

**TOWN OF EXETER
HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN
July 2022**

The Town of Exeter's Housing and Community Development Plan (HCDP) identifies needs, which currently exist or are anticipated during the next three years. The Plan provides a basis for guiding Exeter's housing and community development objectives and actions. The Housing and Community Development Plan is consistent with the current master plan of the municipality.

The Plan's goals and objectives are identified below and are consistent with the national Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, and the state's objectives listed in Chapter Cdfa 300 Community Development Block Grant Program Rules (Cdfa 305.01 & 310.01). These goals and objectives are both short and long term. Priority will be given to the needs of low and moderate-income persons, minorities and disadvantaged people.

The Town of Exeter states that as a matter of policy, involuntary displacement of households from their neighborhoods, by actions of the Town of Exeter shall be minimized.

Goals and objectives of this plan, both long and short-term, are consistent with following broad national objectives:

- Objective 1: direct benefit to low- and moderate-income persons or households;
- Objective 2: the prevention or elimination of slums and blight; and
- Objective 3: Elimination of conditions which seriously and immediately threaten the public health and welfare.

Goals and Objectives of this plan also addresses as many of the following state's objectives as appropriate for CDBG grant awards, and priority will be given to projects that have a public benefit, in both the short and long-term as follows:

- Objective 1: Implementing the Housing and Community Development Plan and conforming to the municipality's master plan and ordinances;
- Objective 2: Preserving and promoting existing neighborhoods and community centers;
- Objective 3: Restoring and preserving properties which have historic, cultural, architectural or aesthetic value;
- Objective 4: Solving community problems with long term benefits and innovative solutions;
- Objective 5: Successfully raising funds or securing matching funds and resources from public and private sources; and
- Objective 6: Funding needed projects for which other private or public funding shall not be available.

Federal CDBG grant funds awarded shall be consistent with the national objectives and shall, at a minimum, provide improved housing in accordance with Section 8 standards, public facilities, or employment opportunities primarily to low- and moderate-income persons or households. Grants shall not benefit moderate income persons to the exclusion of low-income persons.

An essential first step in the master planning process is the setting of goals and objectives for the proper physical and socioeconomical development of the community. As these goals and objectives will provide the necessary guidance for preparation of the various sections of the Master Plan, and ultimately serve as the blueprint for residential, commercial and industrial development within the Town, it is vital that they reflect the priorities of the community as a whole.

The following Goals reflect the input, received from the Master Plan Steering Committee, two major public event where hundreds of residents attended and shared their ideas, and a survey that received 251 responses. The Goals are organized into the following six categories: Support, Prepare, Steward, Grow, Connect and Communicate.

SUPPORT GOALS

- Evaluate the needs of all residents, including seniors and children today and in the future. Determine if existing programs and services in the community and around the region (public, private, and non-profit) are meeting/will meet those needs. Consider needs around housing, day care, lifelong learning, recreation, social interaction and stimulation, and health and wellness, among other issues. **(short term)**
 - Use public engagement techniques (workshops, surveys, etc.) to understand senior needs and preferences.
 - Coordinate and survey St. Vincent DePaul and others that provide senior services to Exeter residents.
 - Based on outcomes, develop recommendations to address unmet needs.
- Based on public input, prioritize existing recreational facilities in needs of improvements that address safety, access, and general maintenance. Estimate costs and develop a six-year schedule that can be incorporated into the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Build off of the University of New Hampshire (UNH) Needs Assessment and Planning Report (2014-2015). **(short term)**
- Identify new facilities or programming, using the findings of the UNH Needs Assessment and Planning Report (2014-2015) as a starting point. Estimate costs and feasibility of providing these new facilities/activities. **(short term)**
- Prioritize public facilities and spaces (including recreational sites) where ADA improvements are needed or could be improved. Estimate costs and develop a 6-year schedule that can be incorporated into the CIP. **(short term)**
- For areas identified most vulnerable to sea level rise, storm surge, and other natural hazards, evaluate town land use policies for these areas and consider alternatives to minimize risk in each area. These might include: **(short term)**
 - Acquiring property to minimize the impact of sea level rise, chronic flooding, marsh migration, etc. to public and private property.
 - Limit redevelopment after flood or storm damage.
 - Decisions where to extend (or not extend) infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, etc.)
- Based on findings of the land use policies evaluation, implement new land use policies and regulations to reduce risks from sea level rise, storm surge, and other natural hazards. **(short term)**
- Conduct a Drainage Asset Management and Condition Assessment to identify where infrastructure is undersized and unable to accommodate new development, increases in storm events, or rising sea levels. Use the development of this plan as an opportunity to educate residents about vulnerabilities and the need for funding to support upgrades and meet permitting requirements. **(short term)**
- Prioritize improvements for public infrastructure. **(short term)**
 - Evaluate upgrades as well as adaptation and mitigation strategies.
 - Estimate costs and develop a 6-year schedule of improvements to be included in the CIP.
 - Identify grants and other funding sources to augment local funding.
- Implement adaptation strategies for public infrastructure. Examples could include, but would not be limited to: **(long term)**
 - Flood water diversion improvements for streets that can be flooded in extreme events.
 - Replacement of culverts and stormwater conveyance structures with infrastructure sized for larger storm events.
 - Installation of “green infrastructure” strategies that can help reduce the volume of stormwater flows.

- Ensuring energy redundancy (e.g., generators) for municipal facilities that are important to emergency response.

STEWARD GOALS

- Identify properties that are less likely to be developed based on regulatory requirements and determine whether this affects their prioritization level for acquisition. **(short term)**
- Review criteria for acquiring land for conservation and consider adding criteria related to sea level rise, marsh migration, chronic flooding, storm surge, and other impacts of climate change and natural hazards. **(short term)**
 - Identify recommendation that have not been completed.
 - Determine which recommendations are still relevant and which are not. Identify new recommendations as needed.
 - Develop a 10-year schedule for maintenance, improvements, or future assessments.

GROW GOALS

- Continue to work with surrounding communities to address regional needs for workforce housing and provide more diverse housing options. **(short term)**
- Assess future housing growth by conducting a buildout analysis under current zoning conditions. Determine if the outcome of housing types will meet projected future needs, as outline in the Exeter Housing Advisory Committee 2017 report. **(short term)**
- Investigate potential expansion of allowed housing types in Exeter (e.g., cottage communities, etc.) and present finding at an All Boards meeting. **(short term)**
- Develop a public education campaign to raise the awareness of housing needs in Exeter and the different housing that can meet those needs. Include the local business community to understand housing needs of their employees. **(short term)**
- Review zoning ordinances to identify recommended changes that will create a balance of housing types to meet projected future needs. This might include review of multi-family structures allowed in R-1 districts, density and other incentives in the Affordable Housing Ordinance, and residential lot size requirements in single family residential districts.
- Research incentives for infill development in R-1 and R-2 zoning districts to encourage the creation of smaller, more affordable homes. Focus on approached that ensure infill maintains the look and feel of the existing neighborhoods. **(short term)**
- Move forward on the most feasible incentive(s) for infill housing by incorporating them into local regulations and/or policies. (this follows prior action). **(short term)**
- Evaluate the Town's property tax exemption programs (elderly, alternative energy, RSA 79E, etc.) to determine their costs and project future impacts based on demographic changes and other trends. **(long term)**
- Set up a schedule to periodically examine property tax exempt programs to ensure fairness and equitable distribution across residential property types. **(short term)**
- Develop a clearinghouse of low-interest loan and grant opportunities for Exeter residents to make improvements to older homes to address needed upgrades, energy efficiency, or environmental hazard

reduction. Resources may be New Hampshire Housing, local non-profits, or use of Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs) to establish a municipal program **(short term)**

- Review the Zoning Map against the goals of this plan to determine if commercial district boundaries should be adjusted. Also review boundaries to see if lines should be altered to better coincide with parcel boundaries. **(short term)**
- Support the Lincoln Street Improvement Project with the development of a physical master plan for the Lincoln Street area as a village-scale Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). Evaluate land uses, building-to-street relationships, and features of the public realm. Assess multi-modal connections (walking, biking, bus/train) with Downtown and other neighborhoods. Be sure to incorporate both elementary schools and PEA. Consider other studies that may be concurrent under CONNECT. **(short term)**
- Continue efforts to improve circulation and promote high quality development along Portsmouth Avenue. Continue work on developing a form-based code for the corridor (started in 2012) **(short term)**
Continue support of the CIP project for reconstruction of the roadway to correct drainage, utility, traffic flow, signal, stormwater, sidewalk, and streetscape deficiencies.
Evaluate bus service and how it does or can impact redevelopment.
Incorporate the recommendations of the bike and pedestrian master plan developed under CONNECT.
- Evaluate the use of tax increment financing (TIF) and other financial incentives in other commercial areas of town. **(short term)**
- Continue to identify improvements to publicspaces and the public realm in the Downtown to enhance its character. This may include public art, pedestrian amenities, or signage. Maintain consistency with bike and pedestrian linkages under CONNECT. **(short term)**
- Inventory under-utilized and under-developed properties in commercial areas. Identify potential partners (both public and private) to assess the redevelopment opportunities of priority properties. **(short term)**
- Continue to use economic development strategies already in place (79E, TIF District, etc.) to retain and grow existing businesses and attract new commercial development in all commercial corridors. Regularly evaluate their ability to meet stated goals and objectives. **(short term)**

CONNECT GOALS

- Conduct traffic and parking studies for the Downtown and prioritize recommendations. Evaluate traffic flow and pedestrian movement to and through Downtown to understand final destinations and impacts on local businesses. Develop a parking management plan with a 6-year schedule for implementation. **(short term)**
- Research funding alternative to augment the implementation of the parking management plan. **(long term)**
- Prepare a town-wide Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan that looks at both walking and biking as modes of transportation beyond recreation. Identify improvements to existing amenities and areas where new amenities could be feasibly installed to promote walking and biking. Use the concurrent parking study (or parking management plan if already developed) for Downtown to inform the plan. **(short term)**
 - Destinations/Routes to consider:
 - All public schools
 - Epping Road to Downtown
 - Lincoln Street/Train Station to Downtown
 - Portsmouth Avenue to Downtown
 - All surrounding residential areas to Downtown
 - Open space and recreational resources

Prioritize improvements/new projects and develop a 10-year schedule for implementation.

- Research funding alternatives to augment the implementation of the bike and pedestrian master plan. **(long term)**
- Consider amending Site and Subdivision Regulations to put more emphasis on pedestrian and bike access within new development (as appropriate) and making connections with neighboring residential areas as well as shopping areas and recreation/conservation lands. **(long term)**
- Conduct a Complete Streets study. Based on its findings, develop and adopt a Complete Streets policy that requires new roads and reconstruction of existing roads to incorporate transit, walking, and biking amenities where possible. Use the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan and parking management plan to inform the policy. **(short term)**
- Working with private and public land owners, evaluate the feasibility of a pedestrian walkway/access along the Squamscott River from Swasey Parkway to the Library. **(long term)**
- Prioritize local intersections that can benefit from safety improvements. Establish a 6-year schedule to develop conceptual designs in anticipation of funding. **(short term)**
- Encourage a balanced and varied stock of safe, sanitary, decent and affordable housing per persons of all age and income groups within the community **(short term)**
- Encourage the development and implementation of municipal and private water and wastewater systems that are safe, sanitary, effective and that meet the NH Department of Environmental Services environmental thresholds. **(short term)**

Any federal CDBG grant funds awarded to address any of the Action Agenda items shall be expended consistent with national objectives and shall, at a minimum, provide improved housing in accordance with Section 8 standards, be used for public facility projects, employment opportunities, or feasibility studies. All CDG funded projects, shall primarily benefit low and moderate income persons or households, and shall not benefit moderate income persons to the exclusion of low income persons.

Citizen Participation Plan

The town will seek to engage its citizens in implementing housing and community activities funded by the Community Development Block Grant. Its citizen participation efforts will be consistent with the State of New Hampshire's citizen participation plan. Specifically, the town will adhere to the following steps to engage its citizens:

- 1) Publishing a statement of proposed activities for any application proposed to be submitted by the town so that affected citizens have an opportunity to submit comments on the proposed activities.
- 2) Provide adequate notices, specifically to persons of low- and moderate-income as well as the general public, for all public hearings to discuss proposed or approved CDBG applications. Such notices will include the statement of proposed activities or how to obtain such statement. At least ten days prior to any hearing, the notices will be published in a daily newspaper of general circulation in the municipality; AND posted as a printed legal notice in at least three other public places.
- 3) Hold two or more public hearings on the proposed application at times and locations convenient to potential beneficiaries, accessible to persons with physical disabilities, and that meet the needs of non-English speaking residents, if appropriate, to obtain citizens' views before adoption of resolution or similar action by the local governing body authorizing the submission of the application. At least one public

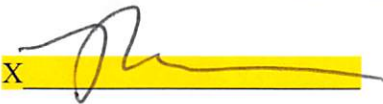
hearing will be held prior to submitting any CDBG application and another during the course of all approved projects.

- 4) Provide at public hearings information concerning the amount of funds available for proposed community development activities and the range of activities within the project.
- 5) Provide at public hearings information concerning the amount of funds that will benefit persons of low- and moderate-income.
- 6) Provide at public hearings information about potential program income and the Program Income Reuse plan, if program income is anticipated.
- 7) Furnish citizens with the plans made to minimize the displacement of persons and to assist persons actually displaced as a result of grant activities, if displacement is anticipated.
- 8) Provide technical assistance to groups representing persons of low- and moderate-income requesting such assistance in developing proposals.
- 9) Provide citizens with reasonable notice of substantial changes proposed in the use of grant funds and providing opportunity for public comment;
- 10) Any modifications or amendments to the project will be made in accordance with the same procedures required in points (1) through (3) above for the preparation and submission of a statement of proposed activities.

Any complaints or grievances received by town will be addressed within 15 working days of its receipt.

Printed Name of Municipal Official: Russell Dean, Town Manager

Signature: X

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Russell Dean', is written over a yellow horizontal line. The signature is cursive and extends slightly to the right of the line.

Date Adopted: July 18, 2022