/wetland soils; Peters Marsh alone is 47 acres.
- There are several areas where high value natural resources coincide including southern Somersworth and the Willand Pond/Peters Marsh Brook/Tate’s Brook marsh wetland complex.

About 4% of Somersworth's --approximately 273 acres--dedicated to public recreation

Other area cities devote no more than 2% to recreation. Public recreation includes parks, golf courses, natural areas and playing fields.

Land Use

Almost 60% of Somersworth is Open Land

Land Use Change since 2000 Master Plan

At ten square miles or approximately 6,398 acres, Somersworth is the second smallest municipality in Strafford County. By comparison Barrington is almost 49 square miles and Rollinsford is about 7 1/2 square miles. Within this area there is a variety of natural resource and open spaces that provide great value to the city.

In the last Master Plan Update in 2000, it was noted that based on 1993 data about 2,200 hundred acres or 34% of the city was developed. Of this about 1,575 acres or almost 72% of the developed area was in residential use while non-residential was about 400 acres or 22% of the developed land. At that time over 60% of the city was open space—defined as forest, fields, parks or water. Based on more accurate aerial photo interpretation from 2005 aerial photography, it would appear that the 1993 land cover data were reasonably accurate.

Based on current data, there are approximately 2,500 acres of developed land. Of this 1,532 are reported (or 61% of the developed land) as residential, primarily single family/duplex—a lower figure than in the 2000 Master Plan which reported 1574 acres of residential. See Table 1 below. Some of this discrepancy may be due to the fact that the Mixed Urban category has not been included in the residential category even though there is some residential within Mixed Urban. A significant portion of the city's residential activity is within the downtown and in particular the Hilltop Historic District, the largest in the state with approximately 220 properties. Non-residential is now reported at almost 968 acres, more than twice the 2000 Master Plan figure, indicating a substantial increase in commercial and industrial development. Commercial use is a little over 250 acres or approximately 4% of the city's total area and slightly more than 10% of the developed area. Industrial use was reported at a much higher number of acres in the 2000 Master Plan than the current Land Use Map indicates. It is now reported at less than 2% of the city's total area and 4% of the developed area. Much of this development occurs along the Route 108 and High Street Corridors. See the Land Use Map.

Over the past 10-15 years one of the predominant uses along the Route 108 Corridor is medical offices and health services. Such uses appear to be taking advantage of a strategic location between the two major hospitals—Frisbie in Rochester and Wentworth-Douglas in Dover. This demand for medical office space has also spilled over onto High Street.

Table 1. Land Use Comparison

Land Use	2000 Master Plan Land Use		2005 Land Use	
	Acres	Percent of City	Acres	Percent of City
Single Family/Duplex (Residential -2000)	1,574	24.6	1345.58	21.03
Multi-Family			186.47	2.91
Mixed Urban			34.77	0.54
Commercial	153	2.4	251.87	3.94
Industrial	240	3.7	97.37	1.52
Public, Institutional, or Educ.	138	2.2	137.07	2.14
Recreation	155	2.4	208.58	3.26
Transportation	94	1.5	214.41	3.35
Utilities			50.53	0.79
Forested or Brush (Vacant-2000)	3,862	60.4	2394.68	37.43
Agricultural			433.05	6.77
Disturbed & Vacant Land			186.11	2.91
Wetlands			675.26	10.5
Water	181	2.8	181.71	2.84
TOTALS	6,398	100	6397.46	100

Sources: 2000 Master Plan; 2005 New Hampshire Land Cover Aerial Photography

Note: The 2000 Master Plan land use categories were aggregated into fewer categories than the 2005 land use interpretations. The 2000 Master Plan data was based on a regional land use study. The 2005 land use data is more accurate and future land use studies should use similar parameters for interpretation

Using the same definition of open space as in the 2000 Plan (including wetlands and recreation areas), there are 3,893 acres of open space or 58%—almost the same as reported in the 2000 Master Plan. Of this open space forest and brush land make almost 2400 acres or 38% of the city. Adding in recreation land to open space puts the city at 60%. See the Land Use Map. The large expanse of open space tends to run in a north-south patterns following the major forest and wetland resource areas associated with north-south flowing brooks—Blackwater, Tate’s, Peters Marsh and Twombly Brooks.

Interestingly, this geographic mosaic has generally led to a north south linear development pattern for both residential and commercial development except for the downtown urban core. If one were to only view the city from its roadways, it might appear that the city is more developed than it actually is.

Impact of Land Use Change

One measure of land use change is particularly important in determining the level of impact on the city's and region's natural resources—increase in impervious surface. Impervious surface is simply those developed areas that are covered with impermeable surfaces such as roofs, roadways, parking areas and sidewalks. Such surfaces repel stormwater preventing it from infiltrating directly in to soils and aquifers. Instead, stormwater runoff flows directly into surface waters where pollutants including, sediment, metals, excess nutrients, organics are discharged into the receiving water bodies such as streams and ponds. In addition to these environmental impacts, increasing levels of imperviousness can dramatically alter our landscapes, as forested and other natural settings that may have value for wildlife and agriculture are converted to urban/suburban uses. Research has indicated that once an area reaches 10% or more impervious cover the quality of the water begins to noticeably degrade.¹

The New Hampshire Estuaries program has studied all of the communities in the Coastal Watershed including Somersworth to determine the increase in impervious surfaces from 1990 to 2005. In that 15 year period Somersworth's impervious cover has increased from approximately 768 acres (12% of the City) to 1,257 acres (a little over 20%). By comparison Dover is at 18.6 % and Rochester is at approximately 14%.

Natural Resources and Open Space

Somersworth natural and open space resources are a critical consideration in establishing a proper approach for land use planning and management. Understanding natural resource values provides a rational basis for determining which areas of the town are more appropriate for protection and open space and which areas are more suitable for development. Natural resources such as surface waters, forest resources, wildlife and opens spaces such as parks and playgrounds add to Somersworth's character, provide recreational and economic opportunities and contribute to the quality of life for Somersworth residents. These resources also provide both opportunities and limitations for growth. Shorelands and wetlands are less suitable for development, while better drained, flatter areas are more suitable.

Topography and Elevation Elevation Ranges from 70 to 314 Feet

Somersworth lies in the New England Seaboard section of the New England Physiographic Region. The flat to rolling terrain ranges in elevation from about 72 feet in the southeast section near the City's wastewater treatment facility to approximately 314 feet near the City's water tower near Noble Pines.

¹ *Effects of Urbanization on Stream Quality at Selected Sites in the Seacoast Region in New Hampshire, 2001-03*, U.S. Geological Survey Scientific Investigations Report 2005-5103.

Somersworth's topography is controlled by both the underlying bedrock that often is exposed as ledge or bedrock outcrops as well as the almost flat gravel deposits that make up much of the city. The steepest areas of the community are associated with the Salmon Falls River, Lily Pond and the urban core area associated with the "Hill". Once slopes get to greater than 15% development becomes more problematic and may require appropriate land management practices to minimize environmental impacts.

Surficial Geology

Much of Somersworth Covered with Sand & Gravel

The majority of Somersworth is overlain by stratified drift materials that were deposited by the melt waters of the last glaciers along an ancient river valley that extended from the Willand Pond area north to Salmon Falls. These deposits provide a good source of sand and gravel as well as groundwater. The remainder of the city is covered with glacial till, a relatively thin mantle of soil over the bedrock that is made up of glacial deposits containing a mixture of sand, clay, loam and stone.

Agricultural Lands and Farmland Soils

About 2.5% of Somersworth in agricultural activity with the same percentage of Prime Farmland Soils.

Somersworth has a total of 433 acres devoted to agricultural activity or about 6.8% of its total land area. Given Somersworth's urban character this is a rather sizable amount of land use devoted to this activity. The largest concentration of agricultural activity is in the southern portion of the city

The highest quality farm lands in Somersworth are Prime Farmlands; there are approximately 748 acres according to the Natural Resources Conservation Service. As shown on the Natural Resource Map of High Community Value there are also areas of farmland soils of statewide importance which comprise approximately 260 acres. Taken together these valuable farmland soils account for almost 16% of the city's land area

Water Resources

A Mix of Streams, Ponds, Floodplains and Groundwater

Watersheds

Somersworth lies within two major watersheds: the Salmon Falls and Cochecho. The central portion of the city, including the watersheds of Willand Pond, Peters Brook and Lily Pond, drains to the Salmon Falls. The western and southeastern portions of the city drain to the Cochecho River though Dover. For planning purposes, watersheds are categorized by Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC) by the NH DES to organize hydrologic data on a statewide basis. In Somersworth there are three watershed units:

- Middle Cochecho
- Middle Salmon Falls and
- Lower Salmon Falls

These watershed designations are depicted on the Surface Water Resources Map. Based on a water resources study conducted by the city in 1991², there are nine subwatersheds three of which flow to the Salmon Falls and the remainder to the Cochecho. These include:

Middle Salmon Falls

- Tate’s Brook/Peters Marsh Brook
- Fieldings Creek

Lower Salmon Falls

- Malley Farm
- Downtown Drainage Area

Middle Cochecho

- Blackwater Brook
- Lily Pond
- Twombly Brook
- Rollins Brook
- Reyners Brook

Fieldings Creek and the Downtown Drainage Watersheds are the only two solely within the boundaries of the city. The largest of these is the Tate’s Brook/Peters Marsh Brook which encompasses 2,041 acres.

Surface Water Features—Three major features comprising 137 acres

The major surface water features are:

- Willand Pond 62 acres
- Lily Pond 36 acres
- Salmon Falls River 39 acres

Lily Pond

Lily Pond is located in the northern portion of the city between West High Street and Lily Pond Road and is at an elevation of about 200 feet. Coles Brook drains out of this

² *City of Somersworth, Water Resources Management and Protection Plan, 1991*

pond for about 1.5 miles before it discharges into the Salmon Falls. Based on NH DES water quality data, this pond does not appear to be impaired and is supportive of primary (swimming) contact recreation, secondary contact recreation (boating, etc.) and drinking water with treatment.

Willand Pond

Willand Pond, located in the southern portion of the city on the border with the City of Dover, is approximately 37 feet deep at its maximum location. It appears that its major source of water is from the groundwater aquifer that lies beneath the pond. This pond is drained by Peters Marsh Brook which flows approximately 1.8 miles where it joins Tate's Brook which flows another two miles to the Salmon Falls River north of downtown Somersworth.

In both 1944 and 1995 detailed natural resource inventories of the pond and its surrounding environment were undertaken by the Department of Natural Resources at the University of New Hampshire³. The 1994 study focused in large part on a major land parcel in one ownership that stretches from Willand Pond to Blackwater Road. These studies analyzed the physical attributes of the pond, its water quality as well as the soil, wetland, groundwater, forest and wildlife characteristics of the nearby watershed. At that time, the nutrient level in the pond was considered to be "mesotrophic" neither too rich in nutrients to be a healthy water body (a "eutrophic" state) nor very low in nutrients where the water is clear and aquatic systems are healthy. In general, it was determined that, in spite of the level of development near the pond, the water quality was acceptable for boating (without gas-powered engines) and fishing. Swimming was never allowed as this water body and the associated aquifer are a back up water supply for the City of Dover.

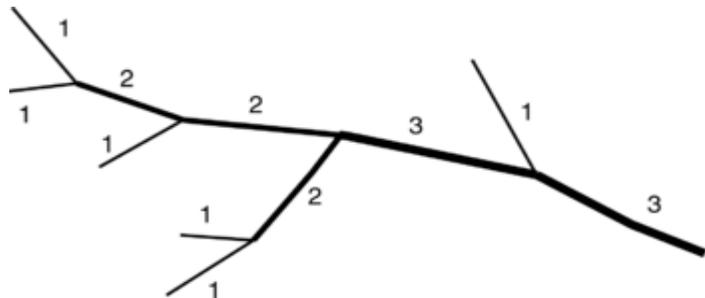
However, in recent years the pond has suffered from several significant problems. This water body is currently classified as impaired by the NH DES because of high *Cyanobacteria* levels. It has also suffered from an apparent problem of poor drainage resulting in higher than normal pond water levels and creating flooding problems to adjacent properties. A jointly sponsored study by the City's of Somersworth and Dover is investigating both of these issues to determine if there is a strategy to mitigate the bacteria levels and high water level problems.

³ *Natural Resource Inventory, Willand Common, Somersworth, New Hampshire, UNH Department of Natural Resources, 1994*

Natural Resource Inventory, Willand Pond, Somersworth, New Hampshire, UNH Department of Natural Resources 1995

The Salmon Falls River, which comprises Somersworth’s eastern boundary originates at Great East Lake in Acton, Maine and joins the Cochecho River in Dover to form the Piscataqua River that eventually drains into the Gulf of Maine. The portion of the river in Somersworth begins at an elevation of about 160 feet and flows almost five (5) miles to the city’s southern border with Rollinsford at an elevation of about 100 feet. Along this course there are four dams—the Mast Dam, the Upper Great Falls, Lower Great Falls and one unnamed one.

Streams and rivers and their associated watersheds are often categorized in hierarchical fashion with first order streams serving as the headwater streams in a watershed. When two first order streams join they stream becomes a second order stream and so on as shown un accompanying diagram.



US Army Corps of Engineers, after Strahler Stream Order

Except for the Salmon Falls, a fifth order stream all of the other streams and brooks in Somersworth are either first or second order. As shown on the Surface Water Resources Map of the 21.3 miles of streams and rivers in Somersworth 9.9 miles are first order and 6.2 miles are second streams. First and second order streams are particularly vulnerable to man’s activity since the low flows provided limited assimilative capacity for sediments and pollutants. Development adjacent to these streams needs to be managed carefully to minimize impacts to water quality and quantity.

Floodplains— Primarily Located in the Peters Marsh Brook/Tate’s Brook and Salmon Falls Corridors

Floodplains are periodically inundated lands adjacent to streams and rivers that are hazardous to health and property if developed. In Somersworth these areas are defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency as the 100-year flood zone and mapped on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) as can be seen on the Surface Water Resources Map as well as the Natural Resources of High Community Value Map. There are approximately 600 acres (about 9% of the city) of 100-year floodplains in the city. The greatest concentration of flood plains is within the Peters Brook Marsh watershed, 473 acres—72% of the total floodplain area or 7% of the city.

These areas provide value for flood control by storing flood waters during significant rainstorm events. Development in or adjacent to these areas must also minimize impact to flood storage value.

Groundwater

The City of Somersworth is overlain by a large sand and gravel deposit particularly in an area that runs in a north-south direction from Willand Pond to the Salmon Falls River. Although there is a large area of this material, much of it is not thick and has only limited capacity to yield large quantities of groundwater. Based on the most recent mapping of this area, it has been determined that much of it has been rated relatively low for groundwater transmission (Less than 2000 square feet per day). The area of highest potential transmission is near the City's current groundwater well site in the northeast section of the City (More than 4,000 square feet per day).

Wetland Resources—Over 1,500 acres of Hydric Soils

Somersworth has approximately 1523 acres of wetland resource areas or soils (approximately 25% of the city) that are considered to be hydric that often coincide with high value wetland resources areas. These are shown on the Surface Water Resources Map. These soils have poor drainage characteristics and have the value for flood storage, wildlife habitat and groundwater infiltration. The largest concentration of wetlands (approximately 552 acres or 33% of all Somersworth's wetlands) is in the Tates Brook/Peters Marsh Brook subwatershed. In the 1994 Natural Resource Inventory of the Willand Common identified five significant wetlands within this subwatershed that comprise over 80 acres that are hydrologically connected. These included:

- Central Parkway Wetland 1 acre
- Stackpole Pond 7 acres
- Peters Marsh 47 acres
- Willand Pond 23 acres
- Wet Meadow 4 acres

Recreation and Open Space Lands

About 4% of Somersworth is dedicated to public recreation

About 4% of Somersworth's land or approximately 273 acres is dedicated to public recreation. See Community Facilities-Open Space Map Based on recent data from the SRPC this figure compares favorably to other towns and cities in the region. Both Dover and Rochester have less than 2% of their land devoted to public recreation. Somersworth ratio of 12 acres of recreation land per citizen is well above the National Park and Recreation standard of 6-10 acres per person. Much of the public recreation land is concentrated in five locations as noted in the table below.

Family recreation, Field sports	Jules Bisson Playground	4.00
Family Recreation, Field Sports	Maple Street Complex	17.00*
Family recreation, Field sports	Noble Pines Playground	13.00
Family recreation, field Sports	School Street Playground	1.00
School and Field Sports	Somersworth High School	15.00

*Note: less than 17 acres used for recreation because portion of area is part of landfill and superfund site

There are two golf courses—one privately owned and the other owned by the City but leased out to a management company.

Golf	Oaks Golf Links Golf Course	290.00
Golf	Sunningdale Country Club	185.00

There are also several natural areas including portions of the Malley Farm, the riverfront park and Salmon Falls River frontage. In 1995 a natural resources inventory and recreational assessment was conducted of the Malley Farm by the Department of Natural Resources at UNH⁴. This study provided detailed inventories of the forest, wildlife and wetland resources of the farm area. It also provided recommendations for land management for forest and wildlife habitat as well as recreational opportunities that were consistent with the mixed use plan for this area.

Natural Area	Malley Farm	59.30
Natural Area	Riverfront Park	27.33
Natural Area	Salmon Falls River Frontage	57.4
Natural Area	Willand Pond Area	25.30

Private recreation areas include the following:

Fitness and Health Club	The Works	42.00
Miniature Golf and Recreation Center	Hilltop Recreation Center	

Areas of High Natural Resource Value

When combined, the areas of high natural resource value define areas of great significance for the protection of high value terrestrial and aquatic resources. Protecting these areas will not only contribute to the health of Somersworth's and the region's environment, they also represent resources that provided natural services to the community. See Natural Resources of High Community Value Map. For example, wetlands provide flood storage capability as well as habitat for wildlife while farm land soils provide a high quality resource for agricultural production. These areas include:

⁴ Malley Farm: A Comprehensive Natural Resource Inventory and Recreational Assessment, University of New Hampshire, 1995

- Wetlands and hydric soil
- 100-year Floodplains
- High value farmland soils (Prime Farmland Soils and Farmland Soils of Statewide Importance)
- High quality wildlife habitat (Including Highest Ranked Habitat in NH; Highest Ranked Habitat by Biological Region; and Supporting Landscapes⁵)

In some instances these resource areas will overlap. Where such co-occurrence exists the resource value may have even higher value than a single source area. Such areas exist in two general locations:

- In the southern portion of Somersworth where high quality wildlife habitat, wetlands and farmland soils exist in close proximity.
- In the Willand Pond, Peters Marsh Brook, Tate’s Brook marsh wetland complex

Open Space and Protected Lands

There are approximately 285.36 acres of lands in Somersworth that are in conservation and protected from land development as shown on the Community Facilities-Open Space Map. These lands are controlled by the city or private non-profit interests

By including city parks and other key city properties there are another approximately 223 acres of land not available for development.

Area	Size	% of City
City Parks	147.70	2.31%
Protected Open Space	285.36	4.46%
Key City Properties		
City Hall	0.43	
Fire Department	1.0	
Police and Public Works	42.24	
Sewer Treatment Facility	6.04	
Water Treatment Facility	25.5	
Total city acreage	75.21	1.1%

Observations

- Somersworth, while relatively densely developed, still has approximately 50% of its land in open space.

⁵ *New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan, New Hampshire Fish and Game, 2007*

- Somersworth’s land use tends to follow the pattern of the major north-south transportation corridors. These corridors represent both gateways to the city and major traffic roadways. They should be looked at to determine if improvements/changes – in terms of aesthetics, land use and traffic management – should be undertaken.
- Much of Somersworth’s historical residential area is concentrated near the city’s downtown core; industrial development is along the Salmon Falls River or west of the NH Route 108 Corridor; commercial development tends to be concentrated in the downtown or along the southern portion of High Street.
- There are numerous scientifically documented resources areas including critical wetland resources, farmland soils, low order streams and flood hazard areas that need to be protected and properly managed for the benefit of current and future citizens of Somersworth and the region.
- Somersworth should consider both regulatory and non-regulatory strategies to continue to protect its valuable natural resources. Particular effort should be invested in the restoration and long-term protection of Willand Pond and the adjacent wetland complexes.
- Ensure a long-term program for management and enhancement of the city’s park and recreation facilities.
- Revisit the land use regulations to determine if there are changes that can ensure more opportunity for:
 - ✓ Compact, pedestrian oriented development, such as Open Space Development
 - ✓ Mixed use development
 - ✓ Agricultural activity
 - ✓ Low Impact Development
 - ✓ Natural resource protection
 - ✓ Revisions to the zoning districts and zoning standards in the downtown core
 - ✓ Consideration of design guidelines for the downtown.

Transportation and Land Use

An Overview

Somersworth Land Use Patterns Are a Response to the City's Road Pattern

The transportation system is an important factor in determining a community's land use pattern. The transportation system is a land use *form* in terms of its linear physical presence and a land use *function* in terms of the service it provides to shoppers, businesses and residents in their day-to-day activities. The city's transportation system is comprised of roads, railroads, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, parking, and a public transportation system. With few exceptions, land use development has conformed to the strong centric design of the city and its transportation corridors.

Most of the Transportation Activity within the City is Automobile-oriented

Consequently, growth and development has conformed to the strong centric design of the city and its transportation corridors.

Somersworth is part of Regional Transportation System

Somersworth has access to two major regional highways:

- I-95 that connects the Boston Metropolitan Region with the Seacoast of New Hampshire and southern Maine.
- The Spaulding Turnpike that connects I-95 to New Hampshire's Lake Region and the White Mountains.

Somersworth also has good access to regional air, rail and sea facilities.

Local Transportation System includes 82 Miles of Public Roads

For a relative small community geographically, the city has many miles of roads including over 82.31 miles of public roads (under both state and local jurisdiction) and 13.83 miles of private roads. There are also 22 miles of sidewalks.

Traffic are Volumes Related to Land Use and Have Remained Relatively Constant

Over the past ten years, population has remained steady and traffic counts on the major roadways have been relatively constant. The highest counts are on Route 9 (High Street) – approximately 26,000 trips per day near the city line with Dover--associated with the shopping centers in the southern part of the City. The volumes decrease progressively approaching the downtown – approximately 13,000 per day.

Recent Traffic Studies/Projects Look to Improve Traffic Flow & Downtown Vitality

A recent major study looking at a one-way traffic pattern came to the following conclusions:

- Longer route to the driver's destination
- Slightly more efficient traffic flow
- Reduction of traffic on High Street
- Significant increase of traffic on Washington Street and Main Street
- Potential for higher speeds if traffic calming measures are not implemented
- Potential for increased vehicle and pedestrian safety

This study also made recommendations with respect to improving downtown vitality including improvements to parking and signage, enhancing the appearance of downtown and private investment.

The rehabilitation of the Somersworth-Berwick Bridge provides an opportunity to design and build a structure that is more consistent with Somersworth's historic character.

A More Balanced Transportation System Can Lead to a Healthier Community.

By encouraging and implementing a more balance transportation system, the City can also have a healthier community. Such a system would encourage the use of public transportation, bicycles and walking.

Somersworth Land Use Patterns—A Response to the City's Road Pattern

The transportation system is an important factor in determining a community's land use pattern. The transportation system is a land use *form* in terms of its linear physical presence and a land use *function* in terms of the service it provides to shoppers, businesses and residents in their day-to-day activities. The city's transportation system is comprised of roads, railroads, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, parking, and a public transportation system. With few exceptions, land use development has conformed to the strong centric design of the city and its transportation corridors.

Most of the transportation activity within the city is automobile-oriented. Much of the city's existing approximately 95 miles of roadways was designed to facilitate travel to the city center and to and from the State of Maine. Two major routes intersect at Market Street in the center of Somersworth's downtown area—High Street (NH Route 9) and Main Street. This convergence of major roadways provides good access to the city, but also has resulted in significant volumes of traffic especially along High Street. Over the past 60 years, development has responded to the use of the automobile as the main means of transportation, resulting in land uses that are

associated with the major travel routes. This phenomenon is particularly borne out by the level commercial retail growth that has occurred along the southern portion of High Street just north of the Dover border and Weeks Crossing. This commercial retail growth has included large shopping plazas as well as numerous “big box” stores.

Population Growth, Land Use & Traffic Impact

There is a direct relationship between population growth, employment commuting and land use and transportation patterns. Vehicle miles traveled and total vehicle trips typically increase faster than either population or housing growth. Somersworth’s population has remained steady at 12,000 for the past 10-15 years and the vehicle trips on the major thoroughfares have also remained relatively constant over this same time period. On the other hand, the population of communities such as Dover and Rochester has increased, and the number of vehicle trips on major thoroughfares, such as the Spaulding Turnpike, has increased. Depending on its level of growth in future, Somersworth will need to be cognizant of the impact of this growth on traffic and the capacity of its roadways.

Somersworth—Part of Regional Transportation System

Highways

Somersworth transportation system is not only tied to its local system but is dependent in large part on the system of the surrounding region. The single most important highway in the region is I-95 that is located about 12 miles south of the city and connects the Boston Metropolitan Region with the Seacoast of New Hampshire and southern Maine. The second key roadway is the Spaulding Turnpike a regional north-south highway that connects I-95 to New Hampshire’s Lake Region and the White Mountains. Somersworth gains access to this highway via Exit 9 and Weeks Crossing in Dover.

Public-Private Transportation

Somersworth is also tied to a regional public transportation through COAST which has routes throughout the Seacoast. The area also has a private provider, C&J Trailways, which offers bus service from Dover to South Station and Logan Airport in Boston.

Rail, Air & Sea

Pease International Tradeport

This state-owned facility has single 2-mile long runway that provides a base for the NH Air National Guard and various freight carriers. Several attempts have been made to provide commercial passenger service without long-term success. At present, there is no such service.

Skyhaven Airport

In 2007, NHDOT’s Bureau of Aeronautics gave up ownership of the Skyhaven Airport, located in Rochester, New Hampshire. The City of Rochester had until the spring of 2008 to decide if they

wanted ownership of Skyhaven Airport. The City declined ownership and Skyhaven Airport was turned over to The Pease Tradeport. Ossipee Valley Aviation is the Fixed Base Operator at Skyhaven Airport and is hired to run the day-to-day operations of the airport.

Amtrak Downeaster

Amtrak runs a passenger rail service with four round trips daily between Portland, Maine and Boston's North Station with stops in Wells, Maine, Dover, Durham and Exeter. This route was formerly used solely for freight, but with \$35 million in track and route upgrades the service has been in effect for more than five years.

New Hampshire Northcoast Railroad

The New Hampshire Northcoast operates part of the former Boston & Maine Conway Branch between Rollinsford (through downtown Somersworth) and Ossipee, New Hampshire. The railroad's primary traffic is quarried sand. It interchanges cars with Guildford Rail System in Dover where they are then taken to Boston Sand & Gravel in Massachusetts. New Hampshire Northcoast runs an average of 2 trains approximately 5 days a week, one southbound, and one northbound.

Port of Portsmouth

The Port of Portsmouth is a regional marine terminal, located on the Piscataqua River, which is New Hampshire's only general cargo terminal that allows for docking of deep draft vessels. This 8-acre site has access to regional rail and highway (I-95). It handles bulk cargo such as salt and wood chips as well as specific project cargo for local business and industry as well as container cargo.

Local Transportation Facilities—Over 80 miles of local roadways

Miles of Roadway

Based on City of Somersworth roadway data there are 82.31 miles of public roads (under both state and local jurisdiction) and 13.83 miles of private roads.

Much of the major road network in Somersworth resembles a radial pattern where many of the roads lead into the downtown:

- Main Street from the south
- Green Street from the south
- High Street (Route 109) from the southeast
- Whitehouse Road (Route 236) from the west
- Rocky Hill Road from the north

Unlike the other major routes, Route 108 runs in a north-south direction on the west side of Somersworth connecting Dover with Rochester. Indigo Hill Road and Blackwater Road Connect Main Street, Green

Street, High Street and Route 108. Table 2 below provides mileage based upon the state classification of roadways. The figures vary somewhat from the city figure.

Table 2: Road Mileage by Legislative Road Class: Somersworth, NH

Highway Class	Miles	Description
Class I Trunk Line	4.8	Existing or proposed highways on the primary state highway system
Class II, State Aid Highways	3.1	Existing or proposed highways on the secondary state highway system
Class III, Recreation roads	0	
Class IV, City Streets	7.2	All highways within the compact sections of the city.
Class V, Rural Highways	42.4	All other traveled highways which the city has the duty to maintain regularly
Class VI, Unmaintained roadways	0.3	Highways discontinued as open highways, and made subject to gates and bars, and highways not maintained
Private	16.1	
<i>Total</i>	<i>73.9</i>	

Source: NHDOT Road Centerline GIS shapefile, May 2008: State Classification of Highways, RSA 228:5

Bikeways

There are no designated local bike routes but there are three state recommended bike routes all of which converge on downtown:

- Route 236 from Rochester
- Green Street from Rollinsford and Dover (Broadway), and
- Main Street from Rollinsford

Sidewalks

There are also 22.7 miles of sidewalks mostly in the downtown core area along such roadways as High Street and Main Street

Parking

Parking is allowed on many of Somersworth's streets including the major travel corridors of High Street and Main Street. There are several parking lots in the downtown including a major lot associated with the Somersworth Plaza. Off street parking is required for all industrial and business uses. In general, the need for additional parking does not appear to be a significant issue.

Roadways and Traffic—Issue or Opportunity?

While Somersworth has a strategic location with respect to major local medical facilities, it is also considered somewhat offside from much of the commercial and recreational traffic that flows along the Spaulding Turnpike through Dover and Somersworth.

However, the City is served by two major state arteries that carry significant traffic volumes and provide major corridors for vehicular traffic. However, these volumes have not increased over the past 5-7 years based on counts by the NH DOT as shown in Table 3 below—daily traffic counts. These figures would tend to indicate that the traffic on Route 108 is similar to High Street and diminishes somewhat the further north one travels. On the other hand, traffic along High Street drops off significantly by Indigo Hill Road—most likely a result of vehicles being diverted to the commercial retail shopping area on the south end of High Street. Once past Indigo Hill Road there is little reduction in traffic volume on High Street to the Maine border. During the daily peak hours (early AM and 4-6 PM) there is significant traffic volume along Market and High Street in downtown Somersworth.

Table 3: Daily Traffic Volumes

Location	2001	2004	2007
NH 108 @ Dover City Line	16,000	16,000	16,000
NH 108 @Granite St. Park	13,000	15,000	14,000
NH 9 @ Dover City Line	22,000	26,000	26,000
NH 9 (High) @ Indigo Hill	14,000	14,000	14,000
NH 9 (High) @ Highland East to ME	11,000	13,000	13,000

Source: Strafford Regional Planning Commission

While the volumes create congestion in the downtown, it may also present an opportunity for downtown merchants to capture some of this volume.

Commute to Work--85.2% of Somersworth residents drive to work alone

Table 4 below indicates how residents in selected nearby communities reached their work destination. In 2000, approximately 80 percent of the residents within the Strafford Region drove alone to work. At 85.2% Somersworth was one of the highest. The Town of Farmington had the highest percentage of residents' carpooling (15.2 percent of the population) while Somersworth had less than 10%. The Town of Brookfield had the highest percentage of residents working from home (10.2 percent of the population) while Somersworth had the lowest. The Town of Durham had the highest percentage of people using public transportation (3.6 percent of the population), walking (27.1 percent of the population), and by other means (2.1 percent of the population). By contrast Somersworth had less than 1% using public transportation, about 2% walking and 1.2% by other means (biking) somewhat similar to the regional averages.

Table 4: Means of Travel to Work

MUNICIPALITY	Drove Alone	Carpool	Public Transport	Walked	Other Means	Work From Home
Barrington	82.7%	10.6%	1.0%	0.7%	0.4%	4.6%
Brookfield	72.7%	14.3%	1.4%	0.0%	1.1%	10.2%
Dover	82.8%	10.2%	1.0%	2.5%	0.8%	2.8%
Durham	56.6%	6.5%	3.6%	27.1%	2.1%	4.1%
Farmington	79.5%	15.2%	0.3%	1.6%	1.4%	2.0%
Lee	82.8%	7.1%	0.0%	1.9%	0.3%	8.0%
Madbury	81.2%	9.5%	0.2%	0.9%	0.9%	7.3%
Milton	82.2%	13.1%	0.0%	2.3%	0.3%	2.1%
Newmarket	84.3%	9.7%	0.3%	1.3%	0.9%	3.5%
Rochester	82.5%	12.0%	0.6%	1.2%	1.4%	2.3%
Rollinsford	85.8%	9.1%	0.3%	1.4%	0.0%	3.4%
Somersworth	85.2%	9.3%	0.8%	2.1%	1.2%	1.4%
Strafford	86.4%	10.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.8%
AVERAGE	80.8%	10.6%	0.7%	2.9%	0.9%	4.3%

Source: 2000 Census

Recent Transportation Projects – To improve traffic flow and enhance pedestrian safety

1. Downtown Traffic Circulation

In 2003 a consultant report was prepared that studied the affect of one-way and two-way traffic patterns for the downtown triangle defined by High Street, Washington Street, and Main Street. Two scenarios were studied:

- The existing two-way traffic pattern with the existing signal timing at the High/Washington intersection
- A one-way traffic pattern in a counterclockwise direction along High, Washington and Main Street triangle with optimum signal timing at the High/Washington intersection

One-way vs. Two-way Traffic Pattern

Overall, the one-way and two-way traffic patterns performed comparably. The one-way traffic pattern performed slightly better with regard to delays and queues, but the two-way delays and queues were well within acceptable limits. The traffic signal across the Market Street bridge in Berwick, Maine creates excessive delays and queues that back up the entire distance of Market Street and onto High Street during the PM peak period. Even though this signalized intersection has a negative effect traffic operations in downtown Somersworth, it was not included in the study. No matter which type of traffic pattern is selected for downtown Somersworth, there will continue

to be delays onto Market and High Street caused by this signal unless the timing is adjusted. The one-way pattern will merely relocate this queue to Main Street rather than High Street.

At certain locations around the downtown area the one-way traffic pattern performed better than the two-way traffic pattern. The Main/Market/High intersection is one of these locations. If a two-way traffic pattern is retained, this intersection may need to be signalized before 2020

Effects of One-way Pattern

A one-way traffic pattern would create the following:

- Longer route to the driver's destination
- Slightly more efficient traffic flow
- Reduction of traffic on High Street
- Significant increase of traffic on Washington St. and Main St.
- Potential for higher speeds if traffic calming measures are not implemented
- Potential for increased vehicle and pedestrian safety

One disadvantage of the one-way traffic pattern is the sharp skew angles at the Washington/High intersection and the Main/Market/High intersection. Tractor-trailer trucks would not be able to make left turn from High St. onto Washington Street without property takings and intersection reconfiguration or would need to be diverted down Constitutional Way. The city would need to provide clear directional signage in order to facilitate this. From a traffic perspective, both traffic patterns perform adequately.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Issues

The study noted that there were multiple areas that need pedestrian improvements and handicap accessibility improvements. It was noted that at some crosswalk terminals, no curb ramp was provided. Somersworth has been working to improve the downtown pedestrian environment by implementing the standards of ADA. Additional streetscape improvements have been implemented although some areas could still be addressed.

Within downtown Somersworth, High Street, Constitutional Way, and Main Street are all designated regional bike routes, according to the Seacoast Regional Bike Map prepared by the NH DOT. Since these three regional bike routes converge at Market Street, the report recommend that bike rack terminals should be provided so bicyclists can rest and enjoy downtown Somersworth.

While this study provided valuable information, Somersworth did not enact the one-way pattern considered in this study.

2. Somersworth-Berwick Bridge Project

Through the use of state, federal and local funds, the Salmon Falls Road Bridge over the Salmon Falls River that extends from Somersworth into Berwick, Maine will be rehabilitated within the next several years. This bridge is in need of repair and the upgraded project will improve traffic flow through this area. The city should explore redesign and improvements to

the traffic signal just across the river in Berwick with Berwick and both state transportation departments as part of the bridge improvements.

3. Safe Routes to School

The Safe Routes to School grant program is one resource available for elementary schools and middle schools to receive grant funding to encourage students to bike and walk from home to school. Somersworth has applied for one of these grants and expects to receive it in the near future. Grant funding is available to teach students how to ride bikes safely by following the rules of the road and to encourage students to bike more often by organizing bike rodeos and purchasing incentives.

A Balanced Transportation System Can Contribute to a Healthier Community

According to the EPA, transportation is responsible for nearly 80 percent of carbon monoxide and 55 percent of nitrogen oxide emission in the United States. Poor air quality has a direct negative effect on human health. Moving to a more balanced transportation system has several benefits:

- Providing bicycle facilities reduces traffic congestion, parking area demands, and traffic congestion.
- Encouraging more bicycling and walking builds muscular strength, endurance, balance, and flexibility has been shown to protect against injury, disability. Light to moderate activity will result in measurable health benefits.
- Roadway improvements to accommodate bicyclists can also enhance safety for motorists.
- Adding paved shoulders on two-lane roads has been shown to reduce the frequency of run-off-road, head-on, and sideswipe motor vehicle crashes. They can also serve a dual purpose of providing space for bicyclists.
- Widening improvements can result in a decrease in the rate of normal roadway edge degradation, thus increasing road longevity and saving money in maintenance costs.

Business Vitality in Downtown Somersworth

As part of the 2003 study of one-way traffic, the consultant was also asked to consider opportunities to enhance the viability of downtown businesses with respect to traffic patterns and other transportation-related improvements.

The City of Somersworth has a mid-size downtown with a mixed inventory of retail and commercial buildings. Downtown businesses and infrastructure were studied to identify the characteristics of the downtown business sector, the types of customers that frequent the stores and public spaces in downtown Somersworth. The relationship between business vitality and the traffic pattern was explored.

Business vitality recommendations in this report focus on improvements to signage for motorists and pedestrians, maintenance of public resources in downtown, and further planning and directional assistance. More specifically, these recommendations include:

Parking and Signage tor Parking

- Development of the new parking lot on High Street across from City Hall.
- Improvements to the Public Lot at Somersworth Plaza—including lighting, landscaping and signage.
- Improve use of municipal parking permits by employees of downtown businesses.
- Improve pedestrian signage to connect the city such as the use of attractive visible signs to indicate the direction of various shopping options or community services.
- Provide informational signage for motorists such as for the public parking lot.

Enhance the Appearance of Downtown Somersworth

- Improve Downtown Infrastructure including, parks, benches, lighting, pedestrian walkways, and public access to the canal.
- Develop Visual and Pedestrian Access to the Great Falls Mill.

Private Investment in Downtown Somersworth

- Improvements in Private Signage would both improve the appearance of downtown Somersworth and provide an image of a serious business sector.
- Improvements in Downtown Somersworth that will enhance viability including targeted workshops for businesses, coordinated marketing, sponsoring events.
- Providing compatible business mix to coordinate advertising for similar customers.

Note: What this report did not directly address was the potential benefits to retail business visibility and increased sales that could result from making Washington-Main-High Streets into a one way loop. Implementation of the one-way street pattern would significantly increase the drive by traffic on Washington and Main Streets which should result in increased retail activity if sound retail merchandising is employed.

Future Land Use

At the Community Forum in March of 2009 there was strong support for addressing the challenge of a “Sustainable Somersworth.”

Sustainable development- a balance of economic growth with ecological responsibility, social fairness & cultural preservation⁶.

Most of Somersworth’s undeveloped or open land is within two major zoning districts—the Agricultural (A) and Residential (R-1). Neither of these zones is contiguous and can be found in different locations within the city, although they are primarily in the southern portion and the northeast near the Salmon Falls River north of the downtown. The Agricultural District allows agriculture, single-family housing and land protection for land unsuitable for development while the R-1 District is primarily for single family homes. There is also available land in the Commercial and Industrial Districts on the western side of the city.

The 2000 Master Plan noted that agriculture is declining in the city although it is holding steady within the Strafford Region. The Community Forum noted as a primary challenge the need to have a sustainable Somersworth that balances economic growth with environmental and cultural protection. The city will need to consider the long-term viability of its desire to maintain agriculture with respect to demand for residential uses in these areas. Support for long-term agriculture would be consistent with a “Sustainable Somersworth” by preserving the opportunity to have locally produced food and other locally-produced agricultural products.

Based on this challenge, the city will need to also consider the future for residential and business growth. To pursue sustainable growth, the city will need to weigh the policy of more compact development by such strategies as encouraging adaptive reuse of existing buildings for mixed use or allowing for higher densities in already developed areas. Such a strategy would also allow greater opportunity for natural resource and agricultural preservation. The Future Land Use Map provides a general guide for the geographic location of various land uses.

The Future Land Use Plan builds upon a variety of factors that have been identified through the Charrette, the factual working papers presented to the Vision Committee and the Growth and Development Strategy. This plan proposes a blueprint for the geographic allocation of future uses and activities in the city. Some of the key factors that have been taken into consideration in determining the city’s future land use include:

- Somersworth’s inherent natural environment,
- Existing land use,
- The Growth and Development Strategy,

⁶ *A Planner’s Guide to Sustainable Development*, American Planning Association, Report # 467, December, 1996

- Projected growth in population and future needs for business and industry, and
- The Community Forum of April 21, 2009 and downtown Charrette held on September 12, 2009 where citizens expressed their preferences for the city's future.

The future land use plan is intended to be the basis for new or revised city policies including capital improvement projects, other public investments, and change to the existing zoning ordinance. This description of future land use areas and accompanying map are not intended to be a new zoning plan or map. The Future Land Use plan recommends more general planning areas as well as expansion of existing zoning districts.

The Future Land Use Plan is described below and shown on the attached **Future Land Use Map**. Eleven (11) categories of land use have been proposed and for each use category a purpose is identified and typical uses proposed.

Commercial

This land use is situated along Route 9/High Street between the Dover city line and Stackpole Road.

Purpose: To provide a location for single and multi-tenant general retail activities with associated on-site parking with good visibility and access to a high volume arterial street.

Typical Uses:

- Retail
- Offices
- Restaurants
- Hotels
- Fitness clubs
- Shopping center
- Day care
- Banks

Commercial-Industrial

This land use is located along both sides of Route 108 for its entire distance in Somersworth. It also includes an arm that extends to the east and north along Willand Drive.

Purpose: To provide space for a mixture of suburban, automobile dependent uses along a major arterial street providing good visibility and access.

Typical Uses:

- Offices
- Restaurants
- Retail

- Wholesale trade
- Laundry
- Auto sales and convenience
- Medical Services
- Shopping center
- Auto repair and sales
- Truck terminal facilities
- Mini-warehousing

Downtown Mixed Use

This use is located in the downtown, generally lying on both sides of High Street and Main Street between the Berwick Bridge and Washington Street and extending southerly along Main Street for one additional block. A Historic Millyard Sub district extends further south along Main Street and the Salmon Falls River.

Purpose: To promote the vitality and expansion of a mixture of urban uses that collectively serve as the focal point for the entire community and function as the primary social gathering place and a center of arts and individuals and businesses involved in the creative economy. Due to the historic character of this area, special design criteria would be established to promote building renovations and new infill structures that reinforce the historic architectural quality of the downtown.

Typical Uses:

- Medium to high density residential, primarily on floors above first floor retail
- Retail
- Office
- Government offices
- Restaurants
- Artist studios
- Fitness Club
- Clubs, Bars
- Hotel/B & B
- Bank
- Museum
- Parking structure

Historic Millyard— Sub-district of Downtown Mixed Use

This special land use is dedicated to the remaining mill buildings located along the Salmon Falls River and east of the railroad tracks in the downtown area. Its southerly terminus is at Depot Street and Buffumsville Road.

Typical Uses:

- Higher density residential

- Retail
- Artist studios
- Professional Office
- Industrial/Wholesale
- Fitness Club
- Clubs, Bars
- Hotel/B & B
- Bank
- Restaurants
- Museum

Neighborhood Mixed Use

This area would generally correspond to several locations: one along High Street from approximately Stackpole Road to just south of Indigo Hill Road and along Main Street/Somersworth Road from approximately Mt. Auburn Street to the Rollinsford boundary line.

Purpose: To provide locations for limited commercial uses that are compatible with surrounding residential development. Typical uses would include small scale business and retail, such as convenience grocery stores; professional offices; restaurants and personal services.

Typical Uses:

- Moderate density single and multi-family dwellings
- Commercial retail
- Professional offices
- Restaurants
- Places of worship
- Indoor recreation
- Day care facility
- Small convenience store

Mixed Use Nodal:

This area would generally be concentrated at the land area adjacent to the intersection of High Street and Blackwater/Indigo Hill Road. At present, much of this area is built out with commercial retail and business activity. Any new development would be infill or redevelopment of existing structures. It could be seen as a mixed use service center for the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Purpose: To provide for commercial retail, professional offices, financial institutions, and high density multi-family residential in a specific location at the intersection of two major roadways. A compact development pattern is encouraged that would foster a mix

of uses, buildings oriented to the street, parallel street parking or parking to the side and rear of buildings, where both vehicular and the pedestrian activity can exist compatibly.

Typical Uses:

- High density-to-medium density residential
- Commercial retail
- Professional office
- Hospitality businesses—hotels, restaurants, B & B
- Parking facility
- Places of worship
- Indoor recreation
- Fitness Club
- Clubs, Bars
- Bank

Residential—Low Density

This area would cover a portion of northeast Somersworth between Salmon Falls Road and the Salomon Falls River as well as an area bounded by Green Street, Indigo Hill Road and Main Street in the southern portion of Somersworth

Purpose: To promote low density single family residential and agriculture thereby preserving the city’s rural character and natural environment. Open Space Development should be encouraged to protect the city’s open spaces and encourage attractive living environments.

Typical Uses:

- Single family dwellings
- Agriculture
- Nurseries
- Riding stable
- Accessory dwellings
- Home occupation
- Outdoor recreation facility
- Tourist home (B&B)
- Small businesses such as a neighborhood grocery store, day care facility or kennel
- Veterinary offices and hospitals

Residential-Moderate Density

This area would encompass much of the eastern portion of the city west of the downtown and east of the Tates Brook/Peters Brook marsh/wetland complex to the west.

Purpose: To provide for medium density single-family residential and two-family residential in appropriate circumstances. Traditional neighborhood development would be encouraged to create a compact development pattern and encourage attractive living environments. Low impact non-residential uses, such as small scale commercial businesses, may be permitted where there is good access to community roads and services.

Typical Uses:

- Single family dwellings
- Accessory dwelling
- Two-family dwelling
- Home occupation
- Tourist home (B&B)
- Small businesses such as a neighborhood convenience store or day care facility
- Civic use
- Professional office in residence

Residential—High Density

This area would be between the Medium Density Residential and the proposed Downtown Mixed Use area. It would generally be bounded by Main Street, Washington Street, High Street and Indigo Hill Road. There would also be a small area between High Street and Grand Street just north of the proposed Downtown Mixed Use area.

Purpose: To provide for high density single-family and multi-family residential in established neighborhoods close to the downtown and many of the city’s civic institutions. Traditional neighborhood development would be encouraged to create a compact development pattern with street connectivity and emphasis on the pedestrian environment (sidewalks, granite curbing, and street trees).

Typical Uses:

- High density single family dwellings
- Accessory dwelling
- Multi-family dwelling
- Home occupation
- Tourist home (B&B)
- Hospitality businesses—hotels, restaurants
- Small businesses such as a neighborhood convenience store or a day care facility
- Civic use
- School
- Day care facility

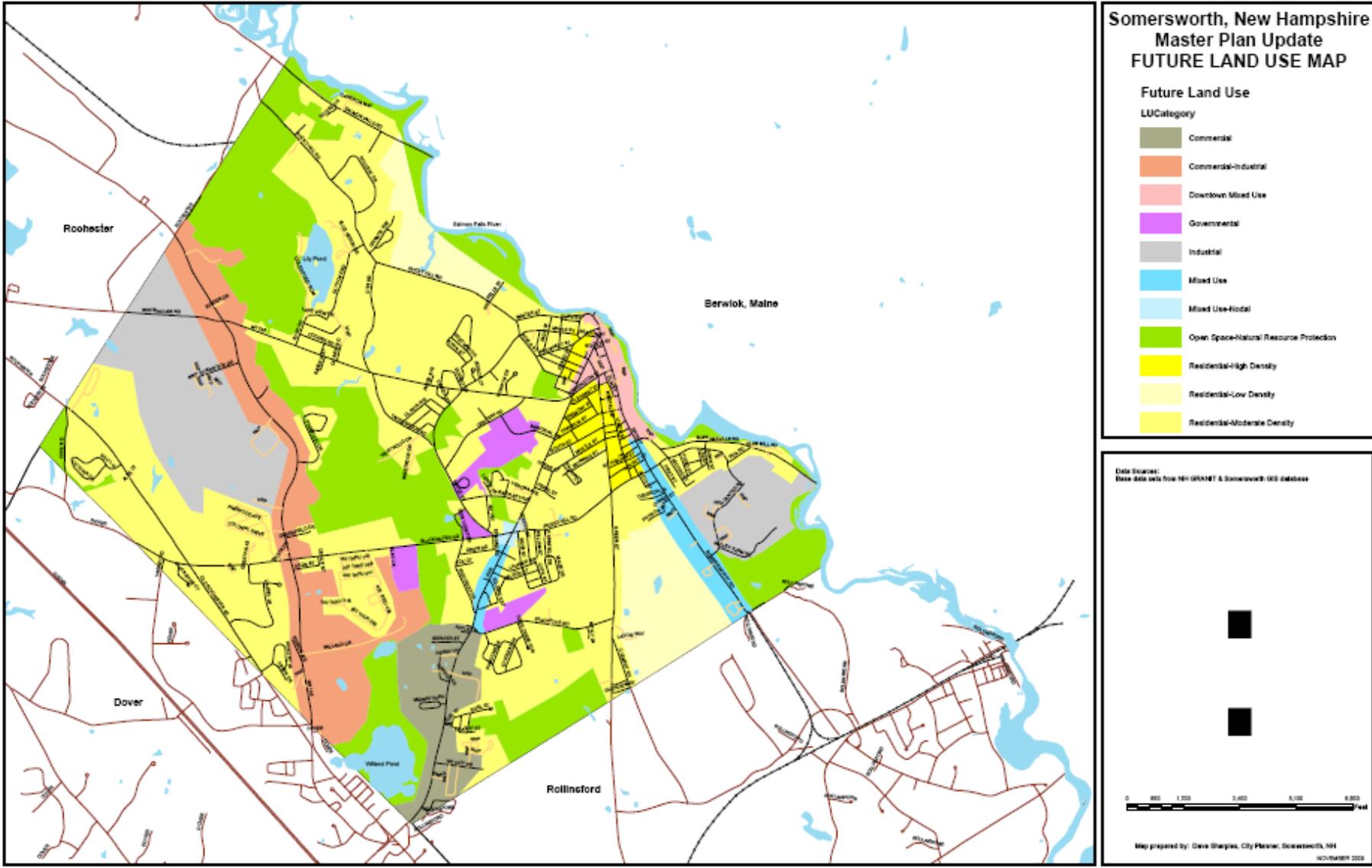
Open Space-Natural Resource Protection-Recreation

This area covers much of central Somersworth as well as areas along the Salmon Falls River. It would include wetlands, shorelands, floodplains, recreation areas and protected conservation lands. This area would be Somersworth “green infrastructure” providing valuable natural services for flood storage and water quality protection.

Purpose: To protect and manage the city’s woodland and water resources; encourage low intensity recreational activity and support natural resource services and allow for very low density residential.

Typical Uses:

- Sustainable forestry and tree farming
- Agriculture
- Outdoor recreation such as hiking, walking, cross-country skiing
- Limited low density residential dwellings
- Municipal water system support facilities
- Campground with associated services
- Tourist home (Bed & Breakfast)



A Charrette for Downtown

One of Somersworth's biggest challenges is the long term growth and vitality of its downtown. To enable the community to develop a shared vision for where the downtown should be in 2020, the Vision 2020 Committee held a community charrette on September 12, 2009 at the Somersworth High School and Somersworth City Hall.

Charrette Process—Knowledgeable Design Team with Broad Public Input

The charrette was structured to link an experienced design charrette team with broad public input and discussion on the positive attributes that should be in place in downtown Somersworth by the year 2020. With that input, the charrette team was then able to develop a series of designs and strategies that would address the vision concepts generated through the public input discussion.

On Friday afternoon before the public input session the charrette team walked the downtown with city staff to get better understanding of this area both physically and socially and in terms of the opportunities for, and constraints to, revitalization. The team also reviewed numerous previous plans for the downtown.

On Saturday morning the public had an opportunity to provide input to the charrette team about the future of the downtown. This session was structured to produce a "mental map" that took all of the public comments received and mapped them on a large wall chart so that related issues were grouped together. Approximately fifty citizens participated in this exercise. From this public discussion, the charrette team prepared a general summary of the mapping exercise.

Over the next several hours, the charrette team developed a series of proposals including sketch designs, zoning changes and economic development strategies that provided a "blueprint" for the city to implement in order to achieve they city's objectives for a revitalized downtown.

By late afternoon on Saturday, the charrette team presented its findings and recommendations back to the public in the City Council Chambers.

What Should Downtown Somersworth Look Like in 2020? - The Mental Mapping Exercise

All of the comments received through the public input exercise are captured on the following image that was derived from a single eight foot wide sheet of paper.



The Charrette team consolidated and organized the more than eighty ideas from this mental map into eleven categories:

Buildings & Facades

- ◆ Fix up buildings along High Street and Main Street
- ◆ Clean Up Rouleau's
- ◆ GE Façade and site improvements including the public environment
- ◆ Build on & improve historic architecture
- ◆ Reuse old police station
- ◆ Use mill buildings (i.e., elderly housing)
- ◆ Building and facade renovations

Economic Development

- ◆ More downtown businesses
- ◆ Lack of clear identity – develop a clear theme for downtown – major downtown attraction



- ◆ Explore tourism as a major economic goal
- ◆ Reuse unused GE building space (e.g. strip mall)
- ◆ Use all of our resources better

- ◆ Community college satellite (i.e., UNH)

- ◆ Level of Code enforcement – too much discourages business and too little inhibits compliance
- ◆ Support local business – buy local – lack of business support by community
- ◆ Capture business from pass thru traffic
- ◆ Gateway improvements & signage – including entry from the Dover end of High Street
 - -Welcome center to town and state
 - Bring people from the strip to the downtown

Events & Social Connectivity

- ◆ Farmers market
- ◆ Youth community center
- ◆ Youth entertainment & activities with cafe
- ◆ Small movie theater/plays
- ◆ Outdoor arena/park/venue for concerts
- ◆ Hilltop school as a community center (yoga, etc.)
- ◆ Festivals
- ◆ More social diversity
- ◆ Bookstore with coffee shop – a place to network – including cable access channel
- ◆ Art galleries & public displays of both local and well known artists
- ◆ Street art



Fiscal/Administrative

- ◆ How do we pay for all of this?
- ◆ Maximize/increase grant writing

Housing

- ◆ Residential above retail
- ◆ Workforce housing – through zoning
- ◆ Encourage younger families – through zoning
- ◆ Improve residential areas

Land Use & Density

- ◆ Less resistance to population density – encourage more compact development
- ◆ Implement an urban growth boundary
- ◆ Maximize use of flat spaces
- ◆ Creative use of sloped areas



Retail

- ◆ Family friendly restaurants (other than just pizza)

- ◆ Specialty retail niche
- ◆ Mixed Use
- ◆ Small concessions & eateries in Main Street storefronts
- ◆ Minimize chain stores
- ◆ More local stores
- ◆ Business that attracts diverse population & encourage more social diversity
- ◆ Bookstore with coffee shop – a place to network – including cable access channel
- ◆ Shops with things that you want but don't necessarily need
- ◆ Eliminate dead zones along streets
- ◆ Art galleries & public displays of both local and well known artists
- ◆ Farmers Market

River

- ◆ Riverside park
- ◆ Major Attractions
- ◆ Develop river and canal entrances and access
- ◆ Bike paths and pedestrian bridges over canal and railroad

Downtown Amenities

- ◆ Streets and Sidewalks
- ◆ Skateboard area
- ◆ Maintain parks and green spaces – with volunteers – e.g. adopt-a-spot
- ◆ Eliminate dead zones
- ◆ A “Parkour park”
- ◆ Landscape city areas
- ◆ Better designed street and sidewalk lighting
- ◆ Better stairs at the Getty station
- ◆ Improve sidewalk and street pavement
- ◆ Shade Trees
- ◆ Fountain
- ◆ Spotlight on the river
- ◆ Benches
- ◆ Trash and recycling receptacles
- ◆ Street art
- ◆ Stores, streets need to be ADA accessible/universal design – accessible to everyone

Sustainability

- ◆ Use river for power
- ◆ Encourage local farming – farmers market
- ◆ Green buildings
- ◆ Buy local

Transportation/Circulation

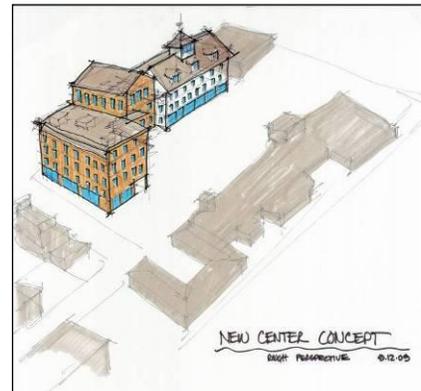
- ◆ Local trolley (use existing trolley house)
- ◆ Parking lots
- ◆ Look into roundabout at Washington & High Streets
- ◆ Cut down on pass through traffic
- ◆ High Street- pedestrian only/shops/greenery, etc.
 - -limited area – too much traffic
 - -or one-way street pattern

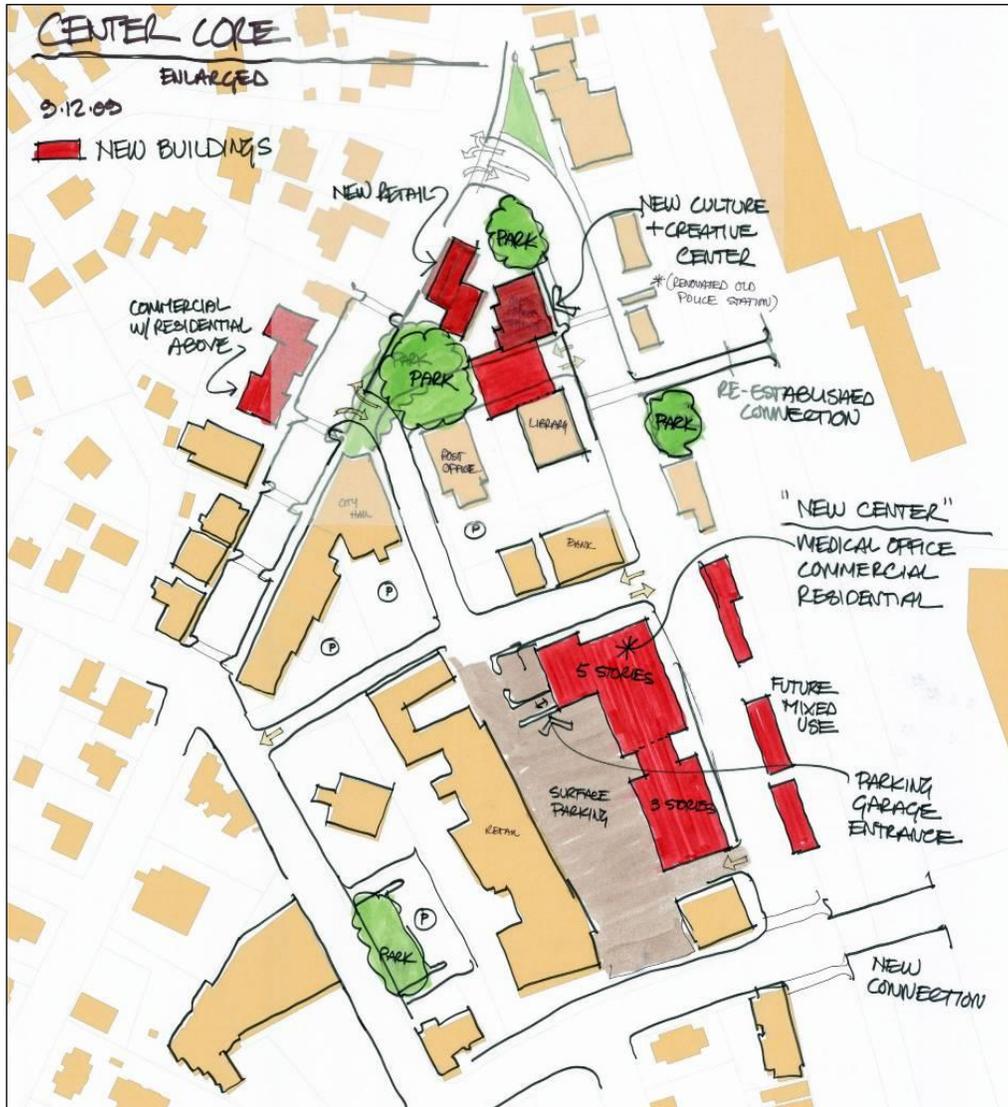
Charrette Team—Provides Recommendations for Design, Land Use and Economic Revitalization

The charrette team studied and evaluated all of the public input suggestions and developed the following recommendations to achieve the City's vision in 2020.

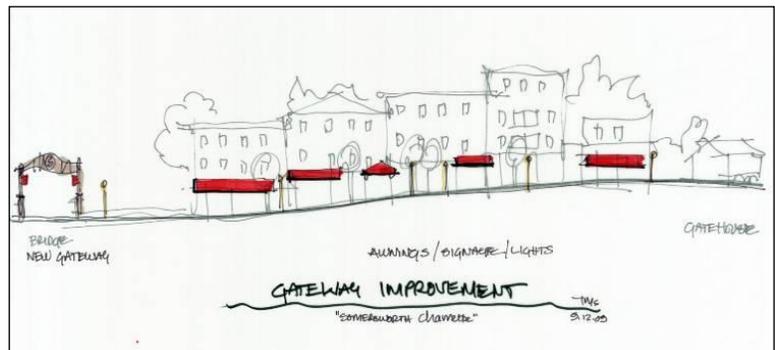
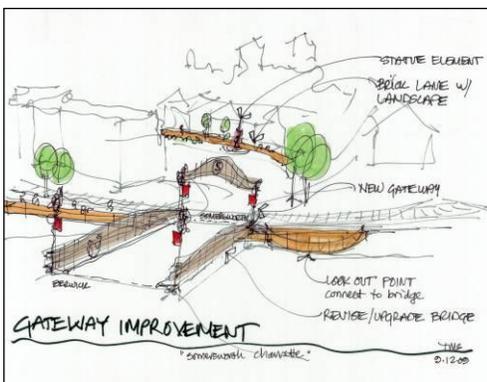
Design Recommendations

- **Downtown Core Design**—Redesign the Somersworth Plaza to create buildings along Main Street frontage and develop a pocket park. Infill and revitalize existing buildings such as the former Police Headquarters.

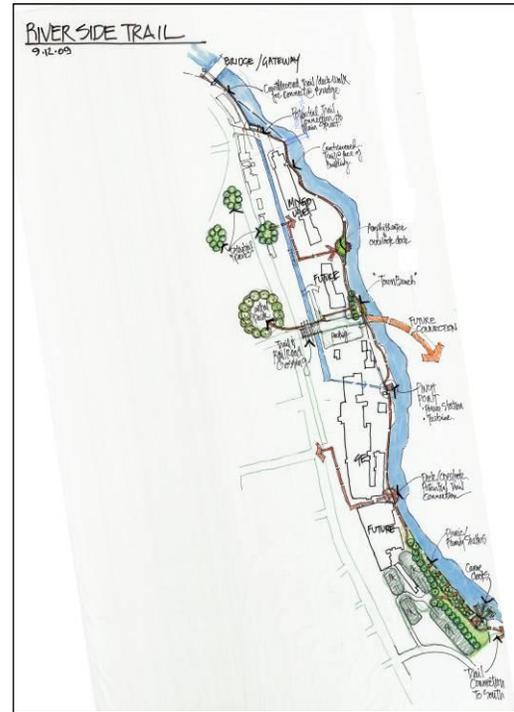
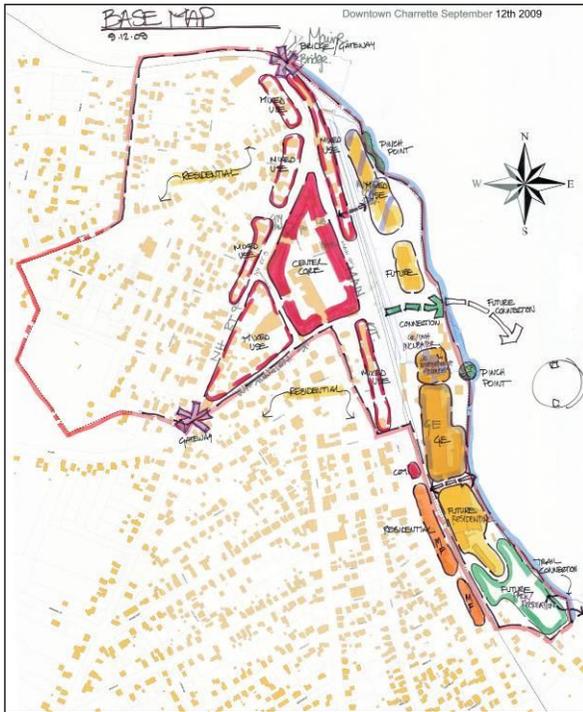




- **Gateway Design:** Make a strong visual statement at the entrances to the downtown with banners, signage, landscaping and public art.



- **Connection from the Downtown Core to Salmon Falls:** Vehicular/pedestrian connections are recommended at Washington Street, GE, and near the old train station. A trail and park system is recommended along Salmon Falls from the Rt. 9/Berwick Bridge to Rollinsford Line.



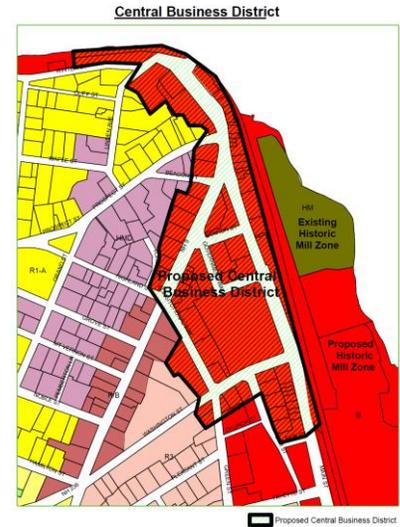
Downtown Revitalization & Economic Development

- Create jobs, taxes and enhance quality of life;
- Retain GE; build on GE perhaps with links to UNH using existing space;
- capture commuter traffic on High Street – get 1 in 20 vehicles to stop and shop downtown;
- provide opportunity for entrepreneurship;



Land Use Regulations

- Revise zoning to create separate Central Business and Historic Millyard (HM) Zones and designate permitted uses that are most appropriate to each
- Maximum height, e.g. 35 ±
- Maximum front setback – 0-5'
- Adopt general design standards for both zones that preserve the look and feel of the historic character of the downtown and millyard without being excessively proscriptive.



Permitted Uses

After review of the current Zoning Ordinance with respect to recommended zoning in the downtown, the charrette team prepared a use table for the two largest proposed zoning districts in the downtown as shown below.

Use	Central Business	Historic Mill Yard
Housing	✓	✓
Industrial		✓
Wholesale		✓
Retail	✓	✓
Prof. Offices; Fitness Club	✓	✓
Bars, Clubs	✓	✓
Hotels, B & B	✓	✓
Urban Shopping Center	✓	✓
Banks	✓	✓
Art Studio	✓	✓
Restaurants – no drive-up take out	✓	✓

Current and Immediate Projects to Jump Start the Process

- **Current Ongoing**

- Renovate old Police Building



- Pursue Transportation Enhancement (TE) Grants for the Rt. 9/Berwick Bridge
- Pursuing river access with existing land holders
- Pursue other grants, e.g. Moose Plate, etc.

- **Quick Projects**—community plantings, public art (murals); historic markers; gateway design competition; signage

