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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Master Plan is to set down clearly and practically the most appropriate set of principles and objectives to guide the future development of the Town of Dalton. The Master Plan is intended to guide the Planning Board in creating and maintaining land use ordinances that preserve and enhance the quality of life and culture in our community.

This Master Plan was prepared with the input of citizens and public officials. The Planning Board started the Master Plan process by conducting a survey to obtain the views of property owners in Dalton about the current land use in town and their vision for the future.

The community survey, as well as additional work done by the Planning Board, has resulted in the identification of several key principles for the future development of Dalton. The Planning Board believes these principles reflect the consensus of our community. The principles, which are set out below, form the backbone of this Master Plan.

These are the key principles for the future development of Dalton:

- Dalton is a rural, residential community and should remain so in the future.
- Dalton’s essential rural character and quality of life are defined by the town's natural environment (rivers, forests, fields and ridges). Future development should be consistent with and seek to protect Dalton's natural environment.
- Dalton is largely a community of single family homes and this should be the core of our future development.
- Dalton should continue to encourage forestry, agriculture and recreation/tourist-related activities and businesses. Home-based cottage industries are part of Dalton's heritage and should continue to be encouraged.
- Commercial and industrial development may be good for the town, in order to diversify the tax base and reduce taxes on homeowners. However, to protect Dalton's character, the town should identify specific, limited areas for future commercial or industrial development, so that the vast majority of the town remains rural.
- Dalton's town center – the municipal building, town hall, fire station, church and surrounding area – has the potential to become more active and vibrant. It may be appropriate to encourage the development of businesses which preserve and enhance Dalton’s New England small town character.
- Dalton property owners must be able to count on full protection of their property rights. Any future land use regulations must fully respect and protect how Dalton's residents and property owners are currently using their land, subject to health and safety considerations.
HISTORY OF DALTON

In June of 1754, Captain Peter Powers, who commanded an expedition to northern New Hampshire, commented in his journal about the good growth of timber, the abundant brooks, and the land which was “as good as ever was seen by any of us”. Upon arriving at the mouth of a stream that merged with the Connecticut River, the Powers party called the smaller river “Stark’s River”, after Ensign John Stark who was captured by Indians there several years earlier. This is the river now known as the Johns River.

A parcel of land that had been vacated by Lancaster was obtained by Moses Little and Company. Tristram Dalton, also of Newburyport, and a great grandson of Moses Little, along with his partner Nathaniel Tracy, purchased this land as well as part of Apthorp. The Town of Apthorp was considered large enough to encompass two towns. The lands within Apthorp, owned by Dalton & Tracy, along with the land they owned south of Lancaster, totaling approximately 16,000 acres, became incorporated as the Town of Dalton on November 4, 1784.

Some time later, Dalton and Tracy offered two 160-acre lots to anyone who would make a road passable for a one-horse wagon between the towns of Haverhill and Lancaster, a distance of about fifty miles. A man named Moses Blake accomplished this, and chose his two lots in Dalton, on each side of the Johns River, where it flows into the Connecticut River. Mr. Blake was the town’s first settler. The deeds that conveyed a 249-acre lot to him from Dalton and Tracy were dated January 26, 1787, and indicated that Mr. Blake was already “of Dalton.” Because the weather in the month of January in northern New Hampshire is not suitable for building a home, it is likely that he built his home in warmer weather prior to the date of these deeds. The road that he cleared, the County Road, is now known as NH Route 135. When the town became part of the emergency 911 system, the portion of this road through Dalton became known as Dalton Road. This two-lane highway, which generally follows the Connecticut River, is also a New Hampshire Scenic Byway.

In June, 1792, the State of New Hampshire granted a petition for a ferry across the Connecticut River between Dalton and Lunenburg, Vermont. Moses Blake established this ferry about one half mile above the mouth of the John’s River, which was also a short distance above the turbulent Fifteen Mile Falls. Blake also operated a tavern, raised sheep, was a merchant, public servant and noted moose hunter. Blake’s Pond, where he frequently hunted the abundant animal, became known as Mirror Lake. This body of water lies on the eastern corner of Dalton, partly within the neighboring town of Whitefield. Moses and his wife Lucy had five children, three of them born in Dalton. Their eldest daughter, Sally, married John Blakslee, Sr. in 1801. After her death in 1813, Mr. Blakslee married her sister Bathsheba. There are still direct descendants of the Blakslee family here today.

The first Town Meeting was held July 26, 1808 “at the dwelling house of Joshua Whitney, innholder.” The usual business of establishing and maintaining roads was a common issue at the early meetings.

The area’s early roads were for the most part just wheel ruts traversing hilly, muddy terrain, and there were probably numerous repairs made to wagons as a result of damage done by rocks and stumps. In 1812, one of the residents of Dalton appeared in Lancaster Court to “defend an action brought against the town for the badness of roads”. The following year, voters agreed to raise $100 to repair roads and bridges. It would be years before there was an organized “highway department” to
maintain and repair the roads. Instead, records show the town making payments to many of the landowners who lived along the roads and submitted bills for work they did to make the roads passable.

The first road to be laid out was the “County Road,” which is Route 135, running from the Littleton Town Line to the Lancaster Town Line. The metes and bounds for this route were recorded in 1793. While there were probably roads of some sort that led to early settlers’ farms, the next one officially recorded in Dalton’s town records was for Union Road in 1809, or as some references called it, Union Street. Soon after, the layouts for Simonds Road, Big Hill Road and part of Blaklee Road were recorded. Often, a road description would only go from a previously established road to someone’s farm, ending at the farmer’s gate or bars. A few years later, residents would petition the town to continue it as a town road to a couple more farms along the way. For the most part, the old descriptions seem to match up well with today’s roads, although there have been some alterations over the years to avoid wet areas, steep grades and sharp curves.

In the 1870’s, another form of transportation came to Dalton. The railroad industry was booming, and trains were able to bring freight and passengers to this area much more efficiently than horses and wagons. The 1870 U. S. Census shows many railroad workers living in Dalton. One “household”, described as a “boarding house” held about twenty men, all working on the railroad, and nearly all being from Canada. The only known building large enough to accommodate that number of occupants would have been the Summer House. The Portland and Ogdensburg Railroad passed Scott’s Station, and continued in a westerly direction, crossing the Connecticut River into South Lunenburg, Vermont. The first railroad bridge at this location was a covered bridge. This was apparently damaged in the heavy flooding of 1927, as the present iron bridge was built. It is believed that the last train to cross this trestle was in 1983.

As mentioned above, during the early years, prominent men of Dalton held town meetings in taverns or private homes. When the need for a larger public meeting place was evident, a committee was formed to look for a site for a new public building. The location chosen was in close proximity to the already established church, the Town Pound, parsonage, and Number One School. All of these buildings are still in use today. The Town Hall, or Town House, as it was called then, was built about 1845 and has served the public ever since, as a school building, public library, and gathering place.

By 1821, there were two school districts, and several mills and taverns were in use. By 1856, we find that Dalton had a population of 750. There were two churches, three hotels, two stores and two sawmills. There were also 889 sheep, 804 “domestic neat stock,” and 141 horses. In 1861, there were eight school districts, one post office and three sawmills. The population rose by one, to 751, while at the same time, Berlin only had 173 residents, Lancaster 1559, and Littleton, 2008. In 1987 the population was 735. By comparison, the census year 2000 shows the population was 927 and 2010 shows the population as 979.
VISION STATEMENT

Dalton, NH is a relatively small rural community with a population of approximately 1000 located along the banks of the Connecticut River directly east of the Moore Dam Reservoir in the White Mountain Region of northern New Hampshire. Dalton’s largest neighboring town and largest employer community is Littleton, NH. The towns of Whitefield, Lancaster and St. Johnsbury, VT are also nearby. Dalton has traditionally been a primary choice of residence in the area for people seeking a rural setting with reasonable property values. In recent years Dalton has seen an influx of part time home-owners. Many of these part time residents have been attracted to the area by both the rural setting and reasonable property values. Many also come to enjoy the various recreational venues such as canoeing, kayaking, hiking, fishing, hunting, skiing, and snowmobiling.

There has been very little industry or commercial development in Dalton. There is no area specifically designated for commercial or industrial development though there are several businesses interspersed among the residential units in the town. The presence of these businesses and in many cases their physical appearance, has created pressure to either eliminate or more closely control such enterprises. This, of course has come into conflict with some residents who feel that there should be little or no restriction on the use of property. This conflict has become increasingly intense as some businesses develop into what neighbors consider to be “eye-sores” as Dalton continues to grow and attract more newcomers.

The town center is very small and contains municipal offices, a town library, and fire and police departments. The most significant visible commercial cluster contains a general store with a gas station located at or near the intersection of Dalton Road (Route 135) and Bridge Hill (the road to Gilman VT). The most significant business in terms of size in Dalton is the gravel and asphalt supply operation at the J W Chipping Gravel Pit which is located well away from most residential areas.

The over-riding concern of a large majority of Dalton’s citizens is a strong desire to maintain the rural character of the town. There are a wide range of opinions of what “rural” actually means but it is clear that a town consisting primarily of single family residences on larger tracts of land, with a minimum of manufactured housing (which many believe should be limited to specific trailer parks where it does exist) is the predominant image. Most citizens desire the establishment of strict standards for property cleanliness and maintenance, recognizing that property values are thus protected and the quality of life implicit in the rural character of the town are maintained. Many citizens who worry about the continued upward pressure on taxes see the need for commercial and light industrial development but clearly also see the need for segregating such commercial development. Specifically, commercial development is understood to mean small manufacturing or other commercial businesses. In Dalton this also means a strict limitation on heavy industries often associated with high levels of pollution.

The most important aspect of a municipal plan will concentrate on the definition of Dalton as a rural residential community. Therefore the establishment of an industrial and commercial section of the town needs to incorporate the desire of its citizens to maintain the essential rural lifestyle of the town. As the commercial expansion of the neighboring town of Littleton accelerates, people will undoubtedly be attracted to the area. Many of these people will prefer the more relaxed, rural atmosphere and reasonable property values of Dalton as a place to live. Therefore, consistent
guidelines for property maintenance and development need to be established in order to protect Dalton from the excesses of potential residential development plans. This pressure to expand residential development will undoubtedly continue and probably accelerate over the next few years and put more pressure on Dalton’s ability to maintain its relaxed rural character. Dalton may find it difficult to provide adequate services at a manageable cost in support of new developments and the new residents they will bring, many of whom may not completely understand and accept the Dalton traditions and way of life.

Planning and the establishment of guidelines for controlling development will become increasingly necessary. While such guidelines must be clear, apply to everyone equally, and protect the overall character and feeling of the town, they need not be restrictive in nature but should provide specific requirements for the development and use of an individual piece of land, depending on its location in the town. Areas designated as residential should be primarily residential and areas designated as commercial should be set aside primarily for small businesses. It is especially important that in residential areas unsightly collections of junked automobiles or other eye sores should be discouraged. The term residential should mean homes and outbuildings directly related to household maintenance such as garages, storage sheds, stove-wood piles, etc. Cottage industry activities are of course common to rural residential settings and will continue to be part of the Dalton lifestyle. However the limitations defining residential housing in terms of unsightly accumulations of non-household materials must be maintained whether a home is used for business or not. These kinds of requirements are only common sense. Unrestricted use of property without specific guidelines will result in a devaluing of everyone’s property. Setting standards will assure that everyone’s desire to live in a pleasant rural setting will be met. Standards are not restrictions; they are a reflection of the values of the community and as such need to be clearly stated, understood and enforced.

One of the greatest pressures on rural settings such as the White Mountain area is the growing desire for people from other areas of the country to come and enjoy this magnificence and become part of the very rural atmosphere we treasure. Whether these are visitors who enjoy the area for a few weeks each year as tourists, or are people who have camps on the rivers, lakes and ponds or in the woods or they are people buying established houses or undeveloped property and building year-round residences, they have a cumulative impact on the town’s facilities, recreation areas and infrastructure. The irony is that the very rural and uncluttered atmosphere such visitors and new residents value will be irretrievably altered and changed to become more and more like the places they left if we don’t establish growth and development goals and plans designed to keep the rural atmosphere we all desire. The need to plan, establish specific and strict standards for the development and use of the land in Dalton, and equally important, educate newcomers to the community’s values, are all becoming increasingly critical. If we don’t set these standards and develop the essential plans and guidelines, rural Dalton will slowly become a suburb of Littleton, a great place in its own right but not what the citizens, present and future, of Dalton want.

Because a major concern for Dalton is the cost involved in any sort of municipal development and the resulting pressure on taxes, there will always be constraints on municipal services and infrastructure improvement. Given this reality, Dalton should concentrate part of its planning effort on the development of municipal structures and services such as recreational facilities, an attractive and functional town center, continued upgrading and improvement of police and fire facilities and other community services. A characteristic of many rural communities is the common meeting area where
civic activities such as town meetings and recreational celebrations take place. To create this environment the town center should be developed to provide such activities in a convenient, pleasant setting.

It is also desirable to encourage the development of small businesses such as grocery, hardware and other service oriented commercial activities in the area defined as the town center. Such a centralized commercial, municipal and social area would enhance the desirability of Dalton for future development and help set standards and guidelines for such development as the population inevitably increases. Individual stores rather than the unsightly development of groups of stores, commonly called strip malls, ought to be the primary guideline for such commercial development. Structural guidelines, meeting infrastructure responsibilities on the developer’s part, and appearance guidelines should be established in order to insure that commercial development enhances the pleasant rural atmosphere of Dalton and contributes to, rather than detracts from, the clean rural appearance of the town. The presence of large commercial “box store” developments in nearby towns precludes any realistic need for such development here. However their presence nearby and the increasing employment opportunities they create will probably lead to accelerated population growth rate in Dalton, which already has more than double the growth rate of any nearby community.

Dalton is uniquely situated to take advantage of the steady growth of tourism in the North Country. For example, the recreational use of the Connecticut and Johns Rivers, Forest Lake and the rugged and forested countryside are all obvious opportunities for local attraction of tourism related businesses. In the past very little attention has been directed to the development of Dalton’s natural resources for tourism purposes. Accelerated development of this concept may be as important to help preserve the rural nature of the land as anything else we do. Dalton should consider establishing standards for commercial development of tourism and recreational opportunities before developers begin to acquire property and gradually drive the cost of land beyond the means of the average Dalton citizen. It would be foolish to ignore the possibilities for attracting significant tourism business to Dalton given its location and the dramatic increase in tourism in the White Mountain area. Therefore, a development plan to attract businesses in this growing industry may become part of our broad commercial development plan. Whatever the process, some combination of awakening the outside public to the recreational opportunities in Dalton and attracting and assisting the development of business to cater to those visitors could be developed.

In summary, the future of Dalton as an outstanding and desirable place to live, where the old country values we all admire and the general rural character of the town are preserved and enhanced, requires careful attention to planning for that future. Standards and guidelines governing the appearance of residential, commercial and small industry centers should be established. The use of public and private land to enhance outdoor activities with the goal of developing a tourism industry needs to be explored and plans for relevant development established. Local regulations for the control of woodland and how it is used in logging and other commercial activities should be enforced in the absence of comprehensive state regulations. Development standards must be continually evaluated and enforced. Dalton is a great rural community. The inevitable accelerated growth facing the town needs to be anticipated, planned for, and directed in positive ways to assure that the rural and attractive character of Dalton as a place to live and work is preserved and enhanced.
TOWN SERVICES

TOWN GOVERNMENT

Board of Selectmen

The Board of Selectmen consists of three residents who are elected in staggered terms at the annual town meeting. The Board, often referred to as the local governing body, meets on a regular basis to conduct the affairs of the Town of Dalton. These meetings are open to the public. An annual meeting is held to elect officers and vote on warrant articles. It is the Board’s duty to carry out these warrant articles to the best of its ability.

Municipal Offices

The town offices, located in the municipal building, consist of an Administrative Assistant, the Town Clerk, Tax Collector and Treasurer. The Town Clerk, the Tax Collector and the Treasurer are, by State and local law, elected for three year terms. The Town Clerk is responsible for registering vehicles and dogs, maintaining and processing vital records, retaining minutes for all official town committees and is instrumental in election procedures. The Tax Collector is responsible for issuing, collecting, and tracking the taxes warranted by the Board of Selectmen. The Treasurer is responsible for the custody of all monies belonging to the town. The Administrative Assistant is a direct employee of the Board of Selectmen. The town offices need to constantly adapt to the changes in federal, state and local regulations while continuing to serve the residents in the best way possible.

Planning Board

The planning board meets to act on property changes such as mergers; subdivisions -- including major, minor and lot line adjustments; and gravel pit permits. Meetings are to be held at least once a month.

The planning board consists of five members and two alternates all of whom are Dalton residents appointed by the Board of Selectmen. One member is chosen annually by the members to serve as chairperson. One member acting ex-officio must be a member of the Board of Selectmen. Currently the secretary is a non-member paid position.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police Department

The police department is currently a part-time department with an organizational structure that roughly follows a military unit. The department responds to motor vehicle incidents, criminal activity and calls for service as required with the available manpower.

Within the next ten years the department is facing several issues that could change the structure of the department. With the increasing State requirements placed on departments for training and hiring, part-time police officers are becoming increasingly difficult to recruit. The State of New Hampshire
has doubled the number of hours from 100 to 200 for part-time certification as well as increasing the
difficulty of the physical agility test, which must be repeated every 3 years. This increase also requires
that officers in training make a minimum of 14 trips to the Concord academy during the course of the
training session. State requirements restrict part-time officers to work no more than 1300 hours per
year. These facts do not take into consideration the tremendous increase in the paperwork associated
with administration and operation of a police department. Sometime during the next few years it may
be necessary for the department to hire a full time Officer/Chief, supported by a staff of part-time
officers.

Volunteer Fire Department

If Dalton continues to follow past growth trends, primary growth will be single family homes and a
limited number of small businesses. The current membership and equipment is adequate to cover the
presumed increase in calls. An ongoing concern is maintaining trained active members. Every year it
is harder to recruit, train and keep quality members. If the Fire Department is to operate under the
current structure into the future, it will take quality management at the department level as well as the
town level. With controlled growth and good management, the Fire Department will be able to
effectively cover the town’s emergency service needs in the years ahead at a reasonable expense to
the town.

The responsibilities of the Fire Chief are increasing yearly. The growth of the department along with
state and federal regulations has increased paper work and time needed to operate the department
effectively. The future may require a part time paid chief.

The department currently has 30 members, 19 of which are firefighter certified and 17 EMS certified.
The department has established an EMS First Responder Service. The First Responder Service will
respond to medical emergencies in Dalton, administer care and assist the ambulance service with
transport.

Currently there are five pieces of apparatus in service. A sixth piece of apparatus, an EMS response
vehicle, is currently being built. The engine is new, the tankers and support truck are in good
condition. The forestry truck will need replacement within the next few years. The department has an
adequate supply of equipment which includes hydraulic extrication tools. Due to the continued
replacement and upgrading of apparatus and equipment, the department has out grown the current
Fire Station. Because this creates a safety hazard, the department is planning an addition to the
existing facility.

HIGHWAY

Future commercial and residential development should be planned so that Dalton’s road system
remains adequate. Its purpose is to provide a safe and efficient transportation system on the roads
within the community. While much of Dalton runs along Routes 142 and 135, state maintained roads,
most of our recent development has occurred on our town roads. Dalton’s transportation network
ties the community together and gives local residents access to needed services. Local roads should
meet minimum road standards to provide reliable access to work, schools, health care services,
shopping and residences. The location and quality of these local roads has a great impact on where
development will and should occur. A safe and efficient network of roads is essential to the growth of the community. In the future some paving of the steepest gravel roads may be considered to maintain their integrity and viability. Equipment, while adequate at this time, needs to be monitored for possible future replacement, as newer equipment would last the town for many years. Plans for the replacement and maintenance of equipment should be considered as part of a Capital Improvement Plan.

SOLID WASTE

The Town currently has a transfer station where residents, displaying a valid permit, can bring their refuse. There is a voluntary recycling program in which residents can sort such items as number 1 and 2 plastics, newspapers, magazines, mixed paper, glass, aluminum cans, metal and corrugated cardboard. Refuse which cannot be recycled, or which residents opt not to recycle, is disposed of at the transfer station in specially purchased bags. This system is known as the Pay as You Throw system. Income generated from the purchase of these bags is used to offset the cost of disposing of this refuse. These bags can be purchased at the town offices or, with check only, at the transfer station.

Currently the transfer station is open to the public one and a half days a week and is manned by one to two people. The staff ensures that recyclables are properly sorted. This is an important duty as whole deliveries of recyclable products can be refused due to one incorrectly sorted item.

RECREATION

Dalton offers many opportunities for outdoor recreation. There are currently two memorial forests with hiking trails. A portion of Chase Bog is located within town lines. This bog is a diverse ecosystem home to many species of plants and animals.

Dalton is bordered on the west by the Connecticut River. The river begins in the Fourth Connecticut Lake in northern New Hampshire and flows south to the Long Island Sound. The river offers many activities such as boating, fishing, canoeing, sight-seeing, and bird watching. At the junction of Routes 135 and 142, where the Johns River empties into the Connecticut River, there is public boat access to both rivers. Dalton has a walking bridge to Vermont that spans the Connecticut River with scenic views including a hydro facility’s dam.

The town is home to Forest Lake State Park, where a sandy beach, picnicking and beautiful views are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. The park is one of the original ten state parks established in New Hampshire in 1935. The park occupies nearly 400 acres of land.

A major state snowmobile trail, Corridor 5, runs through town. With the dedication of the local snowmobile club, and the generosity of private landowners, snowmobiling is a growing sport in Dalton with trails that are well maintained. These trails are also enjoyed by snowshoe enthusiasts, cross-country skiers and hikers.
LIBRARY

Dalton Public Library provides a vibrant library where people want to be. It meets the needs of a diverse community by providing services and partnering with other community organizations. The Board of Trustees and the staff work together to serve the public and respond to the changing nature of library services.

CEMETERIES

Dalton has three public cemeteries. The Johns River Cemetery, located on the Johns River at the intersection of Routes 135 and 142, is thought to have Dalton’s oldest gravestone, dated 1806. Cushman Cemetery, located on Route 135, is the largest of the town’s cemeteries, with a monument dated as far back as 1814. The Ladd Cemetery, located on Faraway Road, is the smallest cemetery in town.

SCHOOLS

Dalton is part of the SAU 36 School District which encompasses the towns of Dalton, Carroll, Jefferson, Whitefield and Lancaster. There are three elementary schools within the district and one regional high school located in Whitefield.

Student and population data for the last ten years and projections of expected growth are available at the school district website: www.sau36.org. On this site you can access a facilities study which contains pertinent information on growth trends in the town as a whole and the school population in particular.
INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years, major changes have been taking place in the demographic makeup of smaller rural towns in northern New Hampshire. Change is the natural evolution that occurs over time in any community. In the past, mostly the attitudes and expectations of the residences influenced the rate of change. Today it is the “land value” factor that is most influential. The demand for affordable building sites is the driving force for sub-dividing land for profit. In the past investors valued land for its productive potential. Today, investors value land for re-sale potential, which is economically enhanced by the process of sub-division. Demand for property and tax rates that are often less than adjacent communities’ fuels land speculation at little risk to investors. The danger is that the town becomes financially burdened for the cost of increased services and more importantly a loss forever of its rural character. It is incumbent for the citizens of Dalton to establish a Zoning Ordinance which will serve to preserve the long term interest of the community. The thoughtful governance of how land will be used is critical to a successful future for the Town of Dalton.

Planning for the future of Dalton and how it governs the use of resources and controls growth must be accomplished within the framework defined by the legal requirements affecting the development of a comprehensive Master Plan. New Hampshire RSA 674:2 II (B) requires that each community develop and maintain a Master Plan which at a minimum must have a statement of that town’s vision for its future growth and a section describing how the land shall be used. There are many state defined requirements governing land use but each community has great latitude in how their Master Plan is developed within these general guidelines. The Master Plan can have a direct impact on the use of natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas and on the general character of the community. Additionally, it can affect roads and transportation, affordable housing in keeping with community standards, and include provisions for elderly or needy members of the community. The tax base and the quality and cost of essential services such as schools, fire and police protection and road maintenance can also be affected.

Finally, these issues are not only impacted by laws affecting the environment and public safety but, it is increasingly clear, that laws and regulations governing land use have become more complicated. Not all land is suitable for development due to natural factors such as slope, soil make-up, and ground and surface water. Dalton must understand and take all of these factors into consideration when planning for the future.

CURRENT LAND USE

Residential

Dalton’s land use pattern is relatively straight-forward consisting primarily of single family homes scattered throughout the town with no primary concentration of houses in a central area. There are several businesses operated from individual homes (cottage industries) where the individual’s home serves as both a place of residence as well as a business. The town center contains the town hall; the municipal building, where basic administrative offices are maintained including a library and police department; the fire station and a church. A classic town center with government, retail commercial
and multi-unit dwellings and the town common does not exist. This is entirely in keeping with how the town grew historically.

**Commercial and Industrial**

Existing small businesses are sometimes viewed as a mixed blessing. The primary problem is the lack of enforceable guidelines having to do with the appearance of such businesses in general. The basic issues include where they can be located, and control over the possibility of accumulations of industrial equipment, old vehicles and miscellaneous junk creating unsightly areas in the town. This is especially considered a problem in residential areas. At the present time a business of any kind can be located essentially anywhere in the town with the result that those businesses that have actual operations in the town are by default in close proximity to residential areas. This is of course a natural outgrowth of how Dalton has evolved. If a property owner decides to start a business of whatever kind, he or she can. As a result such businesses have been established without input from abutters and/or interested parties.

**Recreational and Tourism**

Dalton, by virtue of its location in the White Mountains and its close proximity to I-93, has become increasingly available to people from anywhere in the country who are seeking recreational opportunities in the woods, streams, ponds and mountains of the area. Forest Lake not only has a growing number of year round residents but is a prime summer camp location for both residents local to the area and people from outside the area. Development is extending to formerly remote and sometimes inaccessible areas often not solely on or near the lake. This is making it more difficult to establish and enforce reasonable and sustainable building development controls and guidelines. New development can create an ever increasing burden on infrastructure and services. At the same time tourism along the Connecticut and Johns Rivers, while a real potential, has yet to be developed as a resource for the town in terms of attracting tourism business. The very remote, rustic and rural character of the area, which attracts the tourist seeking outdoor activities, is in danger of being compromised by the lack of guidelines.

**Forestry and Agricultural**

As a part of the economy of Dalton farming has been on the same steady decline as it is everywhere in the New England area. By its nature, because of the ruggedness of most of the land in Dalton, the farming value of the land has always been at best marginal with the possible exception of river bottom locations. At the present time there are very few actual functioning farms in Dalton and as such they have very little impact on resources nor do they contribute significantly to the economy.

Forestry is a viable and important activity in Dalton. Forests are the town’s most abundant resource covering approximately 80% of the land. They consist of both softwood and hardwood species which are valuable to the wood products industry. Where the land is steeply sloped it is generally unsuited for most commercial or industrial uses. There are former pasture areas, once cleared for farming, which have returned or are in the process of returning to forest. This represents a potential economic resource for Dalton.
Public Lands

Dalton’s public lands consist of Forest Lake State Park, a recreational field on Route 135, and the lands upon which municipal buildings are located. Future considerations might include the purchase of lands or easements for conservation purposes.

FUTURE LAND USE

Dalton should take steps to encourage future land use patterns that support and strengthen the town's rural/residential identity and character. To achieve this, the bulk of the town's land should be set aside for residential uses that preserve our rural character and for other traditional rural uses such as forestry, agriculture and recreation. At the same time, in order to diversify the tax base and reduce the tax burden on Dalton's homes and families, specific and limited areas of town could be made available for new commercial and industrial development that is consistent with Dalton's rural character. The town-owned buildings and land in the center of town should be respected, cared for and potentially expanded as the need may arise. Building on our strong tradition of respecting private property rights, existing uses of land may be continued (subject to health and safety considerations), including the current commercial or industrial uses in areas of town that will be residential in the future.

Rural / Residential

As of today, the Town of Dalton is open to the risk of rapid and fundamental changes to our rural character. Because we have no limitations on commercial, industrial or large-scale multi-family residential developments, we could wake up one morning and find that our community is suddenly defined by a massive new industrial plant, a series of strip malls, or large-scale condominium developments along our rivers or in our countryside.

For this reason, the town should take the necessary steps to define the vast majority of the land in our community as available in the future only for single family residential uses and for other traditional rural uses. This is the most effective way to protect the rural character of Dalton against the development pressure that is rapidly moving toward us from adjacent communities.

Specifically, except for the limited areas of town discussed below for commercial, industrial and public uses, all of Dalton could be defined as a single "rural/residential" land use area. The land uses in this area should consist of: (1) single family homes; (2) the "cottage" businesses that are customary and appropriate in rural homes, such as inns and bed and breakfasts, day care, arts and crafts, professional/technical, and the like; (3) forestry and agriculture; and (4) recreation and tourist-oriented businesses that are appropriate for our rural environment. To preserve our community's rural character, other land uses would not be permitted in this area, other than the continuation of current businesses.

Residential

The town should take appropriate steps so that the development of new single family homes will occur in a manner that is as consistent as possible with our rural environment. At the same time, the community should take steps to encourage affordable housing, so that people of any generation can
make Dalton their home.

To protect our rural character and our natural resources, new residential development should be conducted so as to protect and preserve our wetlands. In areas where there are steep slopes or where the soils make it difficult for septic systems to function effectively, the community could seek larger lot sizes and/or other protections for our wetlands and water. Dalton’s rural character is defined by the forests, lakes, rivers, streams and open land. The town can preserve this rural feeling while at the same time respecting the right of landowners to build on their land by seeking appropriate building setbacks and/or buffers. While it is not practical to just say "no" to future growth, the town could instead seek larger lot sizes where appropriate to preserve our natural environment and rural feel. Dalton could also consider so-called "cluster developments" where the homes are placed close to one another and most of the land is kept open and free from development.

To maintain the character of the community, as was strongly emphasized by the community survey, appropriate limits should be placed on the size, quantity and quality of new residential structures.

The consensus of Dalton residents and property owners is to not allow large-scale multi-family, condominium, or similar developments because of the threat they may pose to our rural character. However, there is a strong desire to allow the types of housing that will be affordable to all of the groups in our community, in particular the young who are just starting their families and the older generations. With land prices continually fluctuating, it is increasingly difficult for young families or the retired to afford to live in Dalton. The town should seek to encourage an adequate supply of affordable housing by being flexible and understanding in our land use policies. Specifically, to reduce housing costs and encourage affordable housing, the town could consider, in certain areas and neighborhoods: (1) smaller lot sizes (with self-funded community wastewater disposal as appropriate); and (2) multi-family housing (both rental and owned).

Cottage Businesses

Our community is comprised of independent, self-reliant, capable and entrepreneurial people. Many of us wish to make our living on our property. To support this feature of our community, the town should continue to allow the traditional "cottage businesses" and similar activities in the rural/residential area, with appropriate limitations to preserve our rural character. These "low impact" businesses and activities are part of the rural/residential community the town’s people wish to preserve. They include hospitality businesses (inns, bed and breakfasts), day care, home-based education and instruction, arts and crafts businesses, in-home professional activities (accounting, technical, etc.) and of course forestry, agriculture and recreation/tourist activities as discussed below. To encourage such businesses while at the same time preserving our rural character, the town could seek appropriate guidelines to mitigate potential detrimental impact. In the future impact fees may need to be assessed on businesses that add costs to town services.

Forestry and Agriculture

As traditional land uses in Dalton, forestry and agriculture should be encouraged in the rural land use area. There is a concern, however, in the community about the future potential for large-scale clear cutting of land. The town should determine whether any limitations on such activities may be
necessary or appropriate.

Recreation and Tourism

Dalton, being located on the Connecticut River, offers many opportunities for outdoor recreation. The town is also home to Forest Lake State Park, a year-round recreational area where a sandy beach, picnicking and beautiful views are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. The park was one of the ten original state parks established in New Hampshire in 1935. The park occupies nearly 400 acres of land.

A major state snowmobile trail, Corridor 5, runs through the town of Dalton. With the dedication of the local snowmobile club and the generosity of private landowners, snowmobiling is a growing sport. Dalton’s trails are well-maintained and enjoyed by snowshoers, cross-country skiers and hikers, as well as snowmobilers. At this time the trails are not accessible to ATV users, and there are no who could establish small shops plans for this to happen.

Many Dalton residents and property owners are actively engaged in outdoor recreation, and the town’s natural features support the development of recreational and tourism-related businesses. These activities should be allowed and encouraged in the rural/residential land use area, with consideration of such limitations, if any, as are necessary or appropriate to preserve the town’s rural character. Dalton provides a wonderful environment for hunting, hiking, fishing, boating, bird watching, biking and mountain biking, snowmobiling, skiing, snowshoeing, and other similar outdoor activities. There is an opportunity for our residents and property owners to create businesses that are based on or serve these outdoor activities, and such businesses should be allowed and encouraged in the rural/residential land use area.

Special Protections

Dalton has some very special features that play a large role in defining our rural character and natural environment. These include but are not limited to the Connecticut River and Johns River and the surrounding areas; Forest Lake; the Chase Bog; and the ridge lines on Dalton Mountain and Wallace Hill. The town should consider additional protections for these special areas.

For the river and wetland areas Dalton may wish to consider low densities and building setbacks to protect the shoreline, wetlands and water quality. These regulations may need to be stricter than the State standards. For the ridgelines the town may wish to consider low densities and building height limitations and/or vegetation buffers to protect the views. The town may also wish to limit and regulate windmills, communication towers and similar structures on the ridges. In all of these areas the town may also want to consider steps to encourage landowners to open their land for trails and recreational use.

More broadly, our community feels strongly about protecting the attractive rural, visual appeal of Dalton. To that end, the town should consider adopting appropriate and reasonable guidelines to limit the accumulation of junk and other eyesores. This may be one of the most important ways to protect the character of the rural/residential areas of town.
Existing Uses

The land uses discussed above would be the new land uses authorized in Dalton's rural/residential area. The rural/residential area would constitute the largest portion of Dalton's land area, and there are some existing land uses that differ from those discussed above — for example, certain businesses. To protect the rights of our residents and property owners, these existing land uses would be allowed to continue indefinitely into the future, with appropriate limitations on future expansion and subject to health and safety considerations applicable to all land uses in Dalton. This continuation of existing non-conforming uses is called "grand fathering," however any changes to existing facilities must meet current codes and restrictions.

Commercial

The residents and property owners in Dalton generally feel that new commercial activities — retail, wholesale, hotels, professional services, car and truck services, etc. — should be limited to particular areas of town in order to preserve Dalton's rural character. While more work needs to be done to reach a consensus on what areas are appropriate for commercial uses, such areas may include: the area near Dalton Road (Route 135) and Bridge Hill; the area in the vicinity of the Town Hall; the area of Dalton nearest to Route 116; and portions of Whitefield Road (Route 142).

The town should also adopt appropriate lot size, setback, buffer, and operational guidelines for commercial land uses so as to protect the rural character of the town.

Existing commercial uses would be "grand-fathered", however any changes to the existing facilities must meet current codes and restrictions.

Industrial

Industrial uses — for example, factories, plants, quarrying and aggregates businesses — are generally inconsistent with Dalton's rural environment, and for that reason it is the consensus of our community to limit industrial uses to a specific, appropriate area of Dalton. The town could define the area accessed off Route 116 in Bethlehem as the "industrial" land use area. This area should be the only area where new industrial uses are allowed. Existing industrial uses would be "grand-fathered," however any changes to the existing facilities must meet current codes and restrictions. The town should also adopt appropriate lot size and operational guidelines so as to allow effective industrial development in this area while at the same time protecting the town.
The Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981 was established to minimize the extent to which Federal programs contribute to the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use, and to ensure that Federal programs are administered in a manner that, to the extent practicable, will be compatible with state, unit of local government, and private programs and policies to protect farmland. The following criteria guide Farmland in New Hampshire for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981, as PI, 97-Mf, December 20, 1981.

Criteria:

- Soils that have an aquic or udic moisture regime and sufficient available water capacity within a depth of 40 inches to produce the community grown cultivated crops adapted to New Hampshire in 7 or more years out of 10.
- Soils with depth of silty or clayey materials within a depth of 40 inches.
- Soils that either drain well or have a water table that is maintained in a sufficient depth during the cropping season to allow cultivation of crops common to New Hampshire to be grown.
- Soils that have a saturation extract less than 4 mmol/L/cm and the exchangeable sodium percentage is less than 15 in all horizons within a depth of 40 inches.
- Soils that are not frequently flooded during the growing season (less than 10% of the time) or in 10 years.
- Soils that are not less than 4 inches thick and that have a permeability rate of at least 0.08 inches per hour in the upper 20 inches.
- Soils that do not have consistent or unique local or regional importance for agriculture.

Farmland of High Importance

- Land that is not prime but is considered to be of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and crops. Criteria for defining and delimiting farmland of high importance are determined by a state committee chaired by the Commissioner. New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food, with members representing the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts and the New Hampshire Economic Development Council.

Farmland of Local Importance

- Farmland of local importance is defined as prime, unique or of statewide importance, but the area is significant for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and crops. Criteria for the identification and delimitation of local farmland are determined by a county-level committee.
The New Hampshire GRANIT Landcover Dataset categorizes land cover and land use into 23 classes, based largely on the classification of 13 Landsat Thematic Mapper (TM) images. Particular emphasis was placed on delivering as much detail as possible in the forested and agricultural classes. Class-specific classifications were accomplished through a series of image subsets, masks, and classification functions of the TM data to produce the final product. A variety of other data sources were utilized in addition to TM imagery. Over 1,300 new training site data points were collected to supplement 1,800 archived sites from previous projects. Data for a large number of non-forested sites were available from pre-existing sources, such as Digital Orthophotoquads (DOQs), Digital Raster Graphics (DRGs), US Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory (N WI) maps, and local knowledge. Forested sites, as well as some wetland and agricultural sites, required extensive field sampling.

After the final classification was complete, NH Department of Transportation road data were "burned in" to the land cover data set, effectively overwriting any coincident class. Also, USGS Digital Line Graphs (DLGs) hydrography data were used to update double banked river, lake, and pond edges. Finally, several filters were applied to remove speckling and produce minimum map units of one acre.

Data sources:

Conservation Lands – Society for the Protection of NH Forests and other land trusts. NAD83

State Boundary

Water Bodies – US Geological Survey, US Environmental Protection Agency, Complex Systems Research Center, and NH Dept. of Environmental Services. NAD83

The NH Hydrography Dataset (NHHD) is a feature-based database that interconnects and spatially identifies the stream segments or reaches that make up the state's surface water drainage system. The NHHD, developed at 1:24,000 scale, is an extract from the high-resolution National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) issued by the US Geological Survey.

Roads – NH Dept. of Transportation, NAD83

The NH roads dataset contains the location of state, local, and selected private roads. The source scale for this data is 1:24,000/1:25,000 scale.


Boundaries are a digital representation of town boundaries mapped on standard 7.5-minute USGS quadsheets. The source scale for this data is 1:24,000/1:25,000 scale.
Slope is defined as the change in elevation over horizontal distance. The slope of land influences its suitability for development; it is much more difficult and expensive to build on a steep slope than a gentle one. Ease of access and municipal service is also impacted by the slope of land. Soil drainage characteristics diminish on steep slopes and erosion potential increases with steepness. In areas of 25% slope or greater, erosion is quite difficult and costly. Conversely, in flat areas where there are poorly drained soils, water may stand in pools and special techniques may be required to ensure that development may safely occur on that land.

Data sources:

Slope — USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, NA08
County-wide soil surveys produced by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service have been typically produced at a scale of 1:20,000 or 1:24,000 and should not be altered or “blown-up” to larger scales. The smallest soil area that can be shown on the county-wide soil surveys is 3 to 5 acres in size. They do not display sufficient precision to be used for site-specific applications.

Conservation Lands — Society for the Protection of NH Forests and other land trusts, NA08
Data developed has relied on several sources including, the USGS Digital Line Graphs (1:24,000), Society for the Protection of NH Forests records, records for various state agencies, digital records maintained by Cartographic Associates (Littellon, NH) and original deeds and plats.

Water Bodies & Streams — US Geological Survey, US Environmental Protection Agency, Complex Systems Research Center; and NH Dept. Of Environmental Services; NA08
The NH Hydrography Dataset (NHHD) is a feature-based database that interconnects and uniquely identifies the stream segments or reaches that make up the state's surface water drainage system. The NHHD, developed at 1:24,000 scale, is an extract from the high resolution National Hydrography Dataset (NHDS) housed at the US Geological Survey.

Roads — NH Dept. of Transportation, NA08
The NH roads dataset contains the location of state, local, and selected private roads. The source scale for the NH Roads dataset is 1:24,000 scale.

Town Boundaries — US Geological Survey, Digital Line Graphs, NA08
Boundaries are a digital representation of town boundaries mapped on standard 7.5-minute USGS quadrangles. The source scale for this data is 1:24,000 scale.

This map is for PUBLICATION PURPOSES ONLY and does not fully represent geographic conditions. Inaccuracies are known to exist in these data layers. Corrections, additions, or deletions should be directed to North Country Council GIS staff.
Dalton, New Hampshire
Soil Class

Data Layers:

Soils – USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, NAD83
Country-wide soil surveys have been typically produced at a scale of 1:20,000 or 1:24,000 and should be altered or "blown-up" to larger scales. Soil data is intended for general land use planning and are accurate for this purpose. They do not display sufficient precision to be used for site-specific applications.

Conservation Lands – Society for the Protection of NH Forests and other Land Trusts, NAD83
Data developed has relied on several sources including, the USGS Digital Line Graphs (1:24,000 scale), Society for the Protection of NH Forests records, records from various state agencies, digital records maintained by Cartographic Associates (Exeter, NH), and original deeds and parcels.

Water Bodies & Streams – US Geological Survey, US Environmental Protection Agency, Complex Systems Research Center, and NH Dept. of Environmental Services, NAD83
The NH Hydrography Dataset (NHHD) is a feature-based database that interconnects and uniquely identifies the stream segments or reaches that make up the state’s surface water drainage system. The NHHD, developed at 1:24,000 scale, is an extract from the high-resolution National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) housed at the US Geological Survey.

Roads – NH Dept. of Transportation, NAD83
The NH roads dataset contains the location of state, local, and selected private roads. The source scale for this data is 1:24,000/1:25,000 scale.

Town Boundaries – US Geological Survey, Digital Line Graphs, NAD83
Boundaries are a digital representation of town boundaries mapped on standard 7.5-minute USGS quadrangles. The source scale for this data is 1:24,000/1:25,000 scale.

This map is for PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY and does not fully represent geographic conditions. Inaccuracies are known to exist in these datasets. Corrections, additions, or deletions should be directed to North Country Council GIS staff.
Dalton, New Hampshire
Wildlife Habitat

Highest Ranked Wildlife Habitat by Ecological Condition
New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, March 2010.

Information about habitat condition was analyzed to develop a statewide and regional ranking and identify the highest condition habitat relative to all polygons of a given habitat type in the state. The goal is to provide regional planners and conservation professionals a tool in identifying the most critical wildlife habitat locations. Results will be re-evaluated in the future to monitor the effectiveness of conservation actions and respond appropriately to new information or changing conditions. The overall condition of each polygon was assigned a relative rank based on all polygons of a habitat type that occur in NH.

Tier 1 Habitats of Highest Relative Rank by Ecological Condition in NH
Tier 2 Habitats of Highest Relative Rank by Ecological Condition in Biological Region
Tier 3 Supporting Landscapes

This map is for PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY and does not fully represent geographic conditions. Incorrections are known to exist in these data layers. Corrections, additions, or deletions should be directed to North Country Council GIS Staff.

Data Layers:

Conservation Lands – Society for the Protection of NH Forests and other Land Trusts, NAD83
Water Bodies & Streams – US Geological Survey, US Environmental Protection Agency, Complex Systems Research Center, and NH Dept. of Environmental Services, NAD83
Rivers, Streams, Creeks – US Geological Survey, NAD83
Lakes, Pond, Reservoirs, and Wetlands – US Geological Survey, NAD83
Roads – NH Dept. of Transportation, NAD83
Town Boundaries – US Geological Survey, Digital Line Graphs, NAD83
Town Boundaries – NH Fish and Game Department, NAD83
Contour – US Geological Survey, Digital Elevation Model, NAD83

100 foot contours were digitally generated using ArcGIS software.