

Density of development is another metric of comparison for rural communities with relatively sparse development patterns. Population density is measured in persons per square mile of area in town and provides a relative comparison to understand overall land use conditions in New London and its neighbors. Table III-3 (Page 11) provides information for comparison of densities among neighboring communities. New London's higher density is more consistent with a community that has a distinctly built-out landscape like the region's cities and larger towns. It is important to note the public sentiment that New London maintains a rural atmosphere; a sense that the Town is a rural town. New London's accomplishment of achieving a higher population density while maintaining a rural/small town atmosphere indicates the Town's success applying its land use ordinances and development controls to encourage density while maintaining a community with appreciable rural and small town characteristics.

**TABLE III-3**  
**Comparison of Population Density with Neighboring Communities: 1980-2010**

Area	Land Area (Sq. Mi.)	Persons per Sq. Mi. - 1980	Persons per Sq. Mi. - 1990	Persons per Sq. Mi. - 2000	Persons per Sq. Mi. - 2010
New London	25.4	115.6	125.2	162.0	173.1
Newbury	38.1	25.2	35.4	44.7	54.4
Bradford	34.9	31.9	40.3	41.7	47.3
Springfield	43.6	12.2	18.1	21.7	30.1
Sunapee	25.2	91.7	101.5	121.2	133.5
Sutton	42.1	25.9	34.6	36.7	43.6
Wilmot	29.4	24.7	31.8	38.9	46.2
Hanover	48.8	186.9	188.8	222.3	230.7
Lebanon	40.3	276.3	302.3	311.9	326.3
Merrimack County	931.5	105.5	129.1	146.2	157.2
New Hampshire	9,294.0	99.1	119.4	133.0	141.6

Source: U.S. Census, 1980 – 2010, UVLSRPC

Recent Subdivision and Building Permit Activity

A summary of subdivision activity between 2001 through 2010 is presented in Table III-4 (Page 12). The number of approved subdivisions fluctuated between low of 0 in 2001 and 2004 and a high of 7 in 2007. The number of approved subdivision lots ranged from a low of 0 in 2001 and 2004 to a high of 32 in 2003. Over the 10-year period, there was an average of almost 3 subdivisions approved each year resulting in an average of 12 new approved lots per year.

Table III-5 (Page 12) presents a summary of the building permit activity for New London from 2001 through 2010. The number of new residential units being built ranged from a low of 3 single-family units in 2009 to a high of 40 single-family units in 2004. The average number of new residential units being constructed over the 10-year period was approximately 15 per year. New London experienced a surge in residential building permit activity during the three year period from 2002 through 2004.

### *Subdivision Regulations*

1. The Planning Board adopted new provisions in the Subdivision Regulations pertaining to the management of stormwater runoff and erosion and sediment controls for new developments. A major part of this effort was incorporating LID techniques wherever the site conditions allow for their use.

### *Site Plan Review*

1. The standards and requirements for erosion and sediment controls and management of stormwater runoff incorporated into the Subdivision Regulations have been incorporated into the Site Plan Review Regulations by cross-reference. Implementing those new requirements and standards for erosion control and management of stormwater is important when new sites are developed and when existing sites are redeveloped.
2. Information about underground storage tanks, including type, contents, capacity and location is needed.

### *Enforcement*

1. Effective enforcement of existing environmental ordinances and regulations is important and the Town needs to continue to with its efforts in this area.

## **Recommendations**

### *Non-regulatory Programs*

The non-regulatory approaches to water resource protection are as important as the regulatory methods. Given the existing situation in Town, the following recommendations are offered. This list should be reviewed and revised regularly to ensure that they reflect the current conditions in Town.

1. Following the lead of the SAWC's June 2008 Management Plan for the Lake Sunapee Watershed, watershed studies for each watershed in the community should be undertaken. These studies should evaluate the impact of the potential land use development at full build-out within each watershed on the water quality of each lake. Further, they should identify strategies and techniques to manage land use to maintain and improve the existing high water quality in those lakes. The watershed approach to protecting water resources should continue to be supported and used. Education about watershed plans and their implementation should be supported and conducted.
2. The Town should continue to call on the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission to provide the Planning Board and Selectmen with sample ordinances, bylaws and regulations used to protect water resources in other towns. The Regional Planning Commission should be asked to help prepare regulations and amendments to existing regulations to protect those resources. The Regional Planning Commission should help New London, along with its neighboring communities, to prioritize their shared water resources and implement common protection mechanisms.
3. The Town should continue to work with the lake protective associations, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services and the Regional Planning

### III. A VISION FOR LAND USE

#### Introduction

Land use planning is a fundamental component to New London's Master Plan. New Hampshire State Law, RSA 674:2, II, establishes the Master Plan as the basis for the Planning Board to enact land use guidelines, regulations, and ordinances. This chapter, *A Vision for Land Use*, seeks to translate the Vision Statement into physical terms.

Land use considerations are closely related to virtually every other chapter of this Master Plan including population, housing, economic conditions, transportation, community facilities, historic resources, and natural resources. New London's planning for future land uses considers the opportunities and challenges of the above community resources to ensure balanced, appropriate, and sustainable development patterns.

This chapter addresses existing land use patterns and trends, public opinion and recommended future land use growth policy. The existing land use patterns and trends report local and regional population-based statistics, mapping of New London's existing land use patterns and analysis of future development potential, and an assessment of the build-out analysis completed in the mid-1990s. The portion of the chapter devoted to public opinion summarizes important issues gleaned from the 2008 Community Attitude Survey and public forums and develops a list of Land Use Goals based on community input. The last two parts of this chapter focus on land use policy and recommendations for future land use planning.

#### Historic Population and Land Use Patterns

##### Regional Growth and Development Comparison

A comparison of the population growth experienced by New London with other communities in the Region between 1980 and 2010, as detailed in Table III-1 (Page 10), reveals that New London had a spike in average annual growth between 1990 and 2000 compared with the other neighboring communities, Merrimack County, and the state. Over the 30-year period from 1980 to 2010, the New London population growth rate was at an average 1.36%, which is moderate compared with neighboring municipalities with substantially higher growth rates (Springfield – 3.05%) and lower growth rates (Lebanon – 0.56%). New London's 30-year average growth rate matches the County and is consistent with statewide population growth.

Table III-2 (Page 10) details total housing units and average annual growth rates for regional communities, Merrimack County, and the state. The growth in housing units in New London between 1980 and 2010 is equivalent to the statewide growth for the same period and has not indicated dramatic fluctuations for the three decades of Census data.

## Future Development Considerations

Future development patterns in New London will depend as much upon the landscape and natural features as the local, state, and federal land use and environmental regulations. The future development considerations address the likely constraints to development as well as the factors influencing future build-out scenarios.

### Development Constraints

As with most New England towns, New London's landscape has a range of development constraints, or circumstances that prevent reasonable use for commercial or residential purposes. The following text summarizes a development constraint analysis illustrated in Map III-2 (Page 18), which is based on the presence of the following land characteristics:

**Surface waters and wetlands:** Surface waters and wetlands are regulated and cover a significant portion of the Town's total area (surface waters cover approximately 12.5%). Wetlands identified in this analysis are based on existing maps: the National Wetland Inventory Maps from the US Fish & Wildlife Service and the Natural Resource Conservation Service mapping of very poorly drained soils.

**Steep Slopes:** Steep slopes are considered development constraints in this analysis if the topography indicates areas with slopes in excess of 25%, or 1 foot of vertical rise for every 4 feet of horizontal run. Problems encountered by development on steep slopes include erosion and sedimentation issues during site construction, unsuitable conditions for on-site wastewater systems, and aesthetic disruption.

**Protected Lands:** Property protected for conservation either by easement or through fee simple ownership, based on 2003 data.

**Existing Development:** Existing developed areas based on the current land use map (Map III-1, Page 17) with the assumption that existing developed areas would remain unchanged.

The non-shaded or hatched areas on Map III-2 (Page 18) are potentially developable.

### Build-Out Analysis

In 1994 the New London Planning Board conducted a build-out analysis – a planning tool intended to assess the full development potential of a community using the present land use regulations and infrastructure capacity. A build-out analysis provides generic information for decision makers to understand the scale and impact of a land use scenario. Since the initial study the New London Planning Board adopted changes to the Zoning Ordinance, which affected the analysis findings. These changes included allowable zoning density for residential lots.

Consultants for New London revised the full build-out estimates based on these changes to the Zoning Ordinance and determined the following results:

- The Town land area and regulations may accommodate up to 4,374 residential units. This is approximately 2,071 dwelling units more than the 2010 Census count of 2,303 dwelling units.
- The total population under full build-out conditions could reach 9,000, which is more than double the 2010 Census count of 4,397 persons.

### Public Input for Present and Future Land Use

Community Survey conducted as part of this Master Plan update effort solicited reactions to the results of the revised build-out estimates outlined above. Just over half of the respondents (approximately 56%) indicated they were okay with the projected growth potential. Over 30% reacted unfavorably and wanted to discourage growth. The remaining respondents (approximately 14%) reacted favorably to encourage growth.

Further public input collected from public forums and survey responses addressed the following topics. The listed responses are in no particular order

### *Valued Attributes in New London's Landscape*

There was strong public support to maintain the rural character of the community including the following attributes:

- Landmarks and historic buildings
- Agricultural lands & uses
- Stone walls & tree lines
- Lakes and ponds
- Scenic views & vistas
- Sense of community pride
- Colby-Sawyer College campus
- Recreational opportunities
- Good schools

### *Future Land Uses*

Public response regarding future land uses tended toward protecting what individuals value in the landscape. To the extent possible, the public supported the following efforts with regard to future land use and development:

- Preserve & protect ridgelines, scenic areas, and scenic views from public spaces (e.g. – roadways, parks, lakes and ponds, and areas of public assembly – both public and private)
- Conserve and maintain land that contributes to the Town's rural character
- Encourage land uses that enable individual choices to travel using different transportation modes (e.g. – private car, bus, bicycle, walk, etc.)

### *Residential Land Uses*

The existing land use analysis indicates that residential development in New London occupies the most land area. Public input seems to value diversity in housing types for a diverse range of incomes for various reasons:

- Workforce housing important (costs are no more than 30% of a household's gross income)
- The appearance of new housing development should not degrade community appearances
- Residential development should be concentrated in the existing village centers to utilize water and sewer networks
- Land use regulations should allow residential-scale renewable energy options