

New Durham Public Forum Report

July 8th, 2023



Prepared by:

COURTNEY GRUGNALE
HOUSING NAVIGATOR

PUBLIC FORUM OVERVIEW: NEW DURHAM: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

<p style="text-align: center;">ATTENDEES</p>	<p>The New Durham Public Forum was expected to have between twenty to twenty-five community member attendees. Members of the community showed a great interest in our event and over fifty people were in attendance.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">MARKETING</p>	<p>The event was posted on the Town website, illustrated on a billboard light up sign, flyers were hung in public locations, posted on Facebook and postcards were mailed out.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">PRESENTERS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Strafford Regional Planning Commission: Jen Czysz, Executive Director of SRPC Mark Davie, Regional Planner</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Community Members:</p> <p>Russ Weldon: Owner of Merrymeeting Marina and helps the club and South-East Land Trust on trail development and maintenance.</p> <p>Mike Gelinias: District Trails Manager for Powder Mill Snowmobile Club and on the advisory board for Birch Ridge Community Forest.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">OVERVIEW</p>	<p>This event was organized by Housing Navigator Courtney Grugnale along with Planning Board members Jeff Allard, Scott Drummey, Bob Craycraft, Marc Decoff, and Anne Ross-Raymond. This event was an opener to discussing the future of New Durham and as a way to help guide development along with the vision of the community.</p>

RESOURCES FROM PRESENTERS:

HOUSING NAVIGATORS

Grant funded positions through InvestNH, created in response to the current need for housing. Housing Navigators engage community members, build partnerships and community support, provide technical assistance to land use boards, staff, and applicants, perform land use application reviews, assist with implementation of local planning initiatives, and conduct audits of local regulations.

 www.NHHousing.org

InvestNH

HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

PLANNING GRANTS



STRAFFORD
Regional Planning Commission



SRPC

The Regional Housing Needs Assessment is funded by the American Rescue Plan State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Grant, and coordinated by NH Office of Planning and Development, to allow Planning Commissions to look in-depth at housing needs within each region and across income levels. The RHNA provides a foundation for change by including tools, recommendations, and strategies for local decision makers to address these issues in their communities.

LINKS

[Regional Housing Needs Assessment](#)

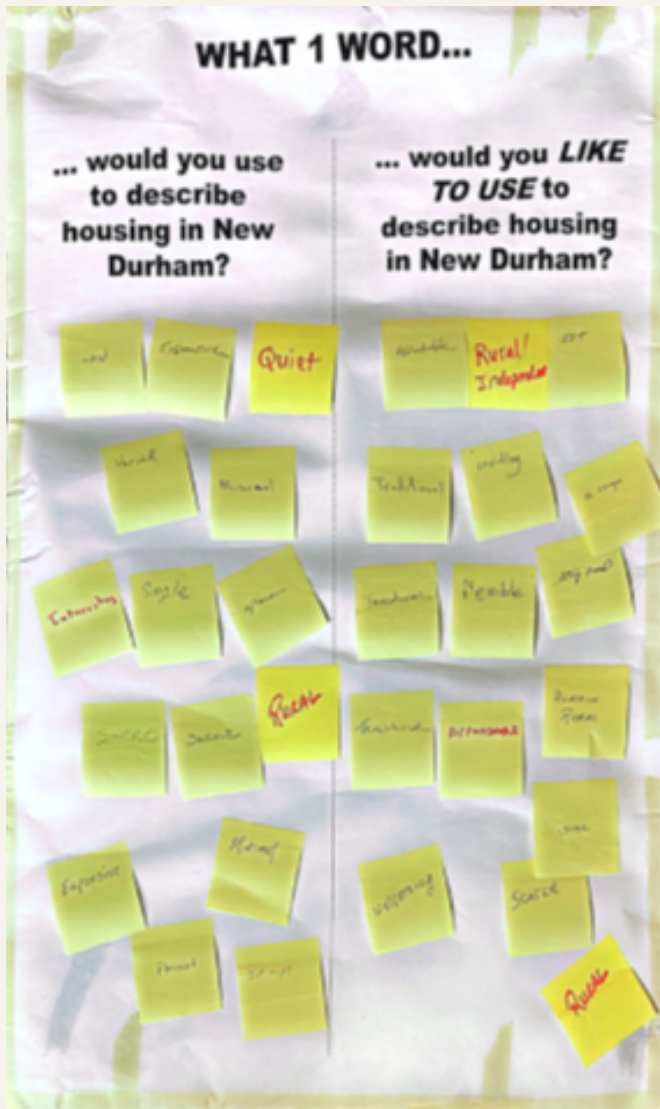
[SRPC Presentation](#)

[Powder Mill Snowmobile Club](#)

[Birch Ridge Community Forest](#)



STARTER ACTIVITY: HOUSING NOW AND THEN



ACTIVITY

As a beginning activity participants were each given two sticky notes to answer:

1. One word you would use to describe housing in New Durham?
2. One word you would like to use to describe housing in New Durham?

WHY?

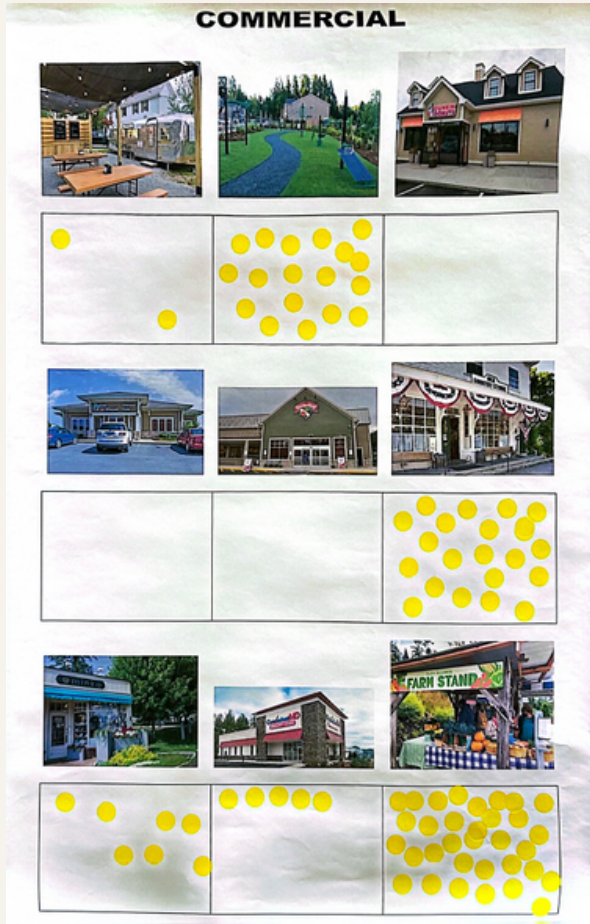
A big part of the forum was to gauge the community's ideas on housing and this activity was a way to start the discussion on how/what they would like housing in their community to look like.

RESULTS

Low, expensive, quiet, rural, varied, pleasant, scarce, just right, single and interesting.

Affordable, Rural, inviting, traditional, no changes, traditional, welcoming, flexible, and scarce.

STATION 1: VISUAL PREFERENCES AND RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL



ACTIVITY

Each participant received 8 sticky dots to place 4 dots on each poster – housing and commercial development images. There were no other rules. Participants could put all 4 dots on one image or spread them out.

Then discussed and documented on a flip chart:

- What type of residential development would you like to see in town?
- What type of commercial development would you like to see in town?
- What types of development do you not want to see in town?

RESULTS

Community Member Feedback:

Residential:

- Single family homes are the most popular.
- One or two townhouses clustered.
- Conservation development.
- Conservation cluster makes a neighborhood.
- Multi use housing in mixed use district.

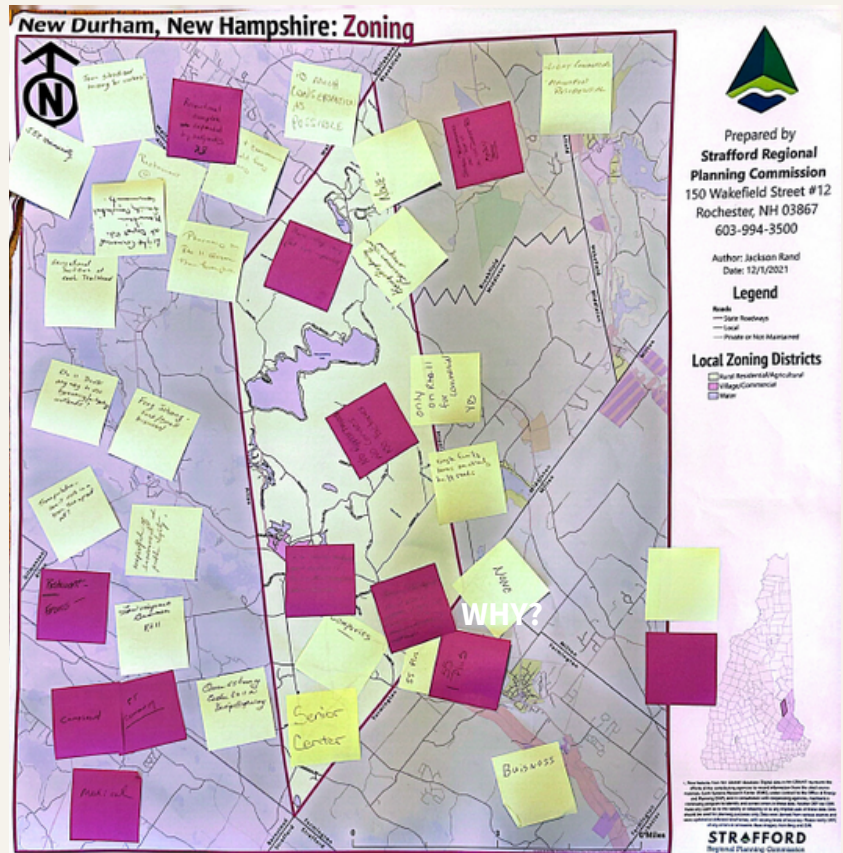
Commercial:

- Small town businesses (County store, farm stand)
- Small Retail
- Recreational activity
- Conservation is the best way to reduce taxes.
- Mixed Use District: small local businesses, town houses for 55+ and apartments above businesses.

STATION 2: WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE NEW DEVELOPMENT IN TOWN?

ACTIVITY

Activity and Discussion: Map exercise – each group sat around the map and discussed what types of development they would like to see in town and where. Participants used sticky notes to jot down their ideas and place them on the map. They also discussed the follow up questions, does zoning allow the suggested use? What changes would be needed?



RESULTS

Community Member Feedback:

- Town subsidized housing for workers
- Recreational complex expanded by ballparks.
- Conservation (As much as possible)
- Small businesses on Route 11 or on Depot Road only
- Light commercial and maintain residential.
- Farm to table restaurants
- Sight housing development in sections without significant natural resources.
- Housing development should ensure protection of natural resources, no development around wetlands.
- Single family homes on already built roads.
- Foxy Johnnie food/small business
- Transportation: Can't work in a town this spread out?

Route 11

- Small businesses on Route 11 or on Depot Road only
- Low impact businesses along Route 11
- Pharmacy on Route 11
- 55+ either along route 11 or highway

55+ Community

- 55+ communities
- 55+ at Foxy Johnnie
- 55+ either along route 11 or highway

Campgrounds

- Horse riding camp
- Camping campground
- Farming camp

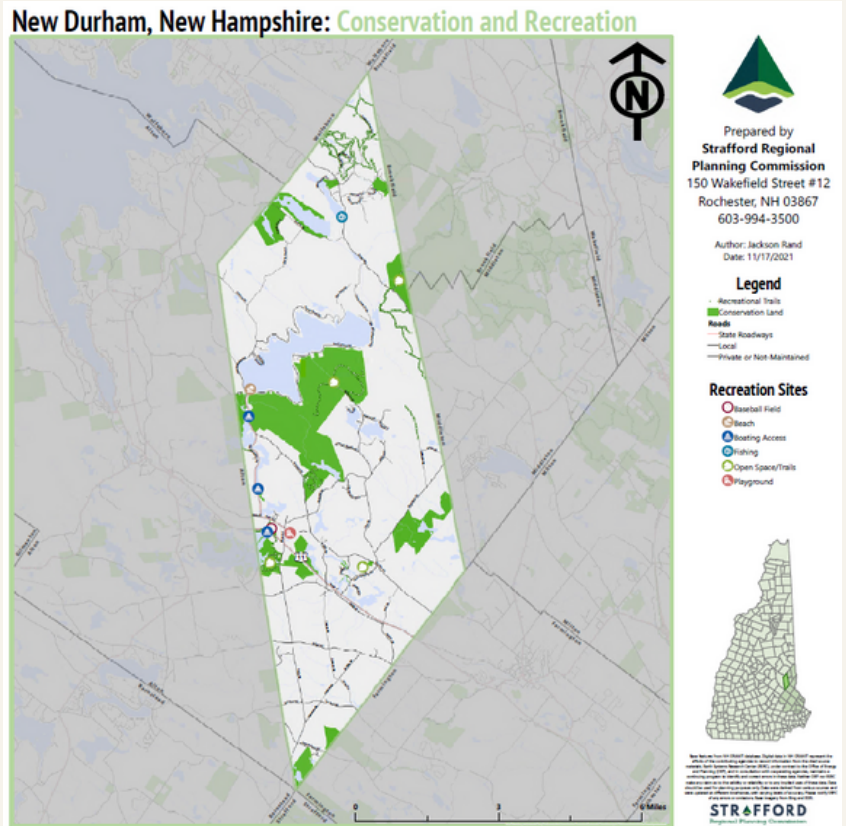
STATION 3: IS A RECREATION-BASED ECONOMY SOMETHING WE SHOULD INVESTIGATE?

ACTIVITY

Looking at a map of the town's recreation and conservation lands:

They discussed and documented on a flip chart and/or the map:

- What opportunities exist in New Durham?
- What challenges are there?
- Is anything missing from the map?



RESULTS

Community Member Feedback:

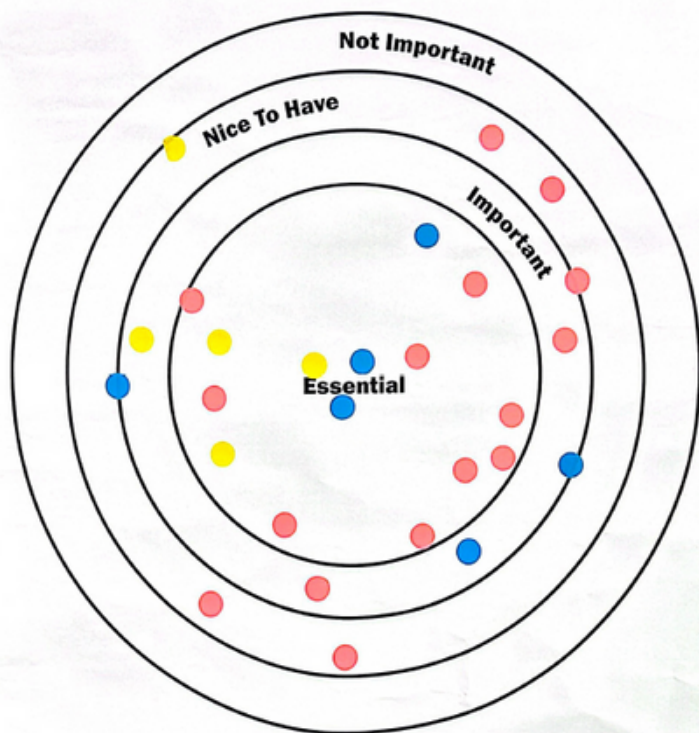
- Selt trails have/will have parking.
- Challenge of promoting/protecting lake
- Challenge of Seasonal Businesses: Need to make all income in summer.
- Limit on septic size, zoning: commercial not possible
- If you can do septic within 100' of the lake it should be possible. (Marina has a stormwater pollution prevention plan, regularly tests outflows and runoffs).

Business/Activity Ideas:

- Town sponsored trail maintenance Exploradoras 20-30
- Need equipment rentals (Bike and ski)
- Horse riding on trails
- Mountain Biking
- Bird watching along river/marsh.
- Tennis and pickle ball
- Camping
- Snack bar at the beach
- Breakfast places
- Parking Area: Bathroom, snacks, and porta potty
- Move the town hall to a new campus and turn the old town hall into a restaurant.
- Educational Opportunities for younger residents rather than commercial.
- Events and Marketing for children

STATION 4: IS AGRICULTURE A VIABLE OPTION IN TOWN?

How important is it to....



...support existing farms and encourage new ones?

ACTIVITY

Bullseye prioritization to vote on importance of agriculture in town, each person got 1 sticky dot.

Then discussed and documented on a flip chart:

- What are some challenges to maintaining agricultural land?
- Are there cherished locations to protect?
- What might be some opportunities for agricultural growth?

RESULTS

Community Member Feedback:

- Agriculture is essential to sustainability.
- Impact of agriculture on the tax base, we need a balance.
- Prefer not to attract “Industrial Farming”.
- It’s about balancing agriculture with commercial and residential.
- An idea would be interactive farms, like camps.
- Needs incentives and support.



STATION 5: SHOULD SHORT-TERM RENTALS BE REGULATED?

ACTIVITY

Introduce the Topic:
Balancing property rights and health and safety is always a challenge. Short term rentals are a new “disrupter” in the market. The town would like your input on what if anything to do to help balance these seemingly competing interests.

Discuss and document on a flip chart:

- What issues related to short term rentals have you encountered?
- What solutions might exist to address those issues?



RESULTS

Community Member Feedback:

- Renters not invested.
- Drive up real estate costs.
- Inadequate property management, issues with the number of people staying.
- Septic problems: exceeding capacity, overuse.
- Lack of tenant respect.
- Air BNB is a business.
- Quality of life/business and residential vs transient community. Transient nature of renters.
- What is the benefit to the town?
- Causing an increase in traffic
- Impact on municipal services such as fire and police departments.
- Disrupts the community environment.
- Noise ordinance, late night activities
- Lake Safety concerns
- Environmental impact due to septic overuse.

Solutions Mentioned:

- Rental duration, renter responsibility, and taxes on air BNB.
- Put restrictions, ordinance and set standards.
- Limitations on septic capacity, proof of maintenance and meet environmental standards.
- Require Permitting
- Zoning (Short Term Rentals are a business)
- Residency (Require owners to live in Town)
- Local input and enforcement.

THE NEW DURHAM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AND KEY IDEAS

OVERVIEW

Jeff Allard introduced a new sub committee that the Planning Board is creating to focus on residential and commercial development, land conservation, municipal facility planning, and community engagement.

Interested parties can reach out to Housing Navigator Courtney Grugnale for an application at:

Phone: (603) 866-0830

Email: cgrugnale@strafford.org

OR

You can stop in at the Town Hall located at:
4 Main St, New Durham, NH 03855

PLANNING BOARD

Jeff Allard
Marc Decoff
Bob Craycraft
Scott Drummey
Anne Ross-Raymond



KEY IDEAS

- 55+ Community
- Mixed Use
- Campgrounds or Interactive Farms
- Incentives for farming
- Small businesses along/around route 11
- Snack station near beach/hotspot
- Parking Area
- An interest in short-term rental regulations

ADDITIONAL IDEAS

- Educating the town on water protections to bodies of water.
- There's growing water pollution which could affect waterfront properties.
- Look at programs to evaluate ways in which individual waterfront owners can improve their homes, yards and gardening practices to help protect the water. They are hands-on, individually tailored programs.