

NEW LONDON MASTER PLAN 2021



PHOTO BY PETER BLOCH



Adopted by the New London Planning Board February 23, 2021

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* The Master Plan Community Survey Results are attached as a separate PDF due to the length of the document.

Acknowledgements

The New London Master Plan Committee was formed in 2018 as a subcommittee of the Planning Board. Charged with creating a Master Plan draft for the Town of New London, the committee met throughout 2018, 2019, and 2020.

The Master Plan Committee presented a Master Plan draft to the Planning Board and to the citizens of New London on February 9 and February 23, 2021. The draft was made available both in hardcopy and as a downloadable file on the Town of New London website. On February 9 and February 23 at a public hearing on the Master Plan draft, numerous constructive comments were offered to the Planning Board.

At its regularly scheduled meeting on February 23, 2021 the Planning Board adopted the Master Plan draft. As a result, this document represents the Master Plan for the Town of New London. The Plan will remain in force until revised or replaced, likely within 10 years.

New London Planning Board

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Timothy Paradis, Secretary
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Prepared with the assistance of the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission

The Master Plan Process

As stated in New Hampshire statutes, RSA 674:2 I, "The purpose of the master plan is to set down as clearly and practically as possible the best and most appropriate future development of the area under the jurisdiction of the Planning Board, to aid the board in designing ordinances that result in preserving and enhancing the unique quality of life and culture of New Hampshire, and to guide the board in the performance of its other duties in a manner that achieves the principles of smart growth, sound planning, and wise resource protection."

The preparation of the Master Plan is one of the major responsibilities of the Planning Board (RSA 674:1), and it should serve as an aid to the Planning Board in the performance of its other duties (RSA 674:2). The board may elect to undertake the job itself, or it may engage professional or other assistance in completing some or all of the planning elements. In New London, the procedure that has been followed involved the creation of a separate Master Plan Committee, responsible to the Planning Board, to carry out preparation of a draft Master Plan for the board's consideration. This committee was composed of volunteers from the Planning Board and Community and continued to serve until the Master Plan was adopted.

The Master Plan is both a reference and policy document. It should contain appropriate text and supporting maps or charts to present the recommendations of the Planning Board, plus it should offer guidelines for other community decision makers, including New London's citizens convened as the



PHOTO BY PETER BLOCH

Town's legislative body at Town Meeting. The plan should stand as the most complete source of information about current conditions and trends within the Town. The 2021 Master Plan is intended to be a concise document that provides actionable items in a usable, and achievable, format.

COVID-19 statement

The information-gathering process for the Master Plan Update was completed in 2019 before the coronavirus pandemic began.

We have all experienced the effects of COVID-19. Our personal lives, workplaces, local community, and the world around us have been affected. At the time of this writing they continue to be affected. In what way this relates to planning, the Master Plan, and how we approach the impacts within our community will require observation during and assessment after the effects are fully known. At present we have identified that the following should be reviewed and considered moving forward:

- Adjusting for existing and potential changes to accommodate the built environment including spatial impacts of social distancing, public indoor/outdoor use, public vs. private effects, infrastructure (Town offices, public meetings, etc.), and transportation (sidewalks, parking, bike paths, public spaces, etc.).
- Fiscal impacts that might affect planning budgets such as the Capital Improvement Program.

These factors cannot be answered immediately. Establishing a protocol to include them in our work and considering them while implementing changes to our Master Plan has begun and will continue throughout this process. The Planning Board will most likely conduct an online survey to gather feedback from New London residents, businesses, and community members to further our knowledge on the effects of the pandemic as it relates to our community and planning for the future. We thank you all for your perseverance and look forward to moving positively into the future together.

Content of the Master Plan

As set forth in RSA 674:2, "The Master Plan shall be a set of statements and land use and development principles for the municipality with such accompanying maps, diagrams, charts and descriptions as to give legal standing to the implementation ordinances and other measures of the Planning Board.... Each section of the Master Plan shall be consistent with the others in its implementation of the Vision section.... The Master Plan shall include, at a minimum, the following required sections: ... a Vision section ... (and) a Land Use section ..."

These required sections are present in this Master Plan.

RSA 674:2 lists other sections that may be included in the Master Plan, including Natural Resources, Transportation, Utilities and Public Services, Community Facilities, Cultural, Historic, and Recreation Resources. In addition, this Master Plan provides a section entitled Demographics because the makeup and growth trends of New London's population are key elements in arriving at the content of the Master Plan.

RSA 674:3-III calls for the Planning Board to solicit public comments regarding the growth of the town in order to involve New London's citizens in the preparation of the Master Plan in a way most appropriate for the Town. This has been accomplished by means of the Master Plan Community Survey (the Survey) and Community Forums. The Committee was extremely pleased to receive almost 850 survey responses. (Appendix F).

Adoption of the Master Plan

The Master Plan is adopted or amended by a majority vote of the Planning Board after one or more public hearings (RSA 674:4). The Master Plan is prerequisite to development of a Capital Improvements Program (RSA 674:5), which the Town updates annually, and the adoption of a Zoning Ordinance (RSA 674:18). The New London Zoning Ordinance has existed since 1990 (enacted as a result of the 1985 Master Plan) and it is amended, as needed, by vote at Town Meeting.

Copies of the adopted Master Plan must be filed with the Town Clerk (RSA 676:6, II) and with the NH Office of Energy and Planning (675:9). The frequency of amending or updating the Master Plan is addressed in RSA 674:3, II, where revisions to the plan are "... recommended every 5 to 10 years."

Implementation

Without implementation, the Master Plan has no value. Thus, the success of the Master Plan in shaping growth patterns and in influencing public policy decisions depends on the degree to which the plan is actually carried out by those responsible for its implementation. The conclusion of each section consists of recommendations considered necessary to ensure the plan is carried out. These recommendations include amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and Site Plan Review Regulations, plus continued maintenance of the Capital Improvements Program, and areas that may require further study. The Master Plan guides the Town departments, boards and committees in their work and recommends areas of focus. The Master Plan Committee recommends that the Planning Board form an Implementation Committee to oversee the process.

Amendments to the codes and ordinances are not the only means available to implement this Master Plan. Other actions (e.g., land acquisition, construction or improvement of roads and public facilities, controlling road access, provision of public water sources for fire protection, and protection of groundwater resources) play a part in bringing about the vision of the Master Plan. Education and outreach related to these topics, and the vision of New London as a whole, are key components in implementation.

VISION STATEMENT

In the next decade, maintaining the natural, cultural, and built environment that complements and enhances the natural beauty of New London is of primary importance. Our small-town character should be protected and preserved as the community blends residential and commercial development into the existing landscape. Efforts to attract residents of all ages and manage modest growth should correspond with maintaining our small-town aesthetic and excellent access to health care, education, arts, and recreational resources as well as the commercial facilities that cater to residents' and visitors' needs. Additionally, we should continue to protect and cherish the natural resources of our community, including our lakes, wetlands, forests, scenic views, agricultural land and, open space.



PHOTO BY ROBERT BROWN

Vision action items

Through proper planning and regulatory procedures, New London will:

- Encourage a healthy community-development pattern with small residential lots clustered around the core commercial, community service, and institutional uses.
- Encourage small-scale development including a mix of uses consistent with traditional New England architecture and the Town's eclectic charm that protects its natural and cultural resources.
- Encourage the development and maintenance of trails and sidewalks to enhance the Town's distinction as a pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly, walkable community.
- Encourage housing that accommodates a variety of age and income levels crucial to the vitality of any community.

- Encourage protection of the historic appearance of New London. Areas of particular interest include Main Street, Elkins, and, where applicable, Newport Road with attention to the historic character and rural charm of the Town.
- Encourage the development of our institutions and our business community, whose successes are critical to maintaining the vibrancy of the Town.
- Encourage protection of agricultural lands, water resources, wildlife habitat, and recreational lands that in many ways define the Town.
- Encourage energy consumption and production that uses renewable and local sources such as solar, wind, and biomass and that contribute to environmental quality and the Town's resiliency.
- Encourage a move away from combustion engines; and use of fossil fuels and other sources that degrade air quality, contribute to climate change, contribute to noise trespass, and leave the Town vulnerable to disruptions in its energy supply.

Demographics

New London has seen steady, though modest, population growth over the last four decades with a growth rate of 53% between 1980 and 2019, compared to 54% and 44% in Merrimack County and New Hampshire, respectively. The population projections provided by the New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiative support the continued growth of New London through 2040.

Population Trends					
	1980	1990	2000	2010	2019*
New London	2,935	3,180	4,116	4,397	4,490
Merrimack County	98,302	120,240	136,225	146,445	151,391
New Hampshire	920,475	1,109,252	1,235,786	1,316,470	1,359,711

Source: US Census, 2019 Data is American Community Survey

Population Projections						
	2010 Census	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
New London	4,497	4,593	4,737	4,904	5,031	5,115
Merrimack County	146,445	150,434	154,459	159,899	164,046	166,771
State of NH	1,316,470	1,359,835	1,388,884	1,412,041	1,425,357	1,427,098

Source: New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives

Local economy

New London is home to a variety of employers from small, locally owned businesses to large institutional employers like Colby-Sawyer College and New London Hospital. Additionally, New London's variety of recreational opportunities has created a strong tourism-driven economy.

Home businesses and remote work

Home businesses have been allowed in New London for many years, providing residents flexibility to run small businesses from their residential properties within the parameters of the Zoning Ordinance. It is anticipated that the number of New London residents who work remotely for businesses both within and outside of New London will grow. The Town has quality access to internet service throughout the community, which provides the opportunity for telecommuting.

Regional employment

New London serves as an employment center for the wider region with people from neighboring communities traveling to New London for work.

New London is situated an equal distance between the Upper Valley and the Concord area. In these areas, there are a variety of employment opportunities with employers ranging from small businesses to those with several thousand employees, such as the State of New Hampshire and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center.

As of October 2020, the unemployment rate for the town of New London was 2.8%. The unemployment rate for Merrimack County was 3.2%. According to the 2018 American Community Survey, the median household income in New London was \$84,145.

LAND USE

Commercial

The existing land uses in New London are diverse and unique for a community of its size. New London has a thriving downtown with a mix of residential, retail, restaurant, civic, cultural, educational, and health care-related uses. New London is home to a variety of cultural resources that are regionally known, like the Center for the Arts, New London Barn Playhouse and Colby-Sawyer College, among many others. The mix of uses creates an eclectic and vibrant community that should be continued and protected. The diversity of building style, design, and layout gives New London a quaint and historic feel that should be carefully considered with new development.

Form-based code

The New London Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations govern many components of design and development. The Ordinance and Regulations determine where buildings may be located, the height of the structure, the setbacks from the street and neighboring properties, the width and location of streets and sidewalks and bike paths. Additionally, they control other factors that determine what is permissible in the built environment, like percentage of lot coverage. Some zoning and planning practices unintentionally have undesirable effects that lead to sprawling, unwalkable communities, harmful impacts on local/small businesses, and housing shortages.

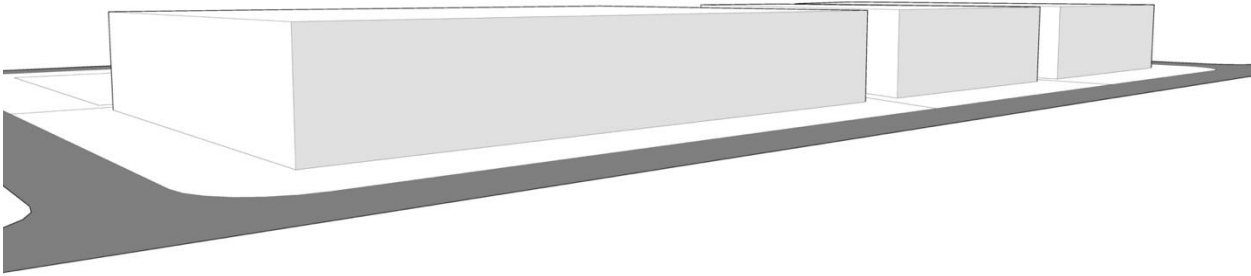
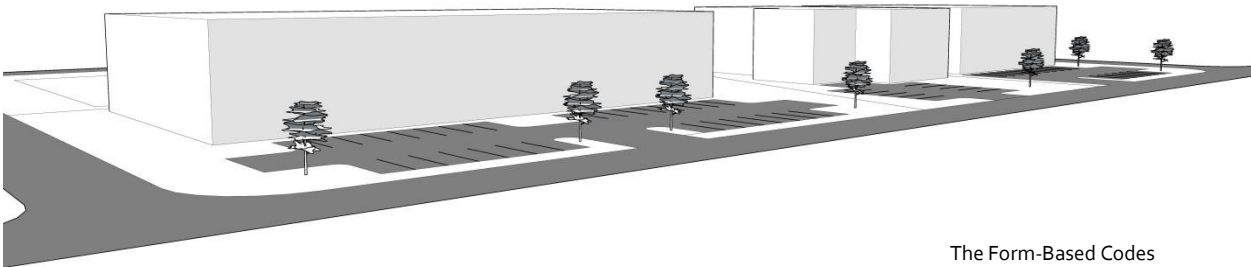


Figure 1: This graphic illustrates the limited extent of New London Zoning regulations in the commercial zones; currently addressing only setbacks, building height, landscape open area and parking requirements.



The Form-Based Codes

FIGURE 2 THIS GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATES THE UNINTENDED RESULT OF NEW LONDON SITE PLAN REGULATIONS; FAVORING PLACING PARKING ADJACENT TO THE STREET BASED ON LESSER SETBACKS FOR PARKING THAN STRUCTURES.

The Master Plan Committee and Planning Board agree the Survey and subsequent meetings reflect a general desire of the residents for a vibrant and walkable “downtown.” As such, research and guidance from the Regional Planning Commission leads the Committee to consider the advantages of a form-based code.

A form-based code is defined as a “...development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code.... Form-based codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks.” In summary, a form-based code ensures and promotes neighborhood compatibility of buildings, surroundings, and uses. Examples of the benefits of form-based zoning include:

- The character of a community is often associated with uniformity or consistency. However, many “destination” New England towns like Wolfeboro, NH, Woodstock, VT, and Edgartown, MA, exhibit an eclectic assortment of uses and architecture yet have a harmonious feel. A form-based approach prioritizes a sympathetic aesthetic over segregated uses.
- Walkable communities need more than sidewalks; they require destinations. Those destinations need diversity. Businesses, parks, restaurants, and municipal services are but a few. Form-based strategies allow this diversity to coexist while remaining integrated with residential use.
- Small businesses were historically present in many neighborhoods until use zoning prohibited business uses entirely in those zones. A form-based approach favors how a building fits among its neighbors rather than focusing on its use. An existing or new building may, for example, permit a ground-floor law office, or retail, or a coffee shop, with an owner or residential tenant upstairs.
- Regulations may often overly restrict density, minimum lot size, and setbacks, prohibiting housing diversity and affordability. A form-based code can satisfy a community’s desire for consistency with the existing vernacular yet also can promote various forms of housing that meet all needs.
- Form-based codes encourage vitality in a community by placing emphasis on opportunities to innovatively rehabilitate historic and important buildings in lieu of buildings designed to meet restrictions on use or parking, for example.

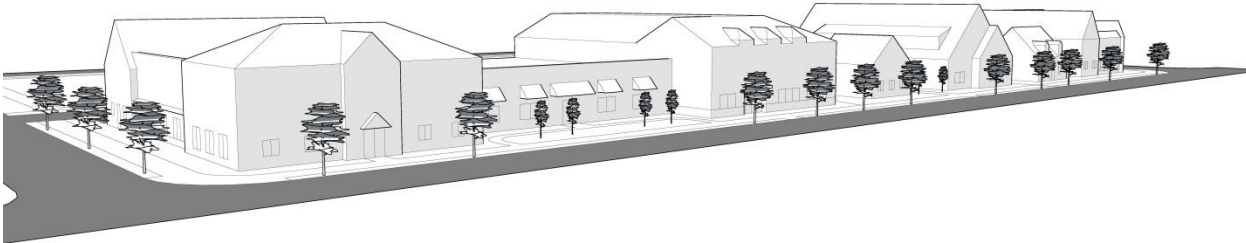


Figure 3 This graphic illustrates the possibilities of Form Based Zoning, specifying build-to lines, percentage of frontage development, sidewalk provisions, surface articulation, planting requirements, and modified parking guidelines. Form-based Zoning works to preserve scale, character, and aesthetic to a greater extent than traditional zoning.

In summary, current regulations overly focus on easily quantifiable goals such as setbacks, building height, parking spaces, density, and use while ignoring quality-of-life characteristics such as walkability, diversity, affordability, and flexibility. The latter, flexibility, is paramount and timely in light of the pandemic. Guidelines for outdoor uses for merchandise, sales, and temporary seating may all be addressed, and promoted, to ensure a resilient community.

The Planning Board proposes to engage a professional consultant that is experienced in form-based code to assist in developing a form-based zoning approach, specifically in the current Commercial and Institutional Zones. These zones could then be reclassified in lieu of commercial or residential. The goal is to produce a concise, perhaps graphics-driven standard designed to facilitate healthy, aesthetically pleasing development and, ultimately, a vibrant and sustainable community.

Recommendation

- Develop a comprehensive form-based code for New London Zoning in the existing Commercial and Institutional Zones.

Housing

According to the 2018 American Community Survey, New London has 2,328 housing units. The assessing data for the Town shows that of the total housing units, 83% were single-family homes, 15% were condominium units, 2% multi-family units, and 2% were assisted-living or nursing units.

The number of units has increased since the 2010 American Community Survey when New London had 2,308 housing units. While data is not readily available, there have been numerous instances in which older or seasonal homes have been renovated or replaced with more substantial year-round units. In 2020, New London has seen an increase in demand for existing homes and new development, some of which is attributed to the effects of the pandemic. In August 2020, the Select Board approved the revised Grand List with an increase of 1.3% in overall assessment partly attributable to recent development of housing.

Affordable housing

The residential market in New London has been described as healthy. The median home value increased from \$347,100 in 2015 to \$371,000 in 2019, according to the American Community Survey. While the residential market is healthy, it is generally accepted that there is a lack of adequate affordable opportunities for those who work in the community and their families and that young families in general find it difficult to afford to live in New London. Fully 93% of respondents to the Survey identified attracting a balanced mix of resident age groups as “important” or “very important” to the future of the Town. In the same survey, 77% favored expanding rental opportunities for members of the workforce, and 63% favored exploring the provision of detached Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) for that purpose.

The Master Plan recommends that the Town explore ways to increase the availability of workforce housing in three ways:

- Investigate opportunities to attract workforce housing developments.
- Investigate means to encourage expansion of the affordable housing stock by permitting detached ADUs in some circumstances.
- Investigate regulatory changes (subject to availability of Town facilities and consistent with town development) designed to encourage market-rate development of housing that is affordable to a variety of income levels.

Workforce housing

In 2008, the New Hampshire legislature created a law to encourage towns to enable the development of housing affordable to working people, so-called workforce housing (WFH). The law required towns to enable WFH development on more than 50% of the land on which residential uses are allowed and to modify zoning restrictions such as density and lot size so as to make development of WFH economically feasible. While towns are allowed to regulate aspects involving environmental protection, water and sewer services, traffic, fire and life safety, such requirements must be reasonable.

In the event that a town denies an application to develop WFH, the applicant may appeal directly to the Superior Court or to a specially constituted state housing board. Should the court or the housing board determine that the town denial or conditions were not reasonable, the Court or board is empowered to approve the projected development.

The obligation of the Town to make “reasonable and realistic opportunities available to develop” WFH in the community applies if the town does not have sufficient housing stock that satisfies its “fair share” of the unfilled regional demand for housing satisfying the WFH requirements of affordability.

In response to the state law, the Planning Board proposed, and the Town Meeting approved, a new Chapter XXIV to the New London Zoning Ordinance. Chapter XXIV provides WFH may be developed in all zoning districts of New London where residential uses are allowed. However, multifamily WFH is only allowed in the R-1 (Urban Residential) and Commercial zones. Applicants for WFH development may seek a Conditional Use Permit for a WFH development, and the Planning Board may grant density increases, and lot size, road frontage, setback, and open space reductions, and may grant a waiver of application fees. Given the historical high cost of land in New London, it is not known whether these allowances that the Planning Board is empowered to grant would be sufficient to encourage development of WFH in respect to a specific proposal that might arise.

Typically, in order to create WFH that is affordable, developers will seek to increase the density of units per acre and to develop lots that are greater than 10 acres in size. Such parcels must also be able to hook up to public sewer and water services. In New London, the public sewer and water systems service a limited area, roughly along, and adjacent to, Newport Road and Main Street. The map of New London attached as Appendix B shows the current size of all lots. As can be seen, there are few lots of 10 acres or more that are serviced by public sewer and water. In addition, many of these lots are already developed.

To date, one developer has sought conceptual advice for development of a WFH project. A conceptual hearing was held by the Planning Board at the request of the applicant, but no further action was taken since the applicant withdrew the application.

The following should be considered in relation to workforce housing:

- What constitutes “reasonable and realistic opportunities to develop” WFH? It seems clear that this test is focused on economic factors that would require review as to accuracy and reasonableness by the Planning Board in respect to a future proposal. Further is the question of how far the Planning Board is required to go to enable any proposed development to be viable.
- What is New London’s “fair share” of the “regional need” for additional WFH? At present, data that would allow estimation of these issues has not been gathered in a meaningful way. It is expected that the 2020 Census data, when available, should provide a better basis on which to estimate the current and future expected regional need and what might already exist.
- New London has limited undeveloped land zoned residential that has town water and sewer service available. How does this factor affect the ability to create “reasonable and realistic opportunities to develop” WFH?
- Identify approaches for WFH development that developed in a manner that compliments the character of the community.

Recommendations

- Determine what, if anything, further is required for the Town to satisfy its obligations under the New Hampshire Workforce Housing Statute.
- Develop suggested/needed changes to the Zoning Ordinance to satisfy the Town’s obligations.
- Explore best practices and new approaches to encourage the development of WFH.

Detached Accessory Dwelling Units

In 2016, the New London Zoning Ordinance was amended to allow homeowners to establish Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) either inside or connected to the primary residence. Such ADUs were limited to no more than 1,000 square feet and no more than 2 bedrooms. ADUs could be rented, but the owner was required to occupy either the principal residence or the ADU. Detached ADUs were not allowed under the Ordinance.

Based on the interest in providing additional affordable housing in the Survey and the community meetings, the Planning Board may explore whether authorizing detached ADUs in some manner would be an effective way to promote additional affordable housing.

Significant concern about enabling detached ADUs was expressed during the community discussion of ADUs in 2016. In weighing changes to enable detached ADUs, the Planning Board should consider appropriate means to focus such development to encourage creation of affordable units. For example, such consideration may focus on aspects such as:

- Restrictions on the size of such ADUs, number of bedrooms, etc.
- Which zones and overlay districts would be appropriate for such units?
- What aspects such as minimum lots sizes, setbacks and other lot characteristics might be appropriate?
- Whether income or rental limitations are appropriate.

Recommendations

- Consider allowing detached ADUs subject to appropriate restrictions.



PHOTO BY PETER BLOCH

Agricultural soils

New London is fortunate to have significant holdings of land with soils that have important value for agricultural use. Survey respondents and attendees at the community forums stated a strong desire for the Town to take steps to preserve these lands for agricultural uses. In recent years, individuals and preservation groups have made investments in some of this land to preserve it. The map attached in Appendix A highlights the land in New London that the State has identified as having soils particularly valuable for agriculture. When these areas are compared to the map of parcel sizes attached in Appendix B, it can be seen that a significant portion of the area containing valuable agricultural soils is already developed or has been subdivided into small parcels.

Based on the interest shown in taking steps to preserve land that has important value for agricultural use, the Planning Board and other Town Boards and committees may explore steps that could result in such land remaining in agricultural use as opposed to residential development.

Land with prime agricultural soils may not be appropriate for conservation efforts for certain reasons. For example, such soils on small lots may not be appropriate for general agriculture. Similarly, if the soils are in heavily wooded areas, the cost to return them to agricultural use may effectively foreclose such future use. The lack of available water for irrigation may limit the usefulness of land for agriculture, while the availability of Town water and sewer infrastructure may enhance the land value for residential development.

After identifying land that is both valuable to preserve for agriculture and also attractive for residential development, the Town can consider steps to encourage retaining such land in agricultural use. Efforts could involve such measures as exploring Town or nonprofit acquisition of certain parcels, taking regulatory steps to enable better irrigation opportunities, or appropriate zoning changes.

Recommendations

- Identify land with valuable agricultural soils that is appropriate for preservation.
- Explore ways to encourage public or private preservation of such land.
- Exploring zoning or other regulatory steps intended to retain such land available for agriculture.



PHOTO BY SETH DEWEY

TRANSPORTATION

Road network

New London is chiefly served by Interstate 89, Route 11, and Route 114, which provide easy access to points in Town and the region. In addition to the road network, New London is also responsible for maintenance of sidewalks in the downtown area throughout the Main Street and Newport Road corridors and in the Village of Elkins.

Public transportation

New London does not have local bus service; however, it is served by a regional bus service, Dartmouth Coach, which provides transportation to Boston and Logan Airport via the New London Park & Ride. Prior to the pandemic, the Park & Ride was often at or exceeding capacity. In the Survey, 56% of respondents said that they would consider using a secondary Park & Ride within 2 miles of the existing lot if expansion to accommodate users was not possible.

The results of the Survey also show that 80% of respondents would support expanded public transportation to regional hubs in Lebanon/Hanover, Manchester and Concord.

Bicycle and pedestrians

New London provides a vibrant Main Street that naturally encourages residents and visitors to park their cars and explore town on foot or via bicycle.

However, pedestrian and cyclist safety in the Main Street and Newport Road corridor is a growing concern. The Survey reported that mobility enhancements to sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes were a top priority. There are several roads that are used for recreational bicycling and walking that can at times be unsafe. Pleasant Street, Bunker Road, and Little Sunapee Road are popular routes for walking and biking and would benefit from the installation of amenities to protect cyclists and pedestrians.



PHOTO BY COLBY-SAWYER COLLEGE

Transportation concerns

The convenient access to employment centers beyond New London indicates the Town could experience development interest if the regional housing market continues to tighten. In order to balance modest growth and a desire to retain small-town character and charm, New London will:

- Consider ways to encourage regional bus service and continued use of the New London Park & Ride.
- Consider opportunities to encourage a walkable community such as through the repair and regular maintenance of sidewalks.
- Consider measures for the Commercial, R-1, and Institutional zones to require the installation or upgrade of sidewalks if development is proposed where sidewalks do not exist or where they are insufficient.
- Consider challenges and opportunities regarding parking along Main Street and Newport Road and consider revisions, if required, to the Site Plan Review Regulations regarding parking requirements.
- Consider the implementation of bicycle amenities to allow safe usage throughout the Town for recreation and transportation.

New London's Main Street serves as the cultural and civic hub of Town in addition to serving as NH Route 114, connecting New London to the wider region with an average of 7,690 cars on Main Street each day. Along Main Street, there are several intersections that have raised concerns regarding safety. Among them:

- The intersection of Pleasant Street and Main Street needs to undergo further study to improve the safety and sightlines for motorists entering Main Street and pedestrians navigating the crossings.
- The intersection of Main Street, Little Sunapee Road, and Newport Road should be investigated to explore alternatives that would calm traffic and improve geometry of the roads. The sightlines are difficult and motorists from Little Sunapee Road turning left onto Main Street can have a difficult time entering traffic. Additionally, the crosswalks and sidewalks can be difficult for some to navigate.
- The intersection of Parkside and Main Street has been identified as difficult to navigate. At this intersection there is a primary side road entering Main Street traffic with the additional traffic from the New London Elementary School during pick-up and drop-offs. The presence of the

school also increases pedestrian crossings in this area. (See Transportation Maps in Appendix C)

The Town of New London is dedicated to a well-balanced and connected transportation infrastructure: safe and welcoming to vehicles, public transportation, pedestrians, cyclists, and all ages and abilities equally. The Planning Board proposes to research and incorporate Complete Streets guidelines (or similar) to address planning for nonmotorized transportation into street infrastructure projects. (Complete Streets is a road rehabilitation and construction planning methodology with an inclusive approach to design, operation and, maintenance in order to enable safe access and mobility to all users.)

Recommendations

- Encourage the continued maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian amenities while exploring additional improvements where appropriate.
- Conduct a parking study of the Main Street corridor.
- Conduct a corridor study of Main Street and Newport Road to identify deficiencies and potential safety improvements for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists.
- Research and evaluate the implementation of a Complete Streets policy.



PHOTO BY PETER BLOCH

NATURAL RESOURCES & ENERGY

New London will encourage protection of agricultural lands, water resources, wildlife habitat, and recreational lands. The following natural resources and environmental concerns are addressed in this plan: surface and groundwater, agricultural land and food production, energy, recycling, wildlife, light and noise trespass, and general land use. Approximately 2,500 acres, or 19% of New London's land, is protected from development. (see Appendix D, Conservation and Current Use Land). Survey results support continued efforts to preserve and protect our land for the purposes of conservation, recreation, agriculture, and water quality and supply. There is a continuing need to save energy, and in doing so, save money and reduce carbon emissions. Light and noise trespass are becoming increasingly evident and detract from our small-town character and the natural environment.

Surface and groundwater

New London is fortunate to have a significant amount of water resources. The protection of these resources is extremely important to both the natural environment and the economic vitality for the Town. Water quality impacts drinking water, recreational activities, and wildlife habitat. The water quality of lakes and ponds is significantly impacted by the presence of road salt that washes off the road from winter maintenance.

Recommendations

- Analyze and compare New London water-resource regulations to those of the state and consider adjustments to meet policy goals.
- Consider whether storm-water management plans are sufficient amid a changing climate.
- Expand and enforce low-salt zones.
- Evaluate drinking water supplies and capacity.

Agricultural land and food production

Preserving and conserving agricultural land and soil is important to the Town's resiliency (see Appendix A, Prime Agricultural Soils.) This has become increasingly apparent with the pandemic and interruptions to the food supply chain. Agricultural development ranked second highest in the Survey. The Survey also indicated broad support for municipal-scale composting.

Recommendations

- Create incentives for agriculture and agricultural-land protection.
- Support local agriculture, food production, and food procurement.
- Update the agriculture resource maps.
- Promote vegetable gardening to improve food sustainability.
- Encourage sustainable consumption of food resources.
- Examine how municipal-scale composting might work.



PHOTO BY TOWN OF NEW LONDON

Energy

Voters at the 2018 Town Meeting adopted an initiative that sets a Town goal of 100% renewable electricity by 2030, and 100% renewable heating and transportation fuel by 2050 for the Town's municipal (not private) use. The New London Energy Committee is studying ways to achieve the Town's goals.

Two municipal solar arrays came online in 2020. They are expected to generate about 40% of municipal electricity needs. The remaining 60% must be found through a combination of reducing electric use and increasing solar or wind power production. To this end, the Energy Committee will

continue working to identify energy efficiency improvements as well as promising sites for solar arrays and/or wind turbines on Town-owned land and structures.

Further, the Energy Committee plans to work with the Conservation Commission to study the feasibility, for example, of municipal heating systems that use biomass harvested from Town-owned property, or high-efficiency air-source or geothermal heat pumps. The latter would require additional solar or wind to produce the required electricity.

Last, the Energy Committee will work with Town departments to study the feasibility of migrating Town vehicle fleets and equipment to all electric units, or as a temporary measure, fuel-efficient and low-emission propane, diesel, or gasoline-powered vehicles and equipment.

In addition to achieving the goals set at 2018 Town Meeting, the following deserve attention:

- Evaluate feasibility of community renewable energy production for business, and residential use.
- Consider ways to educate homeowners, businesses and institutions about federal and state rebates and incentives for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.
- Consider ways to incentivize high-efficiency electric space heating, water heating, and kitchen and laundry appliances that can be powered by renewable electricity.
- Consider ways to encourage installation of electric vehicle charging plugs in new construction and renovations, either in the garage, on the exterior, or both.

Recycling

The Survey found strong support for recycling in Town as well as for exploring the feasibility of municipal-scale composting and other ways to reduce what the Town sends to landfills.

Approximately one-third of trash that New Hampshire generates is food waste. Reducing food scraps could, in turn, decrease what the Town sends to landfills and potentially save on disposal costs. In addition, a locally produced supply of compost material could benefit the Town, businesses, and residents seeking a natural fertilizer.

In addition, the Town should continue to explore ways to reduce the creation of waste and to increase rates of recycling, where possible. The single-use plastics the Town now recycles in part — plastic types 1 and 2 — represent the types for which a significant demand exists. There is little demand in the marketplace for the remaining plastics, types 3 through 7.

There has also been discussion in Town about some of the actions seen in other municipalities such as banning single-use plastic bags from retailers. The Town should examine best practices and make recommendations as to whether some version of a ban would reduce waste, pollution, and harm to wildlife. The Town could consider convening institutions, retailers, and other businesses to study the problem and offer potential ways to address it. The Town should work with its legislators and regional organizations to encourage supply-side solutions to solid waste, particularly plastic generation.

In recent years, the Town explored whether to renovate and expand the Transfer Station. Though there are no plans to move ahead with such a project, the Town should continue to look at how residents' needs could evolve and to explore ways to reduce trash generated, increase recycling, and reduce what the Town sends to landfills.

Recommendations

- Consider ways to reduce waste and increase rates of recycling.
- Continue to study the evolving needs of the Town in terms of waste, recycling, and protecting natural resources.

Wildlife

Increased population and development put pressure on our wildlife. Invasive plants are evident throughout Town. Traditional, intensive landscaping practices affect water quality, noise trespass, our carbon footprint, and create monocultures that are poor for wildlife and conducive to invasive species. Healthy and varied habitats for wildlife contribute to the Town's resiliency, environmental health, and rural quality.

Recommendations

- Allow some municipal landscaped areas to return to native plants.
- Evaluate the feasibility of municipal landscaped areas appropriate for low-maintenance vegetation such as natural grasses rather than lawns.
- Encourage maintenance of field borders for wildlife habitat and corridors.
- Examine what parts of Town-owned land could be kept in a more natural state to promote healthy wildlife habitat.
- Consider planting pollinator gardens.
- Develop strategies to combat invasive species.

Light and noise trespass

Our small-town atmosphere is degraded by light and noise trespass. Highway noise on the interstate, in-town trucking, construction, and landscaping equipment all contribute to noise trespass. The use of shielded lighting and dark-sky initiatives are testament to light-trespass concerns.

Recommendations

- Encourage reduced use of internal combustion engines.
- Consider ways to reduce the use of internal combustion engines in Town equipment and vehicle fleets.
- Educate about and consider incentives for sustainable landscaping practices.
- Adopt best practices for municipal landscaping.
- Develop demonstration and early adopter sites for landscaping best practices.
- Raise public awareness about noise and light trespass.
- Consider guidelines and regulations that minimize light and noise trespass.

Conservation and recreation

This Plan addresses the need to conserve and manage land for wildlife and recreation.

Recommendations

- Develop land- and business-owner strategies for land conservation and trail rights-of-way.
- Examine methods for land-conservation funding; consider municipal partnerships to pursue funding opportunities.
- Develop multiuse trails and walkable community plans.



PHOTO BY PETER BLOCH

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

The Town of New London maintains a number of community facilities to conduct the business and services of the Town, provide emergency services, and for recreational enjoyment. The Town-owned property and facilities require routine maintenance and occasionally large projects are required to update buildings and facilities.

The Survey was used to ask the community for their input on some of the community facility needs in New London. The existing Police Department has been identified as inadequate through extensive study with input from Town officials, department personnel, and community members. There has been significant debate and study conducted to determine what the best option for improving the Police Department's space is. The Survey results showed that 73% of respondents support the concept of relocating the Police Department to a facility that is suitable for its needs and that allows for the Buker Building to be repurposed for other Town space needs.

Additionally, the Survey results showed that 80% of respondents were in favor of a community center being established in an existing building to serve the community in a variety of ways, including as an emergency shelter.

As discussed in the Energy section of this plan, any new development or renovation of Town facilities should use renewable energy and resources.

Recommendations

- Identify and acquire a property suitable for the relocation of the Police Department.
- Work to use an existing space as a community center and emergency shelter.
- Use renewable energy and resources at Town facilities.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the Master Planning process, the Committee consistently heard the same theme: our residents love New London. Our community spoke about the natural resources, local businesses, walkability of Main Street, arts and cultural activities, community character, and the vast recreational opportunities. The recommendations of this plan are intended to protect and enhance the attributes that New London cares most about. The intent of this plan is to keep the recommendations actionable and achievable to encourage use of the Master Plan in town-planning activities.

Historically, the Master Plan has received a comprehensive update once per decade. Going forward, it is recommended that sections of the Master Plan be reviewed regularly and updated by the Implementation Committee as the needs change and recommendations evolve or are accomplished.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan found on the table below is a compilation of the recommendations from each section of this plan. The intention is that this tool will be used by the boards and committees of New London to track progress on the recommendations. The tool should be reviewed and updated as needed as recommendations are completed or changed.

New London Master Plan - Implementation Table

Recommendation	Responsible Party	Estimated Year	Status
Land Use -Commercial			
Commerical			
Develop a comprehensive form-based code for New London Zoning in the existing Commercial and Institutional Zones.	Planning Board	2022	
Housing			
Determine what, if anything, further is required for the Town to satisfy its obligations under the New Hampshire Workforce Housing Statute;			
Develop suggested/needed changes to the Zoning Ordinance to satisfy the Town's obligations			
Explore best practices and new approaches to encourage the development of WFH in New London			
Consider allowing detached ADUs subject to appropriate restrictions.			
Agricultural Soils			
Identify land with valuable agricultural soils that is appropriate for preservation.			
Explore ways to encourage public or private preservation of such land.			
Exploring zoning or other regulatory steps intended to retain such land available for agriculture.			
Transportation			
Encourage the continued maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian amenities while exploring additional improvements where appropriate.			
Conduct a parking study of the Main Street corridor.			
Conduct a corridor study of Main Street and Newport Road to identify deficiencies and potential safety improvements for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists.			
Natural Resources & Energy			
Surface and Groundwater			
Analyze and compare New London water-resource regulations to those of the state and consider adjustments to meet policy goals.			
Consider whether storm-water management plans are sufficient amid a changing climate.			
Expand and enforce low-salt zones.			
Evaluate drinking water supplies and capacity.			
Agricultural Land & Food Production			
Create incentives for agriculture and agricultural-land protection.			
Support local agriculture, food production, and food procurement.			
Update the agriculture resource maps .			
Promote vegetable gardening and improve food sustainability			
Encourage sustainable consumption of food resources.			
Examine how municipal-scale composting might work			
Recycling			
Evaluate feasibility of establishing a community composting program.			
Consider ways to reduce waste and increase rates of recycling.			
Continue to study the evolving needs of the Town in terms of waste, recycling, and protecting natural resources.			
Wildlife			
Allow some municipal landscaped areas to return to native plants.			
Evaluate the feasibility of municipal landscaped areas appropriate for low-maintenance vegetation such as natural grasses rather than lawns.			
Encourage maintenance of field borders for wildlife habitat and corridors.			

Examine what parts of Town-owned land could be kept in a more natural state to promote healthy wildlife habitat.			
Plant pollinator gardens.			
Develop strategies to combat invasive species			
Light and Noise Trespass			
Encourage reduced use of internal combustion engines.			
Consider ways to reduce or eliminate the use of internal combustion engines in Town equipment and vehicle fleets;			
Educate and consider incentives for sustainable landscaping practices.			
Adopt best practices for municipal landscaping.			
Develop demonstration and early adopter sites for landscaping best practices.			
Raise public awareness about noise and light trespass.			
Consider guidelines and regulations that minimize light and noise trespass			
Conservation & Recreation			
Develop land- and business-owner strategies for land conservation and trail rights-of-way.			
Examine methods for land-conservation funding; consider municipal partnerships to pursue funding opportunities.			
Develop multi-use trails and walkable community plans.			
Community Facilities			
Identify and acquire a property suitable for the relocation of the Police Department.			
Work to utilize an existing space as a Community Center and Emergency Shelter.			
Utilize renewable energy and resources at Town facilities.			

APPENDIX A: PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS MAP

Town of New London Prime Agricultural Soils

This map shows prime agricultural soils designated by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

This map should be used for planning purposes only.

Map Created December 2020
by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee
Regional Planning Commission



Soil

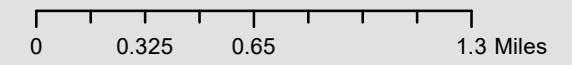
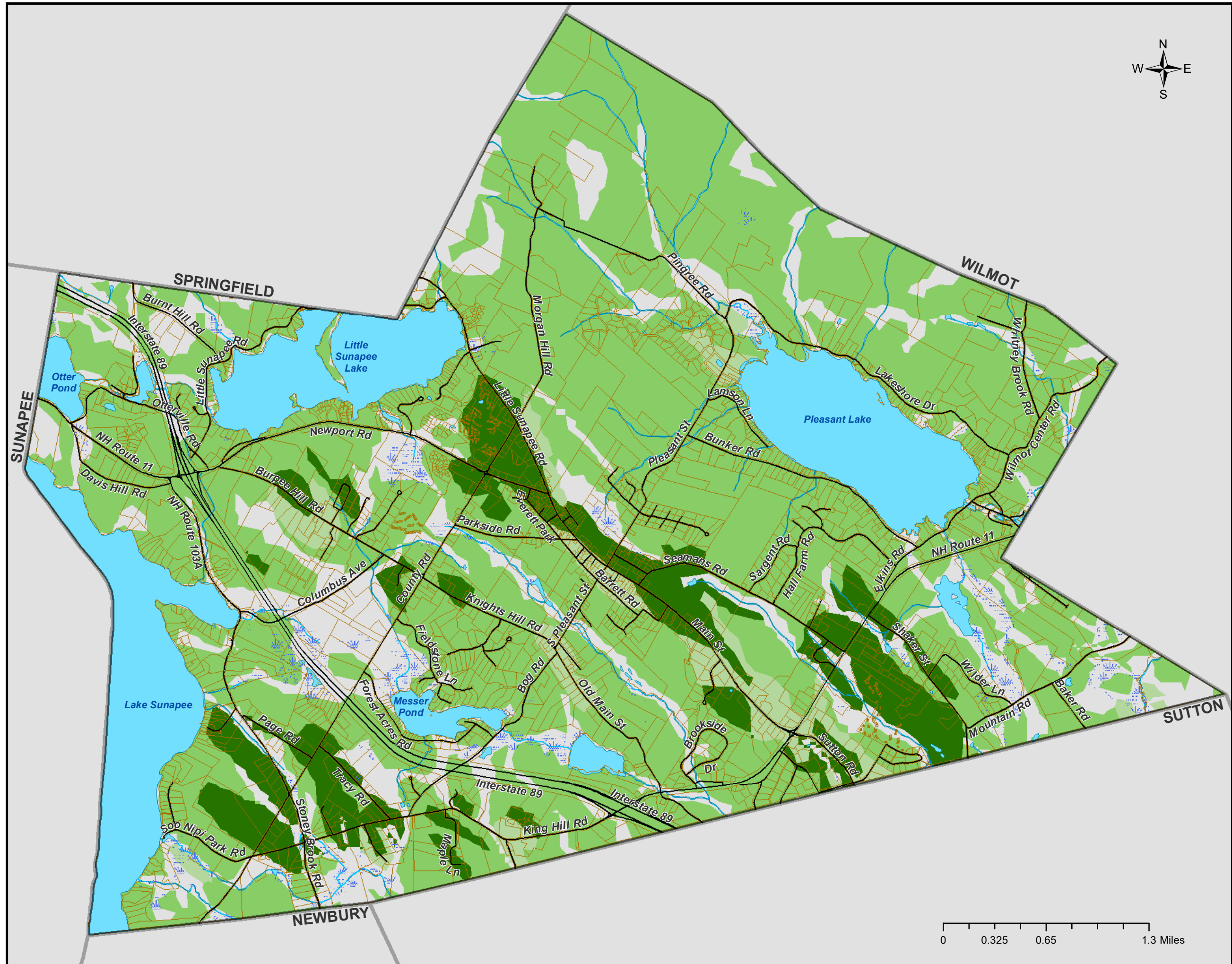
- Prime Farmland
- Farmland of Statewide Importance
- Farmland of Local Importance

Town

- Municipal
- Public Roads
- Parcel

Water

- Lakes and Ponds
- Wetlands



APPENDIX B: PARCELS BY ACRE MAP

Town of New London Parcels by Acre

This map classifies parcels in the Town by acreage.

This map should be used for planning purposes only.

Map Created December 2020
by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee
Regional Planning Commission



Parcel Acre

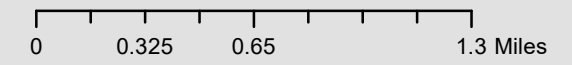
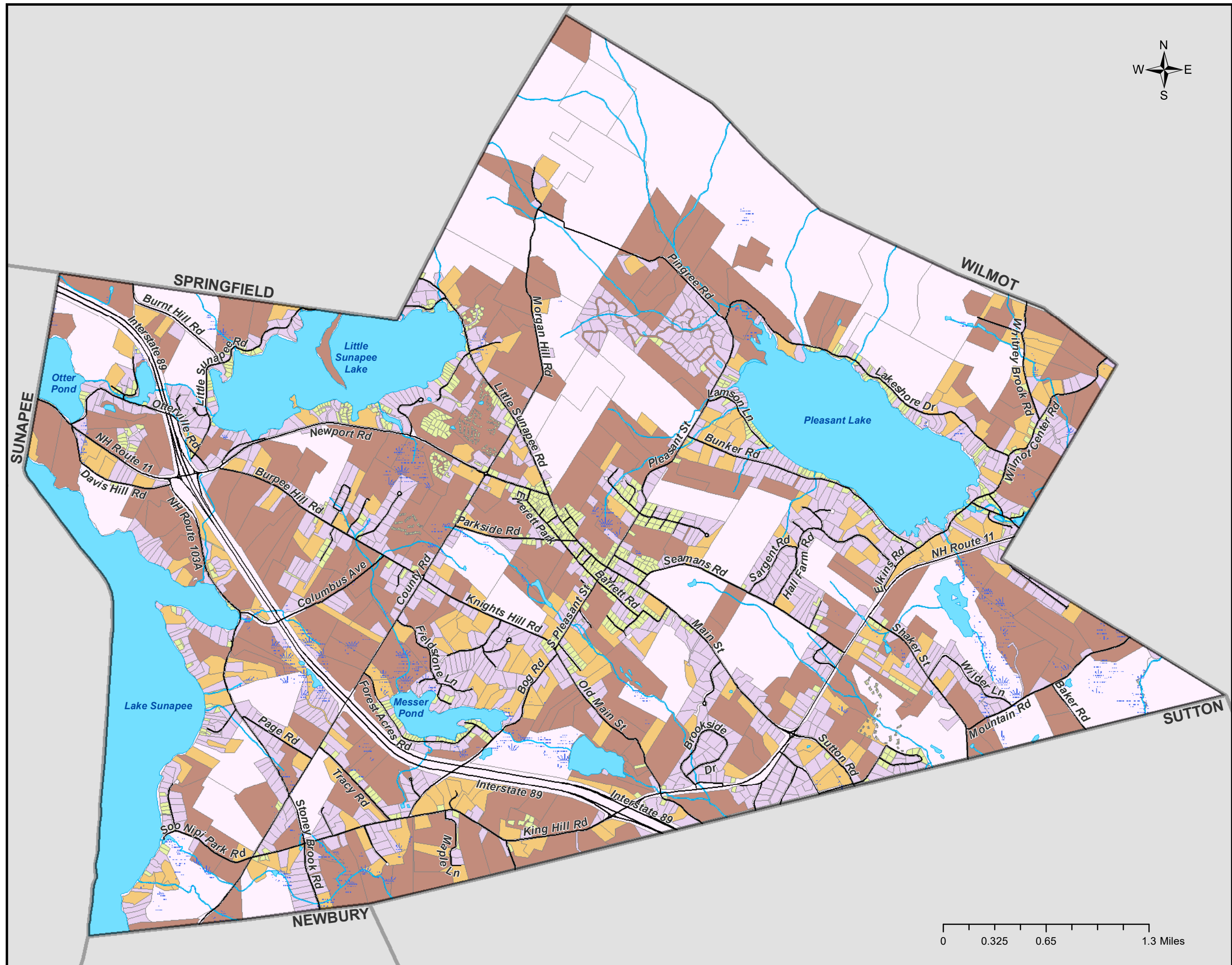
- 1 or Less
- >1 to 5
- >5 to 10
- >10 to 50
- More than 50

Town

- Municipal
- Public Roads

Water

- Lakes and Ponds
- Stream
- Wetlands



APPENDIX C: TRANSPORTATION MAP

Town of New London Transportation Map

This map shows the public road system by functional system. Those with no functional system, mostly private and not maintained roads, are not shown on this map.




The area highlighted in green and purple can be seen on the Transportation Inset Map.

This map should be used for planning purposes only.



Map Created December 2020 by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission 






Roads

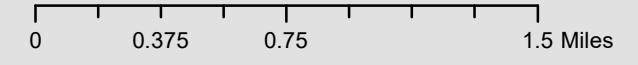
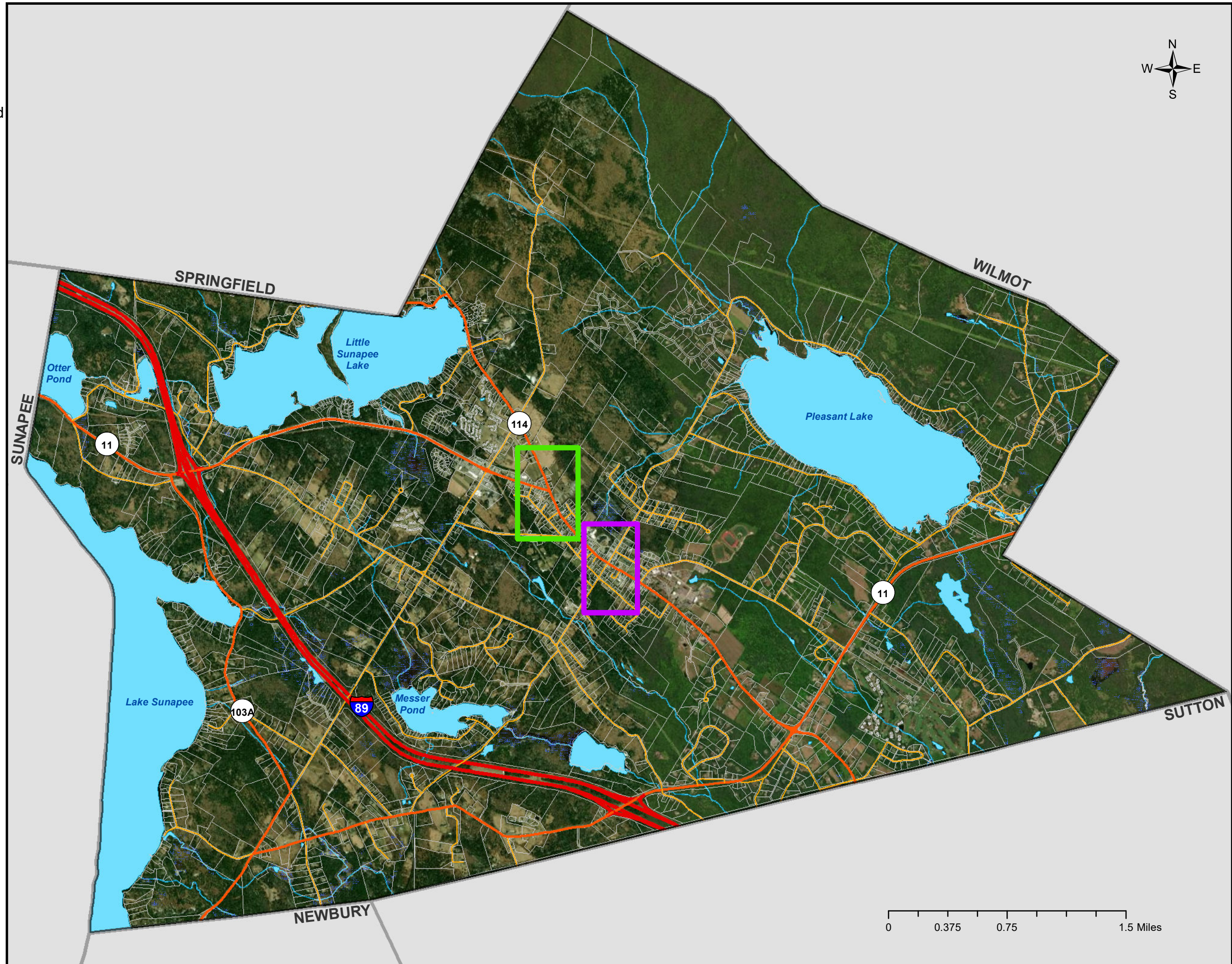
-  Interstate
-  Collector or Arterial
-  Local

Town Features

-  Municipal Boundary
-  Parcel Boundary

Water Features

-  Lakes and Ponds
-  Wetlands
-  Stream



APPENDIX D: CONSERVATION AND CURRENT USE LANDS MAP

*CURRENT USE PROVIDES TEMPORARY TAX RELIEF IN EXCHANGE FOR NO
DEVELOPMENT. CURRENT USE DOES NOT PERMANENTLY PRESERVE LAND.

Town of New London Conservation and Current Use Lands

This map shows land either in conservation and/or current use according to New London assessing.

This map should be used for planning purposes only.

Map Created December 2020
by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee
Regional Planning Commission



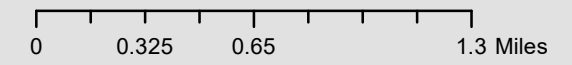
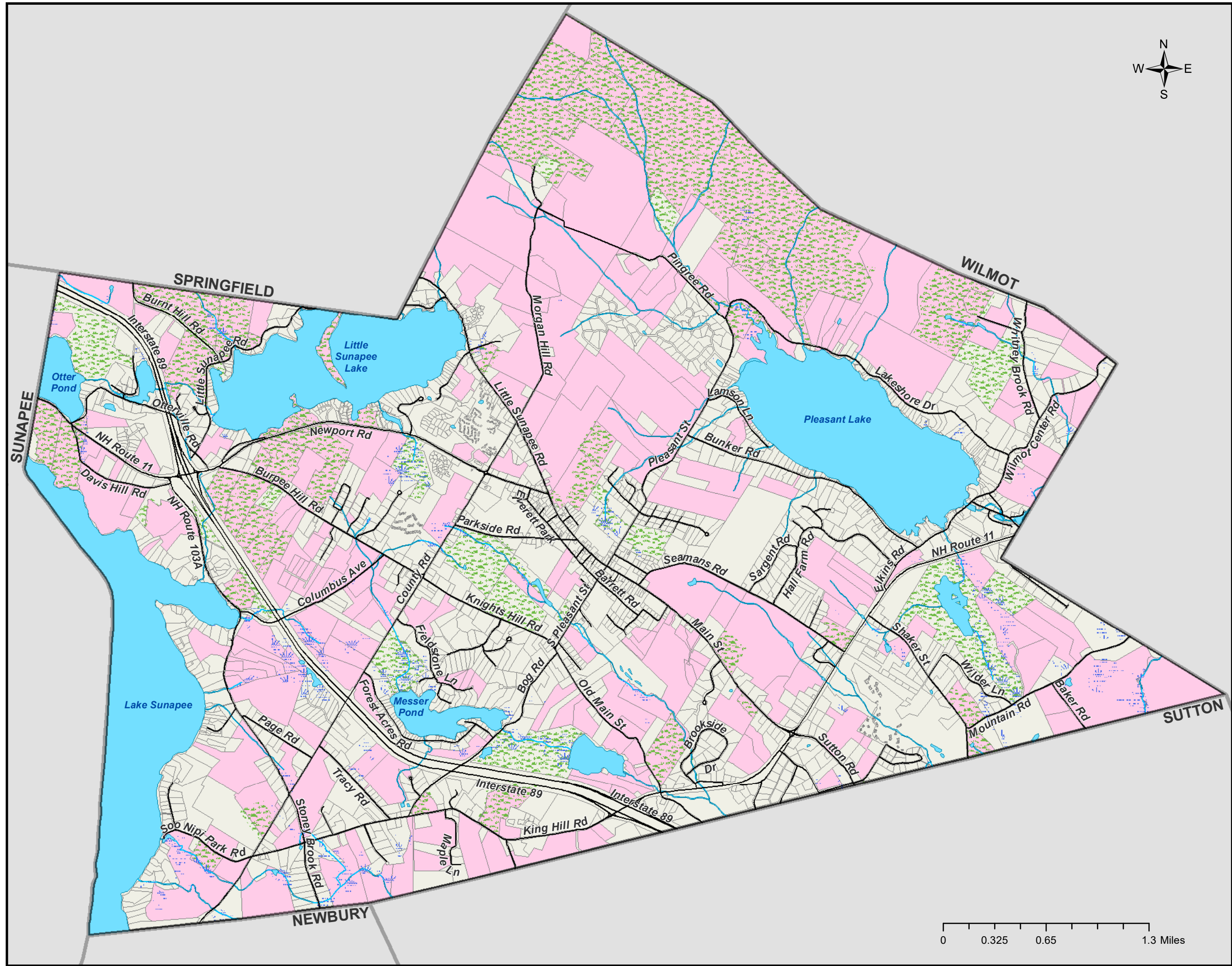
Conservation Land

Current Use

Parcel Boundaries

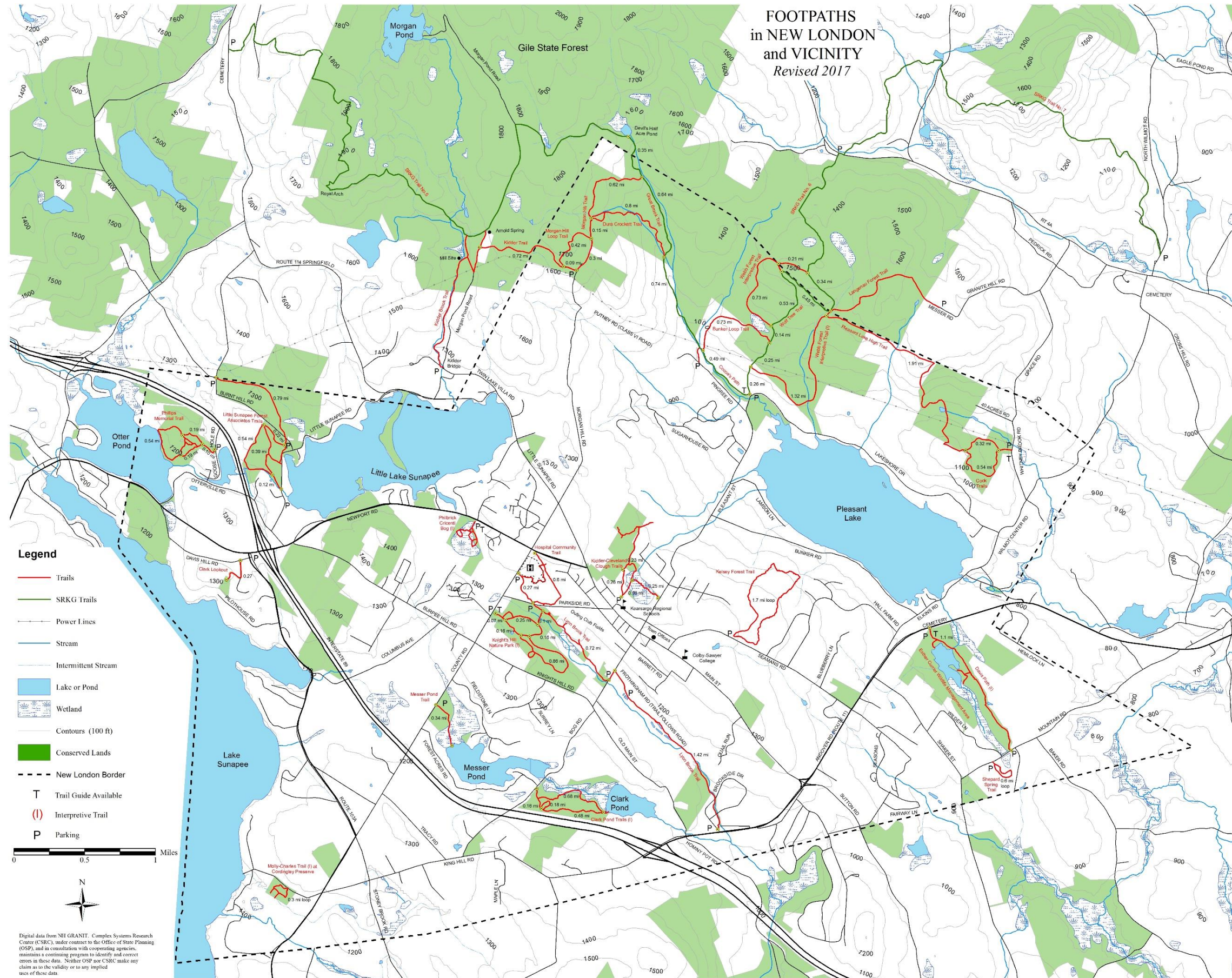
Town Features

Water Features



APPENDIX E: FOOTPATHS IN NEW LONDON MAP

FOOTPATHS in NEW LONDON and VICINITY *Revised 2017*



Legend

- Trails
- SRKG Trails
- Power Lines
- Stream
- Intermittent Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Wetland
- Contours (100 ft)
- Conserved Lands
- New London Border
- T Trail Guide Available
- (I) Interpretive Trail
- P Parking

0 0.5 1 Miles



Digital data from NHI GRANT, Complex Systems Research Center (CSRC), under contract to the Office of State Planning (OSP), and in consultation with cooperating agencies, maintains a continuing program to identify and correct errors in these data. Neither OSP nor CSRC make any claim as to the validity or to any implied uses of these data.

APPENDIX F: MASTER PLAN COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

*THE MASTER PLAN COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS ARE ATTACHED AS A SEPARATE PDF DUE TO THE LENGTH OF THE DOCUMENT.