

**CONWAY PLANNING BOARD AND
MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

OCTOBER 26, 2023

PAGES

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Work Session

**CONWAY PLANNING BOARD
AND MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

OCTOBER 26, 2023

A meeting of the Conway Planning Board and the Master Plan Steering Committee was held on Thursday, October 26, 2023 beginning at 5:30 pm at the Conway Town Office, Conway, NH. Those present were: Chair, Benjamin Colbath; Selectmen's Representative, Steve Porter; Secretary, Erik Corbett; Bill Barbin; Eliza Grant; Alternate Ted Phillips; Ben Wilcox; Kate Richardson; Jason Gagnon; Janine Bean; Debra Haynes; Town Planner, Ryan O'Connor; and Deputy Town Manager, Paul DegliAngeli.

WORK SESSION

The Board and Committee reviewed the attached Future Land Use Map and Improve Long-Term Housing Availability and Affordability documents.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Holly L. Whitelaw
Planning Assistant

Future Land Use Map - Town of Conway

The future land use map provides a vision and statutory basis for how the Town of Conway will regulate land use to achieve community goals. The identified areas of future land use seek to establish an improved balance of housing, commercial development, and natural resource conservation for the Town of Conway. To achieve this vision, the Town will need to update zoning, subdivision, and site plan regulations accordingly. **Importantly, the future land use map is not a zoning map; rather, it provides a basis for adopting changes to zoning regulations and district boundaries.**

The identified areas of land use reflect multiple community development goals:

- Supporting vibrant village centers with a mix of residential and small-scale commercial uses.
- Restricting large-scale commercial development and enabling the creation of more long-term housing.
- Encouraging the creation of walkable neighborhood areas near Conway's villages.
- Protecting water quality, wildlife corridors, and agricultural resources.

This vision requires alignment of land use policy and supporting infrastructure. Areas where more compact development is desired are located within existing or envisioned water and sewer infrastructure service areas, whereas development density would be limited outside water and sewer service areas. In areas where compact neighborhoods are envisioned, proactive planning around sidewalk networks, parking, and recreational facilities will be important for ensuring quality of life and orderly development.

Mixed Use Areas

Mixed use areas permit residential, commercial, and light industrial development to varying degrees, depending on the existing character and planning goals for the area. These areas are priorities for infill development and future water and sewer system enhancements and/or extensions. Performance zoning standards can be considered for these areas to ensure that different uses are compatible with the surrounding area.

Village Core (VC)

Village Core areas embrace a compact, walkable development pattern in line with the historical development pattern in North Conway Village and Conway Village. Residential, civic, and small-scale commercial uses are emphasized, including mixed-use development.

- Served by water and sewer infrastructure

Commercial Core

These areas will support large-scale multi-family residential developments, mixed-use development, and a variety of commercial uses with a long-term emphasis towards creating an improved balance of residential and commercial uses. Infill development supports a more compact, walkable development pattern.

- Served by water and sewer infrastructure

Mixed Use - Residential (MU-R)

These areas encourage a better balance and integration of residential and commercial uses into a more cohesive neighborhood feel via infill development, with an emphasis on new residential and mixed-use development. Compact residential development and neighborhood-

scale commercial uses are supported, as well as locally-appropriate light industrial uses. These areas cover existing mixed-use neighborhoods adjacent to village core areas and existing areas of strip-style development. Walkable development patterns are encouraged and enabled by water and sewer infrastructure. Large-scale commercial development is prohibited.

- Served by water and sewer infrastructure

Mixed Use - Commercial (MU-C)

These areas encourage a better balance and integration of residential and commercial uses into a more cohesive neighborhood feel via infill development, with an emphasis on new small-scale commercial and mixed-use development. Residential development is also permitted. These areas cover existing mixed-use neighborhoods adjacent to village core areas and existing areas of strip-style development. Walkable development patterns are encouraged and enabled by water and sewer infrastructure. Large-scale commercial development is prohibited.

- Served by water and sewer infrastructure

Mixed Use - Industrial (MU-I)

These areas encourage a mix of uses, with additional permissions for light industrial development. Residential development is also permitted. These areas cover existing residential and light industrial areas. Large-scale commercial development is prohibited.

- Served by water and sewer infrastructure

Recreational Resort (R-R)

This area supports ongoing recreational resort operations and enhancement, as well as the creation of resort-oriented housing.

- Served by water and sewer infrastructure

Residential and Agricultural Areas

These areas are primarily for residential development, agriculture, and/or natural resource protection, with varying limits on commercial development.

Village Residential (VR)

These areas embrace a compact, walkable residential development pattern adjacent to village core areas. Residential development occurs on small lots through single-family homes, duplexes and triplexes, and small multi-unit structures, as well as accessory dwelling units (both attached and detached).

- Served by water and sewer infrastructure

Outer Village Residential (OVR)

These areas cover existing, lower-density residential subdivisions adjacent to village centers. The creation of new housing opportunities is supported by enabling smaller lot sizes and permissive policies around accessory dwelling units, conversion of single-family homes to small multi-unit structures, and enabling neighborhood-scale multi-family dwellings.

- Mainly served by water and sewer infrastructure

Rural Residential (RR)

This area balances lower-density residential uses (single-family homes, duplexes and triplexes, accessory dwellings), agricultural uses, and areas of undeveloped forest tracts. The use of conservation subdivision standards enables development of subdivisions with smaller lot sizes with conserved areas, and standards regarding minimum road frontage areas and clearing help retain rural character. Lots are carefully developed with consideration for steep slopes, soils, water resources, and forest coverage.

- Not served by water and sewer infrastructure

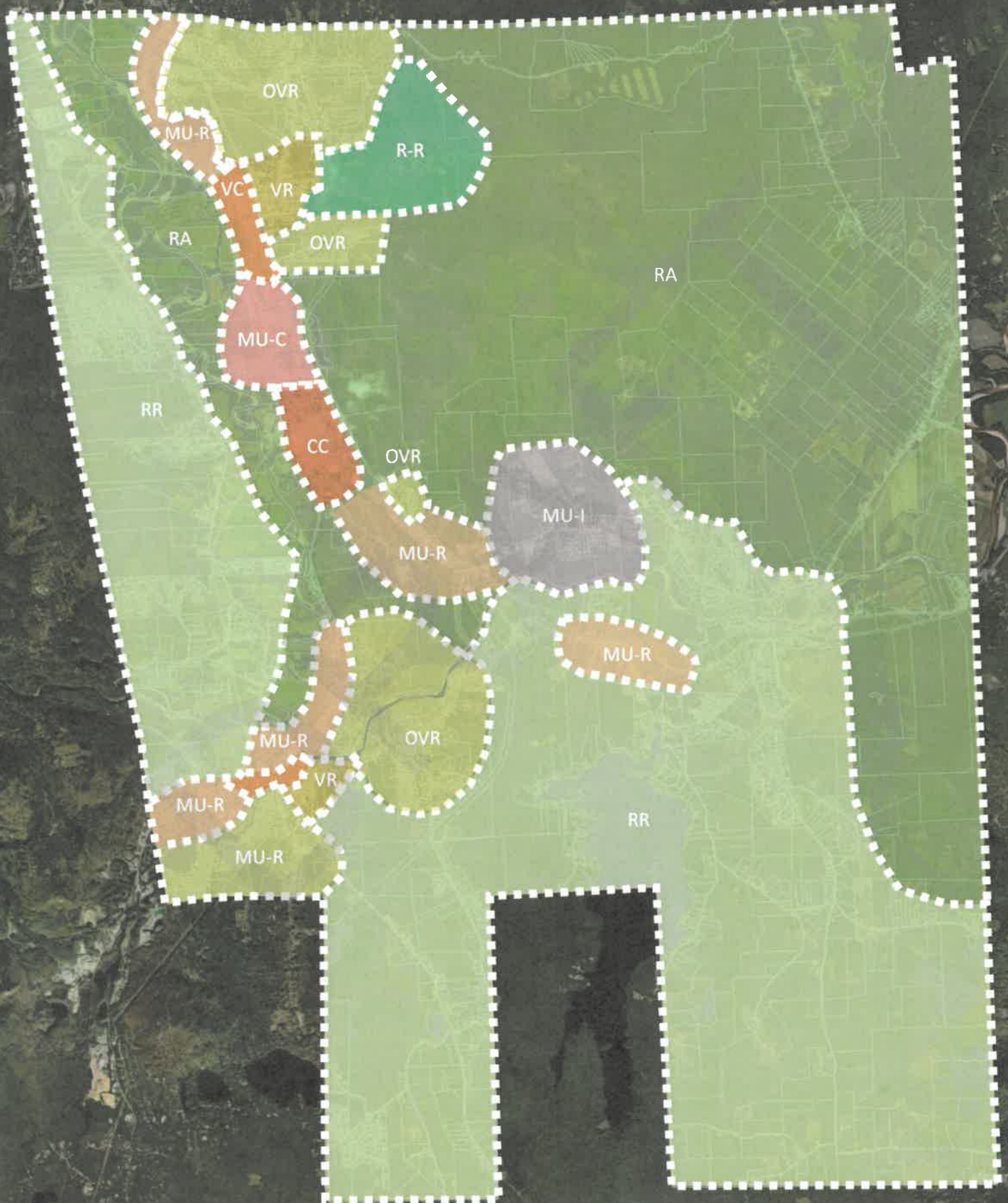
Rural Agricultural (RA)

This area emphasizes agricultural and natural resource conservation and health in areas of high conservation priority using resource-based standards and limitations on development. Larger-sized lots are carefully developed with consideration for steep slopes, soils, water resources, and forest coverage. Large-scale subdivision of land and impervious surfaces are both limited.

- Not served by water and sewer infrastructure

DRAFT

Town of Conway - DRAFT Future Land Use Map





A. Improve Long-Term Housing Availability and Affordability

A. Improve Long-Term Housing Availability and Affordability

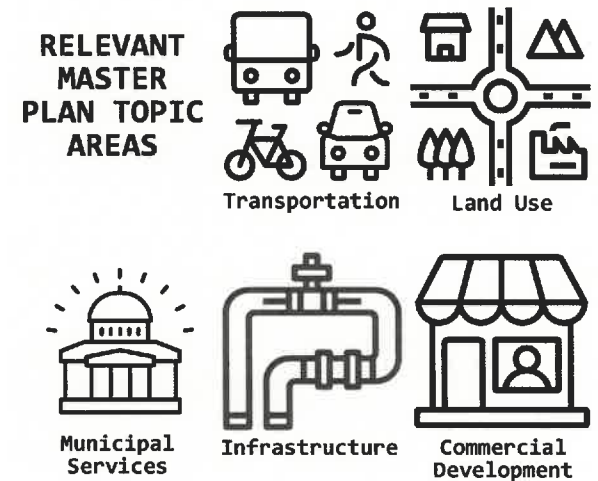
INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents goals and strategies for improving housing options for Conway residents, including strategies for enhancing housing affordability. It also includes strategies pertaining to changes to the Town land use code, as local land use regulations play a central role in determining the types of housing that can be built in a community.

As a regional service center and tourist hub, Conway has a strong demand for housing that far outpaces supply. In 2022, the rental vacancy rate in Carroll County was just 2.3%, and the rate was likely even lower for Conway alone. Because of Conway’s limited supply of housing, many residents cannot find housing that is affordable to them; over half (51%) of renters in Conway are “cost-burdened,” meaning that they spend over 30% of their household income on housing. The 2023 Regional Housing Needs Assessment for the North Country region of New Hampshire (including Conway) projects that there will be a need for hundreds of new rental units and new owner-occupied units in Conway by 2040, assuming that other communities are also building new housing to meet their projected needs.

Through public engagement conducted during the Master Plan process, residents indicated that increasing housing (specifically affordable housing) opportunities was a top priority. In their input, residents noted that a lack of housing supply in Conway has widespread negative effects on the community; for example, a lack of housing for workers makes it increasingly challenging for local businesses to attract and retain staff. To increase the availability of affordable and attainable housing, there is a need for land-efficient housing types, such as small apartment buildings

Living in Conway should be affordable and attainable for residents of different income levels; a reliable supply of quality housing helps support and retain Conway’s workforce.



A. Improve Long-Term Housing Availability and Affordability



and triplexes. At present, nearly two-thirds of homes in Conway are single-family residences. New housing should also be constructed in village centers and areas where water and wastewater connections are available and/or feasible. Today, nearly 70% of housing units in Conway are within the Agricultural/Residential District, which is an area intended for low-density development and is generally not served by water and wastewater infrastructure.

Key Terms

Affordable Housing - Affordable housing refers to housing that is priced at a level that is affordable to individuals or families earning a specific income level. Housing costs are generally considered affordable if they are less than 30% of a household's income.

Attainable Housing - Attainable housing refers to housing that is affordable or generally accessible to residents with moderate incomes. This housing may or may not be fixed in price, like some affordable housing, but it still increases the overall availability of housing in the community.

Missing Middle Housing - "Missing middle," or "middle" housing refers to housing types that are more dense than single-family homes and less dense than large apartment buildings. Because these housing types (e.g., duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, small multi-family buildings) have been less commonly built since the early 20th century, they are referred to as "missing."

A. Improve Long-Term Housing Availability and Affordability

Desired Outcomes

- *There are more homes available for rent or purchase that are affordable to residents of different income levels*
- *Residents can find housing that meets their needs; when workers have more housing options, Conway will have greater workforce stability and a lower cost of living*
- *Updates to the zoning code promote village-style development, a historic development pattern that can be seen in Conway today. As a result, there are more housing options available in Conway's village centers; these housing options include "missing middle" housing types (e.g., small multifamily housing, townhomes, etc.)*
- *There are different housing options available that are suitable to residents of different age groups and abilities*
- *There is a healthy balance between the amount of commercial and residential development in Conway; future commercial development occurs at a smaller scale and does not strain or jeopardize the availability of housing in the community*
- *New housing development is sensitive to Conway's environmental context and minimizes environmental disturbance*



Current and Planned Housing Projects

Under Construction - As of Fall 2023, there were over 150 affordable/workforce housing units and over 60 market rate housing units currently under construction in Conway.

Planned - As of Fall 2023, there were over 30 affordable/workforce units and over 550 market rate housing units planned in Conway; because these units are in the planning stages, it is possible that not all of them will have received Planning Board approvals and be developed.

GOAL A-1:

Expand Housing Supply in Water and Wastewater Service Areas

CHALLENGE:

A lack of water/wastewater infrastructure can make housing more expensive or infeasible and can lead to water quality issues. The Town should work to align zoning with infrastructure capacity; in this way, the allowed density in a given zoning district would correspond directly with the infrastructure capacity of that area.

STRATEGIES:



According to the Environmental Protection Agency, about 15% of private wells in the United States have elevated levels of contaminants, including bacteria, nitrates, and other substances harmful to human health

A-1.1: Align Conway's residential and commercial zoning districts with current and future water/wastewater service areas.

- Create Mixed Use-Residential, Mixed Use-Commercial, and Commercial Core districts that are aligned with water/wastewater service and support higher residential densities (See *Future Land Use Map*)
- Create Rural-Agricultural and Rural-Residential zones to accommodate low-density residential development in areas without access to water and wastewater service (See *Future*

Land Use Map)

- Continue to use the Town's overlay districts to preserve water resources and direct residential and commercial development out of key resource areas (See *Overlay Districts Map*)

A-1.2: Evaluate opportunities to provide water/wastewater service to all village areas within Conway.

- Consider extending water/wastewater service to Center Conway to support orderly, compact future development in that area.

GOAL A-2:

Reduce Zoning-Related Barriers to Affordable and Attainable Housing in Conway

CHALLENGE:

Conway's current zoning policies are outdated and allow only a limited range of housing types, restricting housing types that are more likely to be affordable to low- and middle-income residents. Conway currently defines "multi-family housing" as residences with greater than 2 units. Conway currently has onerous dimensional requirements that prevent multi-family housing on lots less than 1 acre in size in all districts. This has led to a proliferation of single-family homes on large lots throughout town, particularly in the current Residential/Agricultural district, and an accompanying lack of multi-family housing.

STRATEGIES:

A-2.1: Ensure that multi-family housing and duplexes are allowed and supported in the Town land use code.

- Provide definitions of different types of multi-family housing. At present, the Town code defines multi-family housing as residences with more than 2 units. This definition is ambiguous and may hinder the construction of multi-family housing of different sizes. By providing definitions for small multi-family structures (3-4 units) and larger multi-family structures (5-8 units), Conway will be better positioned to allow multi-family residences of different sizes.



According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 American Community Survey, the median cost per square foot for single-family homes in the United States was \$123.72, while for multi-family units (2 to 4 units in a building), the median cost per square foot was \$88.27. This means that, on average, it is less expensive to build or purchase a square foot of housing in multi-family units compared to single-family homes.



9% of residential units in Conway are within the Residential/Agricultural district. 72% of those units are single-family homes.



63% of residential units in Conway are single-family homes. 18% are condominiums, 6% are multi-family residences (>8 units), and 2% are multi-family (5-8 units).

A. Improve Long-Term Housing Availability and Affordability



Detached and attached accessory dwelling units (ADUs), shown above, are a type of infill development. “Infill” refers to further development in already developed lots and areas, as opposed to “greenfield” development, which occurs in previously undeveloped lots.

- Update the Town’s subdivision regulations to allow the construction of multi-family structures on small lots served by water and wastewater. At present, the Town code requires that multi-family units be constructed on lots of at least 1.5 acres (1 acre for the first unit and an additional half acre for each additional unit).

A-2.2: Amend Planned Unit Development (PUD) regulations to include stronger affordable and attainable housing incentives in Conway.

- Add guidance in the Town’s land use code that helps applicants incorporate affordable housing into their PUD development applications.
- Update PUD standards to reflect the desired development direction and character of different districts as referenced in the Future Land Use map.
- Consider revising PUD and subdivision regulations to promote the use conservation subdivisions where a portion of the land remains undeveloped in exchange for the use of smaller lot sizes.

A-2.3: Allow detached and attached accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and provide specific direction on where they can be constructed.

- Allowing both attached and detached ADUs provides property owners with additional flexibility for adding dwelling units. The Town’s land use code does not currently specify where detached ADUs are allowed, although attached ADUs are allowed in areas where SF dwellings are permitted statewide. The land use code should identify districts where these types of housing can be constructed.
- Ensure that dimensional requirements do not preclude ADU development.

A-2.4: Promote adaptive reuse of existing structures for affordable and attainable housing in Conway.

A. Improve Long-Term Housing Availability and Affordability

GOAL A-3:

Increase Affordable Housing in Conway Through a Multi-Faceted Strategy

CHALLENGE #1:

At present, Conway's Town code offers few policies that meaningfully support affordable housing. Conway's land use code contains a section on affordable housing that creates a density bonus program and inclusionary zoning ordinance designed to support the development of small-scale affordable housing in Conway. Local stakeholders have reported that few developers have taken advantage of existing affordable housing incentives in the code.

STRATEGIES:



A-3.1: In collaboration with the Mount Washington Valley Housing Coalition and other regional partners, explicitly encourage affordable housing through outreach to affordable housing developers.

- Seek out an affordable housing developer that can maintain a consistent presence in Conway and the Mount Washington Valley and can address the specific needs and challenges of Conway's rural environment

A-3.2: Make refinements to the density bonus program to reduce the lot size needed to access the incentive.

- Due to large minimum lot size requirements, the current density bonuses offered in the zoning code do not provide a significant incentive for developers to provide affordable housing.

A. Improve Long-Term Housing Availability and Affordability

CHALLENGE #2:

Conway presently lacks administrative and financial support for affordable housing initiatives. At present, there is a well-documented scarcity of housing options for low and middle-income residents in Conway. In recent years, it has become increasingly difficult for individuals and families to find homes in Conway they can afford. This issue threatens the stability of the local workforce and contributes to a widening wealth gap between owners and renters in Conway. The Town should increase staff time dedicated to addressing the local housing challenge.

STRATEGIES:

A-3.3: Create additional capacity with the Planning and Zoning Department to spearhead local housing initiatives and pursue grant funding.

- Allocate additional operating budget and pursue grant funding to support needed studies, planning efforts, and coordination.
- Consider adding a new Housing & Economic Development Coordinator position to assist the Town Planning Director with development review and coordination with affordable housing partners regarding funding opportunities for affordable housing.



GOAL A-4:

Thoughtfully Manage Short-Term Rentals (STRs) in Conway

CHALLENGE:

While STRs can provide a source of income for homeowners and support the local tourism industry, they can also cause disturbances in residential neighborhoods and contribute to housing scarcity. STRs are a form of transient occupancy; a neighborhood with one or more STRs can sometimes have noise disturbances, traffic issues, and a lack of personal connection between neighbors. STRs tend to be more financially lucrative than long-term rentals, which can make it even more difficult for local residents to find affordable housing. STRs also pose challenges for the town in terms of regulation needs, as it takes resources to effectively manage and oversee STR activity. The Town's main goal should be to strike a balance between the economic benefits of STRs and the need to maintain affordable housing and community-oriented neighborhoods.

- i** In 2021, there were an estimated to be at least 500 short-term rentals in Conway, equivalent to about 10% of single-family homes in Conway
- i** STRs host about 1/3 of overnight visitors in Conway during peak travel times

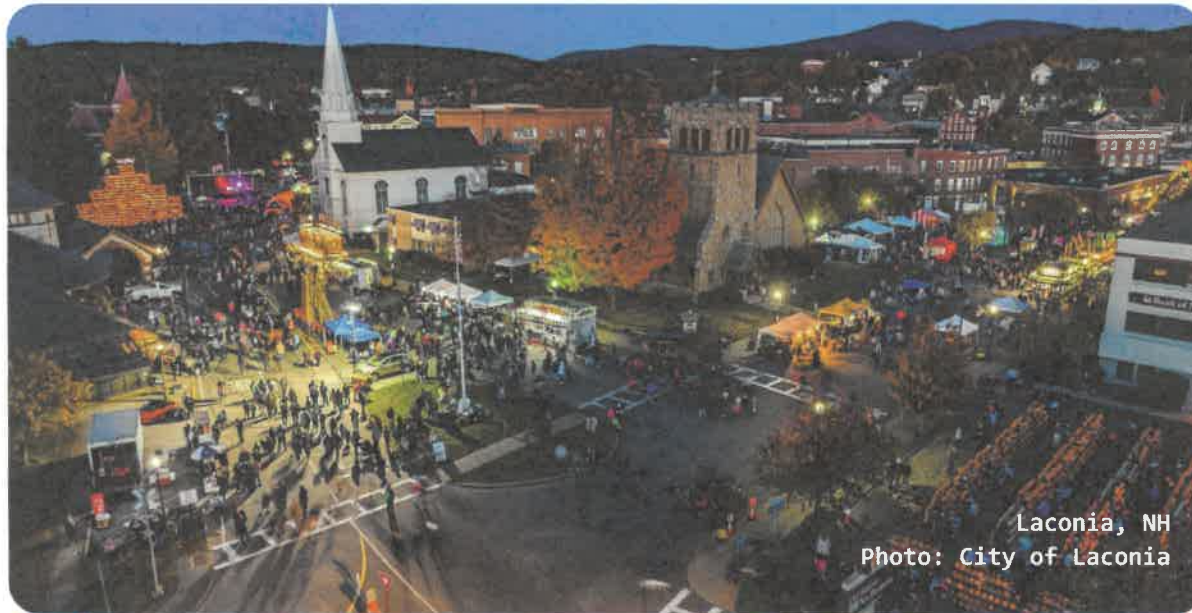
STRATEGIES:

A-4.1: Maintain a local inventory of STRs using AirDNA or another platform.

A-4.2: Zone STRs as a specific type of use and consider limiting them to certain zoning districts as a conditional use. Consider instituting requirements for a conditional use permit, including payment of fees for local review and abutter notification, as well as certification that the structure has passed building and fire code inspections. See a summary of Laconia, NH's policies for a similar example.

A-4.3: If conditional use permitting for STRs is adopted, consider grandfathering in existing STRs.

A. Improve Long-Term Housing Availability and Affordability



Laconia, NH's Approach to Short-Term Rentals (STRs)

Laconia, NH has employed several tactics to address short-term rentals, including limiting STRs to certain zoning districts and subjecting them to conditional use permitting. STRs are permitted in Commercial Resort and Shorefront Residential zones. STRs are only permitted in a "seasonal dwelling" in residential zones. The permit stipulates that owners are responsible for trash, noise, and other considerations. The permit expires after 2 years and applies to the owner (i.e., if there is a new owner, that owner must acquire a new permit for the property).



Focus Area

Date

Naming Convention

12

10/26/23

12_Villages - Redstone

The quarry closed in 1942. Today, the granite is protected through [The Nature Conservancy](#), thanks to a 1990 bequest by Anna B. Stearns for the [Green Hills Preserve](#). A hiking trail leads along a ridge with views of the [White Mountains](#) and ends at the old quarry site.

There are six villages in the town: [Conway](#), [North Conway](#), [Center Conway](#), [Redstone](#), [East Conway](#), and [Kearsarge](#).

Redstone is an [unincorporated community](#) within the [town](#) of [Conway](#) in [Carroll County](#), [New Hampshire](#), United States.

An unincorporated area is a region that is not governed by a local [municipal corporation](#).^[1] Widespread unincorporated communities and areas are a feature of the [United States](#) and [Canada](#). Most other countries of the world have either no unincorporated areas at all or very few of them.

The uniqueness of the Village of Redstone needs to be planned and zoned in a manner that protects its private wells and septic systems from contamination that could occur with more dense housing.

It sits on top of the Saco Aquifer which is influenced by Conway Lake. The existing homes have a historical feel to them, and the neighborhoods are very different from all the other villages within the Town of Conway.

In the recent past the citizens of Redstone Village have strongly stated that they do not want municipal sewer imposed upon their village if it means that the housing growth that follows would forever change the natural and historical makeup of their neighborhood.

The density of housing in Redstone, even if sewer should have to go there due to private septic systems contributing nitrates and other contaminants into the aquifer that lies under the village, should be addressed in the Master Plan. Land use zoning laws can do exactly that. You can zone how you want the land in that village to be use. Much thought should be given to what protections you need in place now to keep the nature of that village intact from a historical and lot size perspective.

One does not do good land use planning by denying the construction of water and wastewater infrastructure.

There should be a thoughtful discussion about the fact that the Town voters who live in Redstone have stated strongly that they oppose water and sewer main constructed in their village.

Focus Area

Date

Naming Convention

12

10/26/23

12_Villages - Redstone

It should be talked about that every vote will count when the Town votes on a bond article to build a water Main and sewer Main to the new Police station as the first phase of getting municipal water and sewer to East Conway, Center Conway and looped back and connect to CVFD.

Water and Sewer would be for the greater good for all relative to enabling affordable housing to be constructed in areas other than Redstone. Water and sewer need not be forced on the residents of Redstone in order to do that. Just leave water Main tees where future pipes could be branched into Redstone if there were failing systems in the future. The mains could go from NCWP to the Town Police station and Court House as its own project for the greater good of everybody.

What the native residents of Redstone have asked you for is to give serious consideration for their village as you have with Conway village, NC village, Center Conway Village and Kearsarge village.

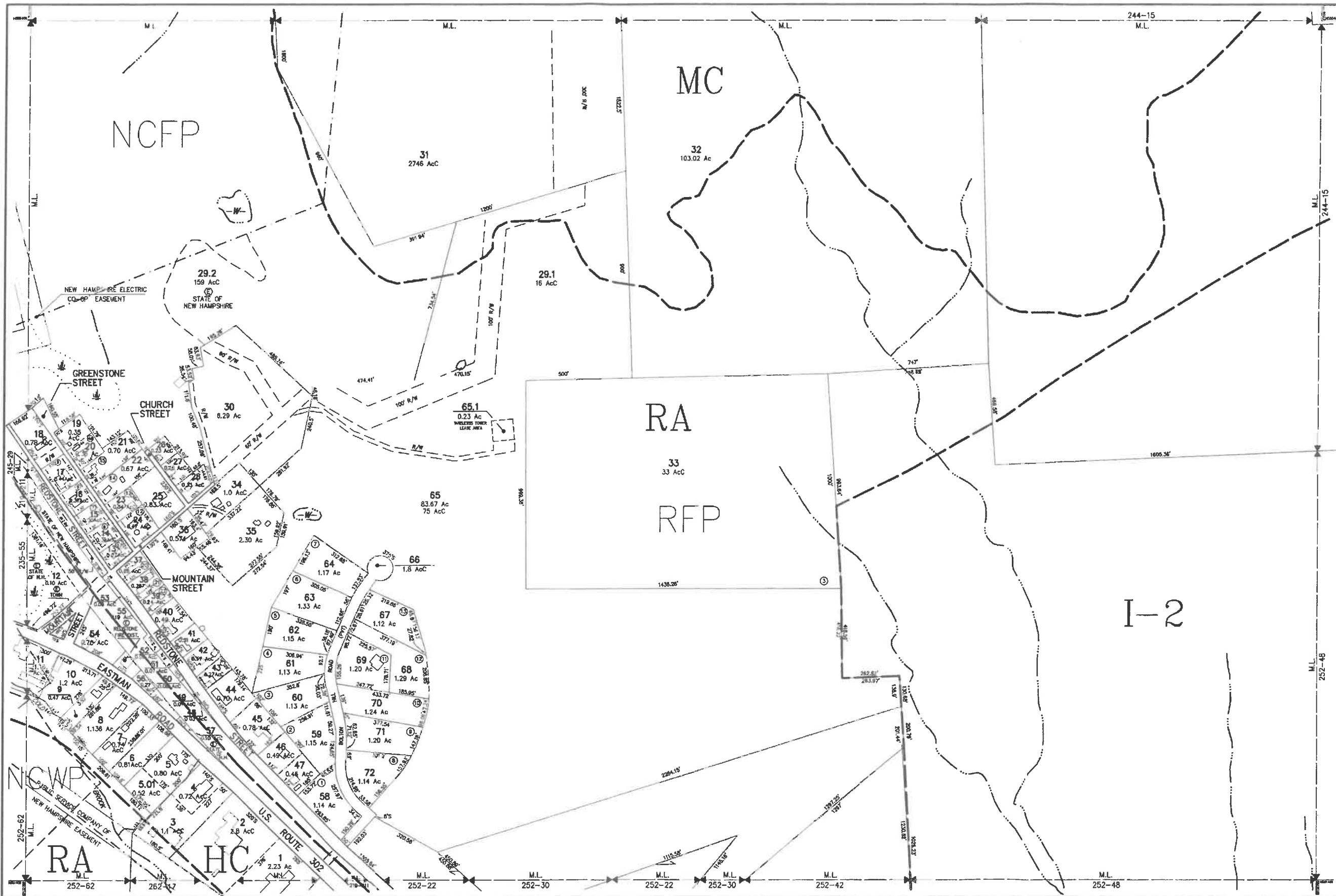
There is much unification in planning needed to understand the makeup of all the villages in Conway and that can only be achieved if all sides are fairly heard and treated with concurring zoning solutions.

Let us build a strong Master Plan that protects nature, water and animal habitat while finding a way to establish a family-oriented community that the world desires to come here to see and experience.

I believe it can be done if we respect what each village within the Town is telling us. Growth is coming because humanity wants to be here. How at the same time can we preserve what they are coming here for.

- Mark Hounsell

In accordance with NH RSA 91-A:2-a Communications Outside Meetings, this email thread is available to the public if requested.



THIS MAP IS FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES. IT IS NOT VALID FOR LEGAL DESCRIPTION OR CONVEYANCE.

THE HORIZONTAL DATUM IS THE NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE PLANE COORDINATE SYSTEM, NAD 83.

PHOTOGRAPHY DATE: APRIL 26, 1998

COMPLETION DATE: DECEMBER 31, 1998

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LEGEND

EXEMPT PROPERTY: (circle with X)

SUBDIVISION LOT NO.: (circle with number)

BUILDING: (rectangle with diagonal lines)

RIGHT OF WAY/ACCESS: (dashed line)

COMMON OWNERSHIP: (dotted line)

METLANDS: (wavy line)

AREA SURVEYED: (dotted line) Ac

AREA CALCULATED: (dotted line) Ac

RECORD DIMENSION: (dotted line) 100'

SCALED DIMENSION: (dotted line) 100'S

MATCH LINE: (dashed line)

WATER: (wavy line)

SCALE 1" = 200'

REVISOR TO: APRIL 1, 2022

PROPERTY MAPS

CONWAY

NEW HAMPSHIRE

INDEX DIAGRAM

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MAP NO. **245**