



Summary Report

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Public Engagement for Granite State Future

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This executive summary provides an overview of the process and results of an extended public engagement process conducted by New Hampshire Listens of the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire and the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, on behalf of the nine Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) in New Hampshire. The work was carried out under contract with the Nashua RPC, using Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant funds administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The primary purpose of the public engagement process was to elicit a wide range of views from diverse residents of New Hampshire, representing all geographic regions of the state, to the question:

How can we make our community the best place to live, learn, work, and play?

The purpose of the effort was to understand the preferences, values, concerns, and aspirations of residents for their respective local communities, regions, and the state as a whole and to share this information with the nine RPCs. Each RPC will use the findings of the two-phase public engagement process we employed to develop regional plans responsive to regional preferences and needs. In addition, an overall “statewide snapshot” will be created to support cross-regional collaborations and shared initiatives, although a single statewide plan will not be created given the variability of conditions and resources found in each of the nine regions.

It is important to note that this work by the Regional Planning Commissions was based on the New Hampshire Livability Principles, a set of concepts that was developed by the NH Transportation and Land Use Roundtables, which were sponsored by the NH Charitable Foundation. The conversations described below referenced the six NH Livability Principles, but they explored many topics beyond those principles as well. That is, the public engagement process of Granite State Future began with, but was not bound by, those principles.

This executive summary offers a brief review of the primary findings that were generated in the public engagement process. Detailed reports of the findings of the complete process may be found at www.GraniteStateFuture.org or www.nhlistens.org.

Public Engagement Process

NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension—in consultation with RPC directors and program managers—designed a two-phase approach to elicit broad participation. First, we used a “**community of interest**” model to identify specific self-identified groups in New Hampshire who would have views reflecting their particular circumstances. Examples of such groups included youth, those with disabilities, senior citizens, low-income residents, veterans, immigrants, and other minority populations. A total of 20 focus groups were conducted with 120 participants during the winter of 2012 and spring of 2013. The focus groups were facilitated by UNH Cooperative Extension staff and were conducted at locations across the state.

The second phase of the process was based on a “**community of place**” model, in which extended deliberations were conducted in 10 different geographic locations representing all

areas of the state.¹ These events were widely advertised and open to all members of the public. Each discussion lasted three hours and was organized around small groups of 8 to 12 participants working with a trained facilitator. A total of 528 participants in 45 small groups from 115 towns attended the community of place conversations, representing a wide range of ages, occupations, length of residency in the community, political affiliations, and education levels. The representative sample of New Hampshire residents was not scientifically constructed, but there was sufficient diversity to give confidence that the results of the conversations reflect the wide range of priorities and concerns found in the general population. The combined results of the two approaches—communities of interest and communities of place—provide a robust picture of what is most important to New Hampshire residents.

Summary of Findings

These two approaches, involving over 600 residents in 65 separate discussions lasting over 1,500 hours in total, yielded a rich set of findings. Each small discussion group recorded its answers to questions posed in the discussion guide, including areas of both agreement and disagreement, on newsprint as well as on summary sheets completed by a volunteer in each group. UNH Cooperative Extension and NH Listens staff used inductive analytic methods to identify the most frequently occurring statements and themes within each individual group, each regional event, and across all events. The overall findings across all regions are summarized below. Regional differences are discussed in detail in the full report on Communities of Place.

Communities of Interest

Twenty-seven different themes were generated by the community of interest focus groups. The top three are described in detail here, but all can be found in the full report. Many of these themes are connected or inter-related. The most frequently discussed topics included:

Transportation—All focus groups identified transportation as one of the most problematic challenges they face. The most commonly expressed concerns regarding transportation highlighted the lack of public transportation and limitations to the existing public transportation system. “There is not enough public transportation” was commonly stated, both in terms of the locations served and the frequency of the service. Use of private cars was discussed, with an emphasis on their high cost and the necessary reliance on cars to obtain food and health care and to get to jobs. The lack of public transportation to major cities, employment centers, and the northern part of the state was noted by most groups. Concerns for pedestrian safety and walking access to schools, churches, shops, and other amenities were also mentioned often.

Housing—Housing was a topic discussed by all focus groups except for groups of youth. Most of the discussion evolved around the need for more affordable housing in safe areas near public transportation. Focus group participants identified the need for a variety of affordable housing types to accommodate the needs of families and people with disabilities.

Jobs and Employment—Participants connected concerns about transportation and housing to the availability of reliable, decent paying jobs. Well-paying jobs are in short supply, and the

¹ Berlin, Claremont, Dover, Keene, Kingston, Laconia, Manchester, Nashua, Pembroke, Plymouth

general lack of attractive jobs threatens the ability to attract and keep younger residents in New Hampshire. The need for access to job training to remain current and competitive was identified by most of the Communities of Interest. Greater availability of part-time jobs is offset by the lack of benefits associated with part-time employment. People with low incomes, people with disabilities, and those who are homeless have particular difficulties in finding steady employment. As with housing, lack of public transportation and the expense of private cars were seen as barriers to obtaining employment.

Other topics of concern to many of the community of interest focus groups included access to social services, recreational opportunities for youth, and the quality of K-12 schools (especially with respect to their ability to serve the populations represented by the Communities of Interest).

Communities of Place

Though a range of topics were discussed at each regional event, certain topics were of particular interest to participants across the state. The most frequently discussed issues included:

Employment and Educational Opportunity—All groups in all of the regions discussed aspects of unemployment, job growth, and economic development. Some participants felt that there is a lack of jobs overall, while others felt there is a lack of jobs that are an appropriate fit with the available skill levels in the state. Many groups commented on a scarcity of adequate training for job requirements in the state. Several communities commented that there needs to be more effective job training available—both for college educated and non-college educated individuals. Quality K-12 education and affordable higher education were frequent topics that participants connected to employment opportunities.

Youth—All groups in all of the regional locations discussed issues related to youth. The majority of groups expressed concern about youth migration out of New Hampshire and discussed ways that their communities can retain and attract young people. Some groups felt that the cost of higher education deters young people from remaining in the state. Others felt that there is a lack of job opportunities for youth and recent college graduates. Some participants thought that the lack of affordable housing drives young people out of the state. Although there was no agreed-upon cause for youth migration from New Hampshire, there was some agreement among regions that communities and towns, as well as the state overall, should contemplate effective ways to encourage young people to work, go to school, and live in our state.

Older Adults/Senior Citizens—All small groups discussed changes and challenges that growing elder populations in the state will pose on their individual communities. Participants explored questions about the care of seniors overall and how seniors will access and afford health care and other services. Many groups expressed concerns about how older adults who no longer drive will access transportation, yet maintain independence. There was also discussion about the relationships between seniors and taxes; some groups felt that, as the population ages, tax revenue bases and the growth of the economy might slow. The need for planning in local communities was evident to participants—including the need for young people to be trained in the multiple health care careers relevant to senior citizens. Some participants felt that no government resources should be used to support seniors, as families, churches, and neighbors should serve in this role.

Transportation—All groups discussed some aspect of transportation in relation to their regions. The majority of groups were concerned about accessible and affordable transportation, and many mentioned the impact of long commute times on lifestyle. In particular, a need was identified to ensure that certain populations have access to transportation, including youth and seniors, as well as disabled and low-income individuals. Beyond access, groups talked about the need for more transportation offerings and a greater variety of them, as well as the health and lifestyle improvements that can come with being able to bike or walk to work or to town centers. Safety when biking and walking is an issue in some communities, especially where sidewalks are minimal. Many participants mentioned that young people are attracted to cities and towns where they have access to public transportation. Some groups discussed a need for more effective transportation among New Hampshire’s cities, such as Concord, Nashua, and Manchester, valuing opportunities for communities to be connected for economic and social reasons.

Housing—All groups commented on the need for improved housing offerings in their communities, including more affordable, appealing, and available housing options. Many groups expressed concern that housing in their communities is too expensive. Many groups made direct connections between transportation and housing. Housing is often located far from jobs and town centers so that—without public transit—it is challenging for individuals without vehicles to work or access essential services. Although there was concern among some participants about government subsidized housing and transportation, more people were concerned about barriers to home ownership and having a variety of housing and transportation options for a mix of income levels.

Taxes and State and Municipal Funding—There were general concerns about taxes and state funding in all of the small groups. Many groups commented that taxes are too high. Others felt they were too high and too singularly drawn from property taxes. Some noted that New Hampshire is known for its “tax advantages” and did not see taxes as too high per se, although many participants commented that the state is overly reliant on property taxes. There was a concern that high property taxes make homeownership difficult or even prohibitive. Some groups thought taxes aren’t funding the right services. There were also concerns about a lack of state funding for particular services and programs, including schools and health care. Many groups commented on how tax incentives for small businesses might attract more economic development to the state.

Zoning and Development—Most of the regions spent time discussing zoning and development. Many groups expressed a desire to balance economic development with the preservation of natural resources and the local character of their communities. This message was consistent across regions and included a stated value in planning and zoning for future development.

Environment and Natural Resources—It should be noted that across all groups and all regions, participants spent some time expressing their appreciation for the natural beauty of New Hampshire. This appreciation, as well as concern, for the natural environment also was mentioned often in the Communities of Interest. Most of the regional groups were concerned about the future of the environment and natural resources in the state. Discussion of the environment ranged from pollution to water, climate change, energy, natural resources, and agriculture. Discussions about water included concerns for water quality, water shortages, storm water runoff, and pollution. Participants also talked about the importance of supporting local

agriculture and maintaining the “rural character” of New Hampshire. Many groups discussed issues related to land use, and often participants spoke of both the barriers caused by regulations and conservation as well as a balanced need for both. Property rights were discussed frequently when issues of land use and natural resources were raised, particularly as related to water. For some participants, there was a desire to ensure that a tradition of individual rights and a libertarian culture continue to inform decisions. For others, balancing community and individual concerns were complicated, requiring ongoing and persistent efforts.

Infrastructure Needs—Many groups commented on a need for more effective and updated infrastructure within their communities, though regions viewed infrastructure differently. Some communities saw infrastructure as the upkeep of roads, bridges, and town buildings. Participants in more northern regions expressed difficulties with communication infrastructure, particularly reliable internet access. There was a general recognition that technology infrastructure can change how we work and where we live. A number of regions mentioned creative and entrepreneurial opportunities linked to better broadband access across the state.

The above summary of findings from the community of interest and community of place conversations demonstrates that the overriding concerns of New Hampshire residents who participated are focused on transportation, housing, employment, and the well-being of youth as well as senior citizens. In addition, the quality and affordability of education (especially tied to job training), the level and use of taxes, and preservation of natural beauty were common themes.

The findings in this summary provide useful information not only for RPCs, but also for decision makers and community leaders in general. The public engagement effort described here represents an innovative and effective approach to involving residents in defining and solving problems in their communities. Engagement through face-to-face deliberation complements and strengthens governance processes that typically rely primarily on the voting booth. This kind of personal, “hands-on” approach is consistent with New Hampshire’s traditions of local control and direct democracy.

Final Report: Outreach through Communities of Interest

The University of New Hampshire UNH Cooperative Extension held twenty focus groups with “underrepresented populations” as part of the community engagement framework for the Granite State Future project. These are populations who share a common bond or interest and may not have traditionally participated in community planning—especially at the regional level—and may not have shared a common geography. UNH Cooperative Extension staff has a history of working with many of these underrepresented populations which include low income, minority, immigrant, senior, and youth populations, along with veterans and young adults. Nine UNH Cooperative Extension staff worked throughout the state to meet with these populations to ask about their experiences where they live, work, play, and learn.

Methodology: UNH Cooperative Extension staff used focus group interviews as the assessment tool to gather ideas, thoughts, and opinions from small, targeted groups. Focus groups allowed for considering a wide range of topics as defined by the Granite State Future project. As anticipated, there is limited detail in the responses due to the wide range of topics and the limits of time with focus groups. Focus group participants reported on their individual experiences and did not represent whole communities. The focus groups were held around the state from December 2012 to April 2013. A total of 120 people participated in the focus groups.

Communities of Interest groups for the Granite State Future outreach effort were identified as populations representing:

- Physically disabled
- Low income and below the poverty line
- Racial and ethnic minorities
- Senior citizens
- Youth
- Homeless
- Immigrants and refugees
- Veterans

Communities of Interest

A community of people who share a common interest, goal, or knowledge about something—a common bond or interest. A community of interest is defined not by space or geographically, but by some common bond or interest.

In order to select the targeted Communities of Interest, UNH Cooperative Extension identified over fifty organizations that represent Communities of Interest across the state of New Hampshire. The Granite State Future Equity and Engagement Technical Advisory Sub-committee recommended contact organizations, and the Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) provided suggestions for Communities of Interest in their respective planning area.

The discussion questions for the focus groups were formulated using the overarching question: “How can we make our community the best place to live, learn, work, and play?” The questions were drawn from the NH livability principles, including topic areas such as traditional settlement patterns, housing, and transportation choices; natural resources; community and economic vitality; and climate change and energy efficiency. Focus group questions were developed with input from the Granite State Future Equity and Engagement Technical Advisory Sub-committee and the RPC Granite State Future project managers. The following list represents the main questions for the focus group sessions:

Thinking about where you live, work, and play in New Hampshire

1. Tell us about the neighborhood/community you live in. What do you like about it? What would you change? What would you like to stay the same? Does it feel safe?
2. Is there a place for you and your neighbors and friends to gather? Do you get together or spend time together?
3. How do you get around your neighborhood/community? Drive, walk, bike, bus?
4. Do you know people who do not drive? How do they get around?
5. Tell me how your kids get to school. Do they walk, get a ride, or take the bus?
6. Do your kids have a safe place to play outside? Are they interested in playing outside? Do you have a park nearby?
7. Does your housing meet you and your family's needs? If not, tell me about this. How long have you lived here? Do you plan to stay here? Is there anything preventing you from staying where you live?
8. Do you have job opportunities here? Can you easily get to your job? How do you get to your job? Does transportation have an impact on your job—time, cost, ease?
9. Do you have a convenient place to buy groceries? Do you have a place to get fresh fruit and vegetables? Do you go to a farmers' market or farm stand? Do you want more choices for where you buy affordable food?
10. Do you have a place to walk in the woods or swim in a lake, pond, or river?
11. Do you have medical services in your community? Can you get to the medical services you need?
12. Would you like to see more businesses in your community? Can you give examples?
13. Is recycling important to you? Do you recycle?
14. How do you heat your home? Is your home warm enough in the winter? How are your energy and heating costs? Do you have options or wish you had other options? If so, what would they be?
15. Are there buildings or areas in your community that are an eyesore or unsafe?
16. What are the most important areas where we should be investing our limited public dollars?
17. What are your priorities—schools, roads, environment, water/sewer, public safety, etc.?
18. Do you belong to any community organizations or committees, such as the school PTA, a library group, Lions, etc.? Are you an elected or appointed official, or do you volunteer for a town committee?
19. Are there other things about your community you would like to share?

Major Themes by Communities of Interest

Senior Citizens

The top issues of importance to **senior citizens** who participated in focus groups:

- Transportation to access basic services and medical needs
- The condition and maintenance of roads
- Pedestrian access in local communities
- The high cost and lack of support for higher education
- Access to needed social services

Low-Income Populations

The top issues of importance to **low-income populations** who participated in focus groups:

- The lack of public transportation options, especially in the evening and on weekends, and the affordability of transportation options; lack of transportation is a barrier to employment
- Lack of affordable housing
- Concern about public safety and drugs in their communities
- The lack of youth recreation and general youth programs
- Concern about the quality of K-12 education and their local schools

Minority, Immigrant, and Refugee Populations

The top issues of importance to **minority, immigrant, and refugee populations** who participated in focus groups:

- The lack of public transportation options
- The need for job training to gain employment
- The language barrier as it affects many areas of life, including employment, communication with schools, and navigating public transportation

People with Disabilities

The top issues of importance to **disabled populations** who participated in focus groups:

- The lack of public transportation options and housing along transportation routes
- The lack of job opportunities and employment linked to transportation and housing
- Pedestrian access in local communities not designed to accommodate people with disabilities
- Lack of housing choices accommodating the needs of people with disabilities

Youth

The top issues of importance to **youth populations** who participated in focus groups:

- The lack of transportation for employment and socializing
- Support for and investment in their schools
- Lack of job opportunities
- Lack of recreation opportunities, especially for teenagers
- The cost of higher education

Community of Interest focus groups were arranged through organizations that work directly with the target group. The twenty organizations were selected in order to cover each Community of Interest identified with a secondary consideration of having them be geographically representative based on their clientele and service area.

Most participants talked about liking the community where they live. The strong sense of community, knowing neighbors, and community members helping each other was often stated. Youth indicated that they knew their neighbors, church members, and teachers. Participants often cited specific things they loved, such as a church or access to shopping or school, and they said their community has a great deal to offer.

Major Themes

Transportation

Transportation in the state was raised as an issue by each of the Communities of Interest and was the most common topic talked about in all focus groups. The most common discussion of transportation highlighted the lack of public transportation and the limitations of the existing public transportation system. “There is not enough public transportation” was commonly stated—both in terms of the locations served and the frequency of the service.

There is a strong need for expanded public transportation options within the Communities of Interest who participated in focus groups. They see a link between transportation options and employment and believe that lack of transportation choices limits their employment opportunities. Youth want transportation for employment and independence, and seniors are also looking for independence and for transportation to medical appointments and medical care. It was noted that there is a lack of access to the Manchester airport, Boston, metro areas in the state, recreation areas, and northern New Hampshire. The need for communication about transportation in Spanish was also noted.

Use of Cars—Participants indicated that they rely on cars due to a lack of public transportation choices. Many have financial limitations, so there is a reliance on family members and informal volunteer networks for driving to basic services, shopping, and medical appointments. The high cost of travel via car and travel time was noted as a negative consequence of using cars for transportation. Youth rely on parents for transportation, and parents noted the impact on their time to accommodate their children.

Public Transportation—There was a strong opinion that there is a lack of public transportation options. Many of the focus groups noted a lack of evening and weekend hours to the existing transportation system as a barrier for them. There is a lack of public transportation to major cities, employment centers, and the northern part of the state. It is difficult to coordinate the limited transportation options. Affordability of transportation was occasionally noted as an issue. There are some public programs with transportation, but those were noted as significantly lacking. Taxi service, train service, bus service, and light rail were all mentioned as being desired.

Pedestrian Access—There was discussion of the need for increased pedestrian access in many communities. The ability to walk to work, school, stores, health care, and essential services was seen as important. Groups highlighted the need for sidewalks, increased pedestrian safety, and expanded accommodations for bicycles. There was concern that some communities are not bike friendly.

Housing

Housing was a topic discussed by all focus groups except for groups of youth. Most of the discussion focused on the need for more affordable housing. The Communities of Interest indicated that they lacked access to affordable housing. There was a concern about affordability for the next generation and a desire for affordable housing in safe neighborhoods and along public transportation routes. There is a need for a variety of affordable housing types to accommodate needs of different groups, such as families and people with disabilities. Participants noted the link between housing and employment. Rents continue to increase, while income is not increasing.

Many families are sharing housing due to cost. This may help with expenses but can be challenging to families. Other household needs are not being met due to housing costs, and there is a reliance on local fuel assistance programs. There is a lack of housing for the homeless and a need for more homeless shelters.

Some expressed a concern that property taxes make housing costly and that less expensive housing is not built because of land costs.

Jobs/Employment

In addition to transportation and housing, jobs were a major area of concern for the Communities of Interest. Participants saw employment and housing options as tied to transportation options.

Job Opportunities—The Communities of Interest expressed concerns about the lack of good paying jobs for themselves and/or their children. Jobs are seen as important to keeping youth in New Hampshire. They see high paying jobs as being in short supply and believe many people in their community are under-employed. They see little opportunity for advancement or to change jobs. Job training is needed, and there was a belief that the job market is changing and different skills are needed.

Part-time Employment—There are more options for part-time employment, but these jobs do not have benefits. Part-time jobs are also a challenge because they are often evening or weekend hours, and public transportation options are limited at those times.

Employment Barriers—Lack of transportation options is cited as a barrier to full employment. Other hurdles to employment success are language barriers and a lack of access to computers for web-based employment applications. Attitude toward low-income, homeless, and disabled populations can be a barrier, and employer education is needed in this area.

Additional Themes

The following additional themes were discussed by Community of Interest focus groups. While these topics were mentioned less often than transportation, housing, and employment, there was still significant discussion on other topics by many groups. Due to the limited time frame and wide range of issues to cover, there was not an opportunity for in-depth discussion on these issues by the groups. A summary of the topics discussed is presented here.

- Social Services: The need for greater access to social services
- Youth Recreation: The need for youth recreation, in particular recreation for 14- to 18-year-olds who are not participating in high school sports

- School/Education: Concern for the quality of elementary, middle, and high schools and fear that education was not valued; lack of support for the value of education
- Youth Programs: The lack of programs for youth (other than recreation) to keep them busy and productive
- Adult Recreation: Lack of recreation opportunities and facilities for adults
- Roads: The poor condition of roads and the lack of investment in infrastructure
- Higher Education: Concern about the cost, access, and support for higher education
- Recycling/Energy Efficiency: An interest in learning more about energy efficiency
- Natural Resources: Placing a high value on the state's natural resources, protecting them and having access
- Food Access: Access to quality food that is affordable
- Broadband: Internet access, especially for connections to schools and possible employment
- Safety/Crime: Concern about safety and crime in some local communities
- Job Training: The lack of job training for existing employment opportunities
- Language: The language barrier, particularly with parents with elementary, middle, and high school children
- Health Care: Concern about access to and the affordability of health care
- Economic Development: The need for job development and support for new businesses
- Drugs: Concern about the availability of illegal drugs in some local communities
- Sense of Community: A concern that community members do not feel a sense of community where they live
- Utilities: The high cost of utilities
- Water Quality: Concern for the quality of water for drinking and recreation
- Keeping Young People in New Hampshire: Concern that young people are leaving for education and employment opportunities elsewhere and not returning to the state
- Downtown: The importance of downtown areas and concern for their viability

Final Report: Outreach through Regional Community Conversations

How can we make our community the best place to live, learn, work, and play?

Introduction

In the spring of 2013, over 500 New Hampshire residents met in ten different locations across the state to talk about their priorities, concerns, and ideas for the future of New Hampshire. At each site, participants met for three hours to share their thoughts, as well as to listen and engage with others.

Compiled here are the priority issues and ideas shared by those participants. New Hampshire Listens and University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension hosted these events in service to the nine New Hampshire Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs); the discussions provided input on topics impacting the multitude of issues with which regional plans are concerned.

Communities of Place

A gathering of people who share a common local or regional geographic location.

These community conversations were advertised widely, and everyone was welcome to attend. In keeping with NH Listens' approach, the purpose of these deliberations was to engage people in a constructive conversation, not to advance a particular set of goals or solutions. All views and perspectives were recorded and integrated into the full report.

Conversations, such as those organized for the Granite State Future project, help to augment (not replace) traditional forms of government and policy making. What follows is a detailed description of the process, outcomes of the conversations, and an analysis of all small group reports that identify areas for further consideration and action.

How NH Listens Collects and Reports Findings

UNH Cooperative Extension and NH Listens base this kind of community development work on small-group facilitated dialogue (typically eight to twelve participants per group) that produces specific findings, often in the form of concrete recommendations for action. Depending on the topic, the findings might be at a more general level, articulating broad sets of values or criteria for decision making. In others, the recommendations can be quite specific, articulating a particular project or approach. Whether a dialogue is constructed as a one-time event that stretches over several hours or multiple events occurring over several weeks, participants typically move through a four-stage process supported by the facilitator. These stages include:

1. Introductions and personal stories about how participants relate to the focus topic of the dialogue (including their prior experiences with and opinions about the topic)
2. Review of the available data on the topic to ensure common, comparable levels of knowledge among participants (sometimes through use of a data summary report of the type prepared by UNH Cooperative Extension and NH Listens for this project)
3. Analysis of the topic and its multiple dimensions, leading to selection by the group of a small number of key issues (three to four) that serve as the basis for subsequent discussion from which the group generates concrete actions and recommendations

4. In-depth discussion of the selected key issues and articulation of a final set of views, values, or recommended actions directed at relevant decision makers

Throughout the dialogue, facilitators and participants document the conversation on large flip charts and identify recurring statements or themes. That is, the information that is gleaned from each small group is inductively analyzed, moving from specific comments made by group members to general statements that represent the shared ideas and perspectives of the group. Both agreements and disagreements are recorded, to ensure that all points of view are heard and documented.

The participants in this project spent three hours on a weekday evening in a facilitated discussion about the future of the Granite State. This represents a significant amount of time (over 1,500 hours of total participation) for residents who typically do not spend time in this type of sustained conversation about their community and their state. It is significant that our overall summary shows evidence of substantially overlapping concerns. This input will be further analyzed by the RPCs as they foster regional cooperation among communities and develop comprehensive regional plans for transportation, land use, water resources, housing, economic development, emergency management, energy, and other planning matters.

The Conversations

NH Listens, UNH Cooperative Extension, and the RPCs had a goal of recruiting participants from across the state representing multiple perspectives and communities. Outreach was conducted statewide through email and personal contact by RPC staff (see Appendix B: Invitation to Participants). This ambitious effort to seek broad participation in planning was enabled by the grant funding and is aimed at solving complex planning problems with increased access to information and a greater representation of constituents across regions.

There was much interest in the topic, and over 500 people registered and participated in the sessions held between February 26 and May 14, 2013. Participants represented over 115 different towns in New Hampshire. The following locations were chosen to make sure there was a distribution of sites across the state:

| Location | # of Participants | # of Small Groups |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Claremont | 68 | 5 |
| Dover | 43 | 4 |
| Plymouth | 24 | 3 |
| Keene | 48 | 4 |
| Manchester | 35 | 3 |
| Berlin | 35 | 3 |
| Pembroke | 33 | 4 |
| Nashua | 74 | 6 |
| Laconia | 113 | 8 |
| <u>Kingston</u> | <u>55</u> | <u>5</u> |
| Total | 528 | 45 |

After each conversation, a brief summary of themes was sent to participants from that particular regional event. The purpose of this summary was to give timely feedback on general results since the project itself and the final report writing would span several months. Regional themes can be found in Appendix D.

Focus Questions

In conjunction with RPCs, UNH Cooperative Extension and NH Listens developed a set of focus questions to guide the discussion. These questions were based on key planning topics and the NH Livability Principles in order to encourage integration across planning topics. The questions were:

- Regarding our changing population, how would our policies and practices need to change if we wanted to attract the 20-something's or 30-something's to the state? How do we need to prepare communities for the ultimate retirement of New Hampshire's substantial middle-aged population in the workforce? What infrastructure will we need to support our aging population?
- Regarding land use and community centers, what is the appropriate role for local planning and zoning?
- Regarding housing and transportation, are workers satisfied with their housing and transportation options relative to their work? Are there barriers to having diverse land uses such as housing, businesses, and offices in the same location? If so, what are they? Who is most impacted by these barriers? What would change if more people of various income levels had access to a variety of modes of transportation?
- Regarding our natural resources and climate, what is needed for us to keep New Hampshire as good or better for future generations? What are the most important long-range decisions we need to make as a region and a state?
- With employers looking for strong, educated labor pools, access to contemporary information (broadband) and transportation infrastructures, what needs to be done to keep us competitive economically?

After introductions within each small group and a general exploration of various issues, participants were asked to explore the information provided in the discussion guide (see Appendix C). The discussion guide adapted information from a variety of sources which can be found at www.granitestatefuture.org. The information was used to expose participants to a variety of issues, but the focus of the conversation followed the interests of the participants. Facilitators asked, "What do you notice about this information?" Often following up with prompting questions, such as, "What stands out to you? What is most important to you? What seems like the most critical aspect of this challenge?" The final questions posed on each topic were:

- What are the issues, barriers, challenges, and opportunities related to this topic?
- What actions need to be taken over the next twenty-five years?
- What actions would move us forward on the issues of concern to you?

Key Findings

The following is a summary of the themes and priorities noted most frequently across all forty-five small groups in all ten locations across the state. Although each group expressed some regional differences and issues pertinent to the towns and communities where participants live, general themes emerged across regions related to trends and challenges facing the state of New Hampshire overall. This report reflects broad themes that majorities of participants in the regional groups identified as important and critical to the future of New Hampshire.

As a summary and analysis of the input shared by participants, some topics arose directly from the discussion guide and were explored in significant ways by participants. This was true, for example, for transportation and the changing demographics of the state. Other topics were more a result of input by

participants. This occurred in the case of education, as it was seen as a significant factor in economic vitality. Similarly, health care was a significant concern and was often raised in connection with our aging population.

Although a range of topics was discussed at each regional event, certain topics were of particular interest to participants across the state of New Hampshire. The most frequently discussed issues included:

- Employment and educational opportunity
- Youth
- Senior citizens
- Transportation
- Housing
- Taxes and state and municipal funding
- Zoning and development
- Environment and natural resources
- Infrastructure needs

Of these issues, *every* small group in *every* regional location across the state involved in the Granite State Future project spent time discussing employment and educational opportunity, youth, senior citizens, transportation, and housing, and *most* groups discussed taxes and funding, zoning and development, the environment and natural resources, and infrastructure needs. The notes from each small group at each location can be found in Appendix E.

In the findings below, we have ordered the focus areas within the discussion guide to reflect those themes and issues most frequently discussed by participants. While our process did not ask participants to reach consensus, our analysis attempts to highlight areas of disagreement and areas of significant common ground. For the purposes of the report, key findings are organized in the following manner to show how themes are interrelated:

- The beauty and strength of New Hampshire
- Community and economic vitality
- Where we live and how we move around
- Who we are and how we are changing
- Environment, energy, and impacts
- How we use land and the impacts of our choices
- The role of government

The Beauty and Strength of New Hampshire

Before addressing areas of focus from the discussion guide, it should be noted that from small group to small group, and region to region, participants inevitably spent some time expressing their appreciation for the natural beauty of New Hampshire. Many felt our surroundings had a significant impact on their decision to move to New Hampshire or to remain here. The desire to sustain the natural beauty of the state was expressed repeatedly. However, these shared concerns around the beauty of New Hampshire resulted in fewer concrete recommendations across groups and regions. Our values here are strong but diffuse and therefore harder to focus into shared action steps. In contrast, so many participants connected jobs, education, transportation, and housing that an understanding of these values tended to result in more frequent concrete recommendations for action. Still, the strength of living in a beautiful environment was seen as one of our greatest assets, along with a sense that New Hampshire residents are deeply engaged in their communities.

Community and Economic Vitality

All of the small groups spent some time grappling with the impact of employment and economic development on the vitality and health of their community and the state. The primary drivers of the conversation centered on opportunities for a quality education for children, affordable higher education, and access to employment with “good benefits.” Both were highly connected by participants to access to transportation options and affordable housing. Many participants were concerned that it be possible “for hardworking families to thrive.”

Employment and Economic Development

All forty-five groups in all ten of the regions discussed aspects of unemployment, job growth, and economic development. Some participants felt that there is a lack of jobs overall, while other communities felt there is a lack of jobs that are an appropriate fit with the skill levels in the state. Several participants mentioned the lack of jobs with good benefits. In particular, many groups expressed concern that there are not enough jobs for high skilled workers, making it harder to change jobs and remain within in the state. The Berlin regional conversation participants commented that the jobs available are low-paying service sector jobs. Claremont regional conversation participants expressed a desire for jobs that require skilled labor and concerns that businesses may choose not to come to the region due to a lack of a trained workforce.

Many groups commented on the lack of adequate training for job requirements in the state. Several communities felt that their regions need to offer more effective job training—both for college educated and non-college educated individuals. Both Keene and Pembroke participants felt that partnerships between schools and businesses might facilitate more effective job training. Claremont, Pembroke, and Dover participants were also interested in partnerships between the private sector and local community. Many communities were interested in economic development and support of business growth, particularly small businesses.

There were five locations where an interest in expanding tourism was expressed. There was a desire to balance tourism with New Hampshire’s natural beauty. In the Berlin region, participants saw tourism in the North Country as a major economic force. Plymouth participants also felt that tourism was a driving force in the community, and that business could be inconsistent from season to season. In the Kingston region, there was a concern that tourists enter the area simply to buy cigarettes and alcohol.

Educational Opportunity

Education was discussed repeatedly and most often in the context of the importance of young people in New Hampshire having access to quality K–12 education and affordable higher education. These themes will be explored in more detail under Youth. As noted above, a strong connection was made by participants between educational opportunity and employment options, and there was concern across participants and regions that we will see decreasing levels of both.

Concerns about Taxes and Funding

There was a general concern about taxes and state funding in all of the small groups throughout the state. Many groups felt that taxes are too high. Others felt they are too high and too singularly drawn from property taxes. Some noted that we are known for our “tax advantages” and did not see taxes as too high per se, although many groups commented that the state is overly reliant on property taxes. There was a concern that high property taxes make homeownership difficult or even prohibitive.

Gas taxes were often discussed, and some groups felt that these taxes are unfairly high and unfairly distributed. Others noted that this tax has not increased in several years. Many groups questioned the fairness of the current tax structure or expressed the need for more equitable and more diverse forms of taxation, although there was controversy about what equitable taxes meant.

Some groups felt taxes aren't funding the right services. There were also concerns about a lack of state funding for particular services and programs, including schools and health care. Many groups commented on how tax incentives for small businesses might attract more economic development to the state. Some groups discussed the relationship between taxes and the environment—for instance, some regions discussed how tax incentives for green home or business improvement could be effective. One group commented that Keene provides tax credits for solar improvements.

Some groups expressed concerns over state and local budget cuts. Certain needs were identified, but the pathways to funding these needs varied and were sometimes controversial.

Who We Are and How We Are Changing

The initial focus of discussion in these regional conversations shared information on current and future demographic changes in New Hampshire. It matters to people that New Hampshire offer appealing opportunities for young people and that our older adults, as they age, can age “in place” and age in ways that provide dignity and independence. This was discussed repeatedly by all groups. Participants spent time focused on population changes in both youth and senior citizens, with a particular awareness of how a significant skew in our overall population can impact revenues and community and economic vitality.

Keeping and Educating Youth

All forty-five groups in all ten of the regional locations involved in the Granite State Future project discussed issues related to youth in the state of New Hampshire. The majority of groups expressed concern about youth migration out of New Hampshire and discussed ways that their communities can retain and attract young people. For instance, the Berlin participants discussed “brain drain” in their region and how they need incentives to bring young people back to the region after college. Other groups discussed the quality and cost of higher education and the need for support for higher education, including the Community College system in New Hampshire.

Some groups felt that the high cost of higher education deters young people from remaining in the state. Others felt that there is a lack of job opportunities for youth and recent college graduates. Some participants believed that the lack of affordable housing drives young people out of the state. Though there was no agreed-upon cause for youth migration from New Hampshire, there was some agreement among regions that communities and towns, as well as the state overall, should contemplate effective ways to encourage young people to work, go to school, and live in our state.

Several groups expressed concern about the quality of K–12 education in New Hampshire and commented on the varying quality of schools, depending on the town or region of the state that people reside in. Dover and Keene participants commented on problems created by a lack of state funding for local schools. After-school programs and programs for teenagers were also mentioned as important factors for supporting young people.

Participants in Claremont, Plymouth, and Nashua expressed concerns over a lack of child care in their regions. Child care needs were also raised in the context of employers playing a role in providing access to onsite care.

The topic of civics education was mentioned across several regions. There was interest in educating young people on how to participate in their community and how government works and decisions are made. We suspect the kinds of people who participated in these conversations place a high value on civic engagement by virtue of their participation. Still, being connected to one's community was often mentioned more broadly by participants, including building community locally and helping people find ways to connect positively to community efforts. Many participants mentioned that a strong turnout at community conversations is evidence of our strength as a civically engaged state.

Older Adults Aging Independently and Healthfully

All forty-five groups in all ten of the regional locations discussed changes and challenges that growing senior citizen populations in the state will pose to their individual communities. Groups explored questions about the care of elders overall and how they will access and afford health care and other services. Many groups expressed concerns about how seniors who could no longer drive would access transportation yet maintain independence. There was also discussion about the relationships between older adults and taxes; some groups felt that as the population aged, tax revenue bases and the growth of the economy might slow. Other groups discussed how retirees might move to the state because of the existing tax structure, further skewing our population toward seniors. Similar to youth populations, there were no certain answers in terms of how to respond to growing senior populations, but the need for planning to take place in local communities was evident to participants—including the need for young people to be trained in the multiple health care careers relevant to senior citizens. Some participants felt that no government resources should be used to support seniors as families, churches, and neighbors should serve this need.

Health Care

Several groups expressed concern about affordable health care, although there was significant disagreement about how to achieve this goal. The issue was discussed often, but the complexity of the issue—combined with a relatively tight timeline—meant groups often did not explore this issue in depth. Still, it is of great concern to a variety of participants across the state, along with access to mental health care and care for those dealing with substance abuse.

Where We Live and How We Move Around

The aging infrastructure of the state as a whole was often discussed. These conversations show significant concerns regarding long-term investment in transportation, housing, and communication infrastructure, as these topics were raised repeatedly by participants.

Infrastructure Investments

Many groups commented on a need for a more effective and updated infrastructure within their communities, but regions viewed infrastructure differently. Some communities saw infrastructure as the upkeep of roads, bridges, and town buildings. Participants in more northern regions—such as Laconia, Plymouth, and Berlin—expressed difficulties with communication infrastructure, particularly reliable internet access. Kingston participants discussed a desire for an infrastructure in their region that is generally more supportive of technology and a new economy. While water quality was often mentioned, the infrastructure to support it was not. There was a general recognition that technology infrastructure can change how we work and where we live. A number of regions mentioned creative and entrepreneurial opportunities linked to better broadband access across the state.

Public Transit and Transportation Options

All forty-five groups in all ten of the regional locations discussed some aspect of transportation in relation to their regions. There was recognition of limitations that exist in such a heavily car-dependent state. The majority of groups were concerned about accessible and affordable transportation, and many mentioned the impact of long commute times on lifestyle.

In particular, a need was identified to ensure that certain populations have access to transportation, including youth and seniors, as well as low-income individuals and people with disabilities. In some communities, there is currently little access to essential services like medical treatment and groceries for individuals without cars.

Beyond access, groups talked about the need for more transportation offerings and a greater variety of offerings and also the health and lifestyle improvements that can come with being able to bike or walk to work or to town centers. Safety when biking and walking was an issue in some communities, especially where sidewalks are minimal. Many participants mentioned that young people are attracted to cities and towns where they have access to public transportation, and high speed rail was mentioned a few times as an attractive commuting option if the service were available.

Some groups discussed a need for more effective transportation between New Hampshire's cities, such as Concord, Nashua, and Manchester, valuing opportunities for communities to be connected for economic and social reasons. There were references to connecting communities in the Upper Valley, as well as the need for an east-west corridor in the state.

Many groups commented on the need for increased and more effective transportation, but groups were less clear about how to fund these services. Some participants saw increased public funds as the solution, whereas other participants favored increased volunteer services or private sector outreach in the community. Several groups expressed interest in developing alternative forms of transportation, including reinstating rail access in the North Country, community development that encourages walking and biking, and consistent bus service.

Affordable, Accessible, and Appealing Housing

All forty-five groups in all ten of the regional locations commented on the need for improved housing offerings in their communities, including more affordable, appealing, and available housing. Many groups expressed concern that housing in their communities is too expensive. For instance, participants in Claremont and Pembroke commented that their regions might be more attractive to workers if housing were more affordable. In some communities, a lack of available housing was noted—"workforce housing," in particular. For instance, in the Berlin region, there are waiting lists for many housing units. Many groups made direct connections between transportation and housing. Housing is often located far from jobs and the town center so that, without public transit, it is challenging for individuals without a car to work or access essential services.

Efforts that would increase choices in housing and transportation options were generally seen favorably. Although there was concern among some groups about government subsidized housing and transportation, more people were concerned about barriers to home ownership and having a variety of housing and transportation options for a mix of income levels.

Environment, Energy, and Impacts

As mentioned previously, living in such a naturally beautiful place was deeply appreciated and often discussed. When participants focused specifically on the environment, preservation and energy were on their minds.

Preserving and Managing our Natural Resources

Most of the regional groups were concerned about the future of the environment and natural resources in the state. Discussion on the environment ranged from pollution to water, climate change, energy, natural resources, and agriculture. Discussions about water included many subjects, such as water quality, water shortages, storm water runoff, and pollution. Preserving water quality received a fair amount of attention among the natural resources of concern to participants. Participants also talked about supporting local agriculture and maintaining the “rural character” of New Hampshire.

A Focus on Energy Diversity, Efficiency, and Costs

Many of the groups discussed topics related to energy, including the cost of energy, energy efficiency, diversification of energy sources, and incentives to use alternative energy. A range of energy sources was discussed, including pellet stoves, solar energy, wind power, and oil and other carbon-based energy. Dover participants discussed how energy use needs to become more diversified and that communities should plan for multiuse facilities (adaptive technology that can run on both natural gas and wood pellets, for example). Plymouth participants commented that carbon-based energy is not sustainable in the long term but that it is difficult and expensive to produce alternative energy. Those in Keene commented that the state provides little incentive for people to create and use alternative energy. Laconia participants discussed a desire to have more strategic and extended conversations about steps for the future in relation to energy and fuel cost conservation. Many experienced what they see as high electric bills and noted that there are few incentives to make homes energy efficient. In fact, some participants mentioned that there are policy and financial “disincentives to do the right thing” and that there should be greater tax incentives for green home improvements, for example.

Beyond Climate Change to Impacts

There was some talk in groups about climate change, although the roots of this issue were debated, especially the prediction of ultimate impacts or the identification of causal relationships. When groups focused on local issues and impacts of changes in weather patterns (such as intense storms, increased flooding, and changes in the growing season), participants were more engaged in noticing concrete impacts (such as an increase in flood insurance rates). Participants were very aware of the politicized nature of the topic and were more drawn to practical impacts than debating political views.

How We Use Land and the Impacts of Our Choices

Many groups discussed issues related to land use; often participants spoke of both the barriers caused by regulations and conservation, as well as a balanced need for both. It was not uncommon to hear participants seeking greater balance between the tensions inherent in these kinds of issues. For example, many spoke strongly in defense of private property rights, and yet they were also very disappointed in seeing windmills located on private property appear in their mountain vista. Similarly, many appreciated the conservation of land but wanted greater public access to trails. These tensions continued to surface in discussions regarding zoning, land conservation, and property rights—three areas that received a high level of attention across groups in the statewide conversations.

Zoning and Development

Most of the regions involved in the Granite State Future conversations spent time discussing zoning and development. Many groups expressed a desire to balance economic development with the preservation of natural resources and the local character of their communities. This message was consistent across regions and accompanied a value of foresight in planning and zoning decisions. In Kingston, the region discussed a desire to maintain the local charm of the area and a clean and healthy natural environment balanced with economic development. Berlin regional participants expressed a desire to preserve the beauty of the North Country, while still allowing development. Many groups expressed an interest in encouraging tourism while maintaining New Hampshire's natural beauty.

Several communities expressed frustration over zoning laws and regulations. Participants in Keene and Manchester were both interested in repurposing existing buildings and transforming them into new industry but felt there were undue burdens to doing so. Several groups were interested in encouraging local agriculture and preserving natural resources and building up local agriculture and farming. A consistent value for local control was expressed, including a value for communities to determine and preserve their own identities.

Land Conservation Perceptions

The issue of land conservation was raised consistently across regions but with a variety of perceptions. Some participants in the Manchester area, for example, expressed a frustration with land conservation, believing it to be a way to “give land to the government.” Others have worked locally to use conservation to preserve the rural character of their towns. Land conservation was an area where there were a number of questions regarding tax implications, property rights, and access for recreation.

Protecting Property Rights

Property rights were discussed consistently when issues of land use and natural resources were raised, particularly as related to water. For some participants, there seemed to be desire to ensure that a tradition of individual rights continue to inform decisions, consistent with a libertarian culture in New Hampshire. For others, community and individual concerns were a complicated and delicate balance requiring ongoing and persistent effort.

The Role of Government

The participants engaged repeatedly in conversations about the complexities and tensions associated with identifying the appropriate role of government—local, regional, state, and federal—in addressing challenges faced by our state. So many of the issues discussed lent themselves to deliberation over who bears responsibility and who should shoulder the expense. In particular, there were many voices advocating for increased communication, collaboration, and transparency in government, across agencies, and with everyday citizens. Most participants found some value in regional cooperation but were cautious of a loss of local control. In addition, some individuals were critical of too much government oversight and regulation, reiterating that “government should not get in the way.”

Many groups commented on the need for further work on the topics discussed at the Granite State Future conversations. It should also be noted that several participants expressed concern that these conversations, along with the other Granite State Future activities, would lead to increased federal involvement in their communities. Nonetheless, participants repeatedly appreciated the opportunity to talk with one another despite their differences of opinion, and the need for productive ways to engage people was mentioned as a value across regions.

Regional Differences

Although the regional groups shared many themes in common, various regions also expressed differences according to their unique communities.

Berlin

The North Country regional groups expressed concern that their region did not receive enough attention in the New Hampshire legislature. North Country participants felt that there is higher poverty in the North Country due to various factors, such as a lack of good jobs, a high cost of living, long drives to job opportunities, and high property tax rates. North Country residents felt that they use more gas than other regions and pay a lot in gas taxes but do not receive equitable road maintenance from the state.

As action items, North Country residents expressed interest in tourism development as an economic force. Participants felt that a railroad could bring more business to the north. There was also an interest in continuing to support White Mountains Community College since it is the lone source of higher education in the region. Some groups felt they would like to increase recycling efforts in communities such as Berlin, Lancaster, and Littleton.

Claremont

Claremont participants expressed a particular interest in building infrastructure such as roads and bridges. There was a concern that the growing senior population in the Upper Valley will need increased transportation. Some groups discussed how existing services are underused and how increased public awareness about alternative programs and services would be helpful.

Dover

State and local budget cuts were of particular concern in the Dover area. Participants questioned why a wealthy state such as New Hampshire is cutting budgets and what potential alternative revenue structures might exist. There was conversation about unevenness in employment rates in Strafford County; some communities seem to be struggling, while others are thriving.

Despite some existing public transportation, there are still parts of the area that are not served by these resources, and a stigma—particularly by older generations—is associated with using public transportation.

There was some conversation about a lack of civics education in schools. There was also a concern about how to access public officials and decision makers.

In addition, EPA quality standards were of concern to many individuals.

Keene

Some groups in Keene felt that Cheshire County does not have the same kind of voice represented through state leadership as do other regions. The regional group pointed to a need for increased collaboration among local, state, and federal officials.

Groups felt that, although there is access to transportation and services near Keene, communities located farther from Keene are less likely to have these offerings.

Taxes were of concern since Keene's property taxes are the fourth highest in the state.

There was a particular concern about storm water runoff.

There was a sense in Keene that community is important. Keene participants expressed interest in encouraging young people to get involved with their community. They also mentioned that young people in the region need greater access to recreational activities.

Kingston

As a region bordering Massachusetts, the Kingston area groups expressed concern about losing youth to the Boston area. The groups also felt that tourism in the area is complicated; there was an interest in attracting tourism, but many groups felt that tourists just come over the border to purchase cigarettes and alcohol.

There was a sentiment in Kingston that seniors are an untapped potential that need to be utilized in the community. There was discussion about building safer and healthier communities and for more effective communication among towns in the region. The Kingston regional groups also placed particular emphasis on a balance between economic development, expansion of technology, and preserving local character and natural resources.

Laconia

Several groups in Laconia discussed a decline in the numbers of school-aged children and an influx of immigrant and refugee populations. Some groups discussed how individuals who live in the community work elsewhere, or vice versa. Several groups discussed the complexity of land use conservation. Laconia area participants discussed ways that drug and alcohol use and crime affect the community. Some groups felt that there are differences in water quality from town to town in the region.

Manchester

The Manchester region discussed some unique challenges, such as poverty rates and public school quality and crowding. The regional groups questioned what being a designated refugee resettlement city means for the future of the Manchester region and if the city has the resources to serve in this capacity. There was concern expressed about the HUD funding of the Granite State Future project and its association with the federal government.

Nashua

The Nashua region expressed particular interest in making the community an attractive place for people to live, work, and enjoy recreationally. Part of the discussion focused on the city's layout and downtown area, and how to encourage and strengthen Nashua's local identity and charm. Access to mental health care was a concern for half of the groups that participated in the Nashua regional conversation.

Pembroke

Pembroke regional participants discussed the importance of community colleges in the area and how these institutions should collaborate with local businesses to stimulate job growth. Many groups discussed the deterioration of bridges and road quality and the funds needed to update this infrastructure. Some participants questioned the validity of the information included in the discussion guide.

Plymouth

There was a particular focus on a lack of internet access in the Plymouth region. Participants also discussed the lack of access to essential services, such as police, fire, and emergency services. There was a concern that cars are essential to living and getting around the regional area. Groups also expressed concern about a large disparity in local housing—wealthier, often seasonal property owners contribute high taxes, while lower income individuals are left with run-down, substandard housing that is still quite expensive. Tourism is a large part of the local economy, and the inconsistency of tourism from year to year and season to season creates complications for the regional area. There was a sentiment in the area that communities need to work collaboratively to create solutions to regional problems.

Participant Evaluation Summary

NH Listens surveyed all participants about their experience of the process and received 267 responses (a 50 percent return rate). A full summary of the results is provided in Appendix F. Much of this feedback assists NH Listens in improving facilitation and engagement for future events.

The conversations received mixed reviews. They were highly rated, as can be seen in the 89 percent of participants expressing, “I am glad I participated in these conversations” and 81 percent agreeing that “our group talked about the most important issues.” Similarly, most participants felt everyone had “an equal chance to express their views” (89 percent).

Still, this project was seen as controversial for reasons stated earlier, and some participants felt their views would not be represented fairly. For example, while most participants felt they learned something new from other members of their group (79 percent), a smaller majority (55 percent of participants) indicated the conversation helped them to have “a better understanding of people who I disagree with and their opinions.” The small group facilitators were rated highly across the project with participants indicating that facilitators “helped the group set ground rules and stick to them” (90 percent) and “helped us talk about different points of view” (85 percent).

Conclusion

Several hundred engaged and committed people came out on a weekday evening across multiple sites in New Hampshire to discuss their concerns and priorities for the future of New Hampshire. This report was compiled to assist participants, as well as the Regional Planning Commissions, as they determine the best ways to plan for our future.

Participants at these sessions spent a significant amount of time discussing employment and educational opportunity, transportation and housing, demographic changes in New Hampshire in regards to youth and seniors, energy and natural resources, and land use. Decision makers utilizing this report can consider participants’ perceptions and recommendations. Collectively, we have indicated topics of importance for reflection and next steps.

Appendix A

Community of Interest Focus Groups: 2012–2013

| Location* | Group Name |
|------------------|---|
| North Haverhill | 4H Teen Club Grafton County |
| Brentwood | 4H Teen Club Rockingham County |
| Hudson | Anne Marie House |
| Laconia | Carey House Homeless Shelter |
| Goffstown | Hillsborough County Advisory Council |
| Manchester | Holy Cross Family Center |
| Sunapee | Kearsarge Council on Aging |
| Nashua | Keystone Hall |
| Laconia | Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce |
| Laconia | Lakes Region Partnership for Public Health |
| Manchester | Liberty House |
| Troy/Fitzwilliam | Meadowood Meals |
| Nashua | Minority Council of Nashua |
| Berlin | Northern Lights Housing Complex |
| Claremont | Pathways of the River Valley |
| Durham | Seacoast Advocated for Independent Living |
| Keene | Southwest Community Services—Senior Citizens |
| Keene | Southwest Community Services—People with Disabilities |
| Whitefield | Whitefield Headstart |
| Claremont | Workplace Success |

*These organizations are located in this community. They may provide their services or work with their clientele in this community, in a region or regions, and possibly statewide.



Granite State Future: Regional Community Conversation

When & Where:

Tuesday February 26th
Claremont, NH
Common Man Restaurant

Tuesday March 5th
Dover, NH
Horne Street School

Thursday March 14th
Plymouth, NH
Senior Center

Tuesday March 19th
Manchester, NH
Memorial High School

Thursday March 21st
Littleton, NH
Littleton Senior Center

Tuesday April 2nd
Keene, NH
Keene Public Library

Tuesday April 9th
Berlin, NH
Berlin Community Center

Tuesday April 16th
Pembroke, NH
Pembroke Academy

Tuesday April 30th
Nashua, NH
Senior Activity Center

Tuesday May 7th
Laconia, NH
Laconia Middle School

Tuesday May 14th
Kingston, NH
Sanborn Regional High School

The Granite State Future Project is committed to engaging everyone to identify local assets, needs and ways to effectively use limited government resources. Regional community conversations are being designed and hosted by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension.

The issues local leaders face are many, including public health, transportation, economic development, infrastructure, housing, land use, energy, cultural, historic, and natural resources, and more! We hope you will join us for this opportunity to talk with neighbors about the future of your community, region, and the state.

All perspectives are welcome!

To register go to: <http://tinyurl.com/RegisterListening>

Be a part of these thoughtful and informative community conversations about the future of our communities, our region, and our state.

All conversations will take place in the evening.

Sign in & refreshments: 6:00 p.m.

Program: 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.

On-site childcare will be available.

For More Information: www.granitestatefuture.org

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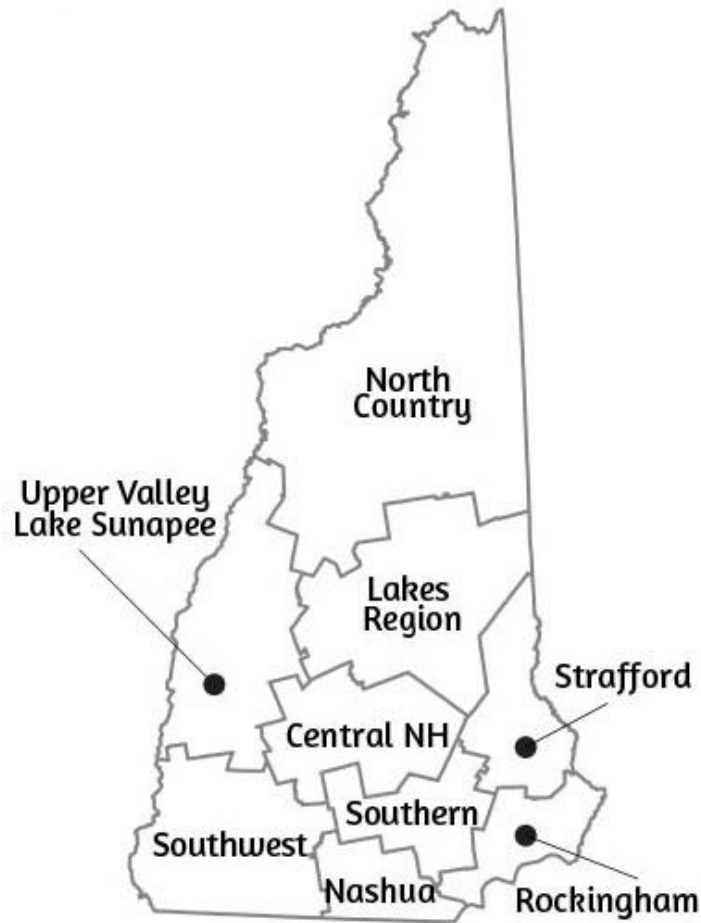
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Discussion Guide

Spring 2013 Regional Community Conversations



Claremont Dover Plymouth Manchester Littleton Keene Berlin Pembroke Nashua Laconia Kingston

How Can We Make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

A conversation about the future of our communities, our region, and our state.

Everyone Welcome!

Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*

Welcome and thank you for joining today's conversation ~

We look forward to your questions, concerns, ideas, and hopes for the future of our communities, our region, and our state and we welcome all perspectives. What do those of us who live and work here in New Hampshire want for the future of our communities? How can we keep what we value, meet the opportunities and challenges of our changing demographics, and increase economic vitality and opportunity? These are the kinds of questions at the heart of our conversation today.

This project asks us all to consider the critical question: How should we plan for the future? What core considerations should be the basis of planning for a thriving future? UNH Cooperative Extension and NH Listens have been asked by NH's nine regional planning commissions to design and host an opportunity for ***neighbors to talk with neighbors*** to identify local assets, local needs, and ways to effectively use limited government resources.

Here is the general outline of our evening:

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 6:00 – 6:30 PM | Registration and refreshments |
| 6:30 | Welcome and Purpose |
| 6:45 | Small group conversations |
| 8:40 | Large group summary reports |
| 8:55 | Next steps |
| 9:00 PM | Closing |

This guide is the same for all participants. The facilitators will help guide the conversation but we are all responsible for making sure the group is productive.

Thank you!

NH Listens works to strengthen New Hampshire communities by helping citizens participate directly in discussions about policies that affect their daily lives. Established in 2011, we engage NH residents in local, regional, and statewide conversations on a broad range of topics to bring about informed, innovative solutions to complex issues. At the core of our work, we organize fair, nonpartisan discussions, help communities establish their own local Listens organizations, and train facilitators for public engagement. For more information see: www.NHListens.org

UNH Cooperative Extension provides New Hampshire citizens with research-based education and information, enhancing their ability to make informed decisions that strengthen youth, families and communities, sustain natural resources and improve the economy. The community development staff works with citizens and civic leaders to strengthen community decision-making, engagement and local leadership development. For more information see: www.extension.unh.edu

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension

Detailed Outline

6:00 - 6:30 Registration

- Welcome and sign in at registration table
- Time to review the discussion guide and view maps displayed throughout the room
- Please join your small group circle for the introduction and to start the dialogue immediately thereafter. We encourage you to review the background information starting on page 8.

6:30 - 6:45 Welcome

- Welcome from a Regional Planning Commission Representative.
- Welcome and information from UNH Cooperative Extension and NH Listens Coordinators: Molly Donovan, Michele Holt-Shannon, and/or Bruce Mallory
 - The issues local leaders face are many, including public health, transportation, economic development, infrastructure, water, housing, land use, energy, cultural, historic, and natural resources, education and more.

The goal of this conversation is to gather input from NH residents on their values and priorities related to:

- New Hampshire's unique beauty and character
 - Local assets important to a lasting prosperity for all
 - Public infrastructure investment and maintenance
 - Local needs for capital investments.
 - Natural, social and financial resources
 - And any other relevant input from NH citizens on how we realize and accomplish shared priorities
- About the process: This conversation is...
 - Designed to focus on what is important to you related to these issues in your local community.
 - Designed for participants to be here the whole time (please do what you need to do to be most present: Feel free to take a break or step outside for a phone call if needed).
 - About a constructive focus and looking forward to desired actions and solutions.
 - Intended to augment and support traditional forms of government, not replace them.
 - Organized to allow the greatest possible time for everyone to both speak and listen, which is why we use small facilitated groups where ideas can be explored, differences understood, and preferences for action expressed.
 - Group agreements for a productive conversation:
 - Share “air time”
 - If you disagree, consider asking a question rather than arguing to prove your point

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- It's OK to disagree, but don't personalize it. Stick to the issue, not the person who is disagreeing with you
- Speak up if the process doesn't seem fair
- Speak for yourself, not for others and not for an entire group (use "I" statements)
- Personal stories stay in the group unless we all agree we can share them outside of the group *
- We all share responsibility for making the group productive
- Be respectful and use respectful language
- Respect the facilitator's role
- Listen first...

** We are delighted to have this event covered by the press and local bloggers and want to balance that with a participant's ability to express an incomplete or experimental thought as a part of this process. We respectfully request all representatives of the news media (formal and informal) to ask permission to tape, photograph, identify or quote an individual participant directly. We are happy to answer any questions about this request.*

6:45 - 7:00 Introductions in small groups

- Your small group has a neutral facilitator whose role is to:
 - Help with the process and keeping time
 - Serve as a reminder of our agreements to be fair and respectful
 - Make sure everyone gets a chance to participate, and
 - Assure recording of key information to submit in your small group's report
- Reminder: Your group will need someone to **report out** to the large group at the end.
- **Introductions:** One benefit of these conversations is to be in groups with people whose experiences and perspectives are different from your own. As a way to get to know each other a bit, please share your:
 - Name
 - Hometown
 - A few roles you have in your community (parent, business owner, elected official, teacher, retiree, student, etc.)
 - One reason you decided to spend this evening talking about the future of NH...

7:00 - 7:10 Our Task

The scope of this project is enormous, including aspects impacting our daily lives from our health and safety, to the ways we preserve and enhance our quality of life, to making sure we are making smart decisions with limited resources to support shared goals.

Information Review

Take the time to look over the information section (starting on page 8) about current trends related to issues traditionally considered in planning documents as well as issues that are connected to "livability" or quality of life. This is a lot of information and is not meant to be all-

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inclusive. While we won't be able to cover each area in depth, we will focus on each issue area with an emphasis on what participants find important to discuss.

There are pages of research on any and all of these issues in NH so we realize this can be overwhelming. For our purposes, we will be asking you "*what do you notice?*" or "*what is most important to you about this information?*" No one is expected to absorb all of this information tonight.

Take a few minutes to read and allow for clarifying questions.

7:10 – 7:30 **What do you notice? A brainstorm**

To simplify a very complicated set of topics, we will **take each focus area in turn** and ask you about each: *What do you notice? What is most important to you about the information?* We will do this briefly by area and then we will determine how best to spend our discussion time based on what you find important. (About 7 minutes for each focus area)


Focus 1: Who Lives in New Hampshire and How we are Changing:
Aging, migration, and attracting people to live or stay in the State

Focus 2: How we Use Land and the Impacts of Our Choices:
Land use, development, proximity to services, and community centers

Focus 3: Where We Live and How We Move Around:
Housing, transportation, and the infrastructure for both

Focus 4: Your Community's Natural Environment, Climate Impacts, and Energy Efficiency:
Including preservation of natural resources, energy diversity, and climate change adaptation

Focus 5: Community and Economic Vitality:
Including poverty rates, unemployment, and educational opportunity

 **Group Report:** *Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.*

7:30 - 8:00 **Patterns and Biggest Challenges**

Next, consider the framing question: *How can we make our region the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?* Given your priorities when you came in and the information we have just reviewed:

- what are the **most important topics and issues** to be discussed?
- Do you see any **patterns** across the focus areas?
- What do you see as our **biggest challenges**?

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Consider some of these key questions listed below:

- Regarding our changing population how would our policies and practices need to change if we wanted to attract the 20-something's or 30-something's to the state? How do we need to prepare communities for the ultimate retirement of NH's substantial middle-aged population in the workforce? What infrastructure will we need to support our aging population?
- Regarding land use and community centers, what is the appropriate role for local planning and zoning?
- Regarding housing and transportation, are workers satisfied with their housing and transportation options relative to their work? Are there barriers to having diverse land uses such as housing, businesses, and offices in the same location? If so, what are they? Who is most impacted by these barriers? What would change if more people of various income levels had access to a variety of modes of transportation?
- Regarding our natural resources and climate, what is needed for us to keep NH as good or better for future generations? What are the most important long range decisions we need to make as a region and a state?
- With employers looking for strong, educated labor pools, access to contemporary information (broadband) and transportation infrastructures, what needs to be done to keep us competitive economically?



Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

8:00 - 8:15

Values and Actions

Based on the key issues your group has identified, you can choose to talk more in depth about a focus area. If your group seems stuck here, it is ok to continue to identify a variety of solutions to a variety of issues. The group decides. If one or two topics are of interest, help the group first explore aspects of the issue:

- What are the issues, barriers, challenges, opportunities related to this topic?
- What actions need to be taken over the next 25 years?
- What actions would move us forward on the issues of concern to you?



Group Report: Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.

8:15-8:35


Final Priorities

Based on your group conversation, *“Are there any common thoughts or ideas in this group? If so, what do we want to say at the end of the evening about each of the focus areas? If not, what diverse points of view do we want to convey?”*


A single consensus is not expected, but if one emerges, or perhaps if the group wants to put forward two or three primary points of view, that is fine. These will represent your key recommendations and comments to the large group and to the Regional Planning Commissions.

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Your group will need to prioritize their top insights to report out to the large group and *select someone to speak*. The reporting out should include no more than **two or three** specific statements. To arrive at this point, the group should take a step back and look for *both the unique and recurrent ideas*. Group related ideas together, but don't lose track of the unique ones. The **written** small group report will convey a more complete view of your ideas (this **will not be edited or changed** and will be included directly in the report *as finalized by your group*). You will likely not have time to represent **all** of your ideas in the large group report out (two minutes!).

 **Group Report:** *What are your group's specific recommendations for making your community the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?*

If you have time...

 **RECORD:** *Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and regional planning commission Staff.*

8:40 – 8:55 **Reporting Out**

Each group will be asked to provide a VERY BRIEF summary of their most important findings, concerns or recommendations. If you are asked to speak for your group, please be brief and share what has been compiled *by your group*, including common ground and divergent views. (You will have two minutes!)

8:55 – 9:00 **Wrap up comments**

NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension Staff

- Please fill out the evaluation – it matters to us! We read these and always work to incorporate your feedback. Thank you!
- Next steps

Thank you for participating!
To keep in touch with the project go to:

<http://www.GraniteStateFuture.org>

You can access information on your region at: www.GraniteStateFuture.org

- | | |
|---|--|
| ● Central NH Regional Planning Commission | ● Southern NH Planning Commission |
| ● Lakes Region Planning Commission | ● Southwest Region Planning Commission |
| ● Nashua Regional Planning Commission | ● Strafford Regional Planning Commission |
| ● North Country Council | ● Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC |
| ● Rockingham Planning Commission | |

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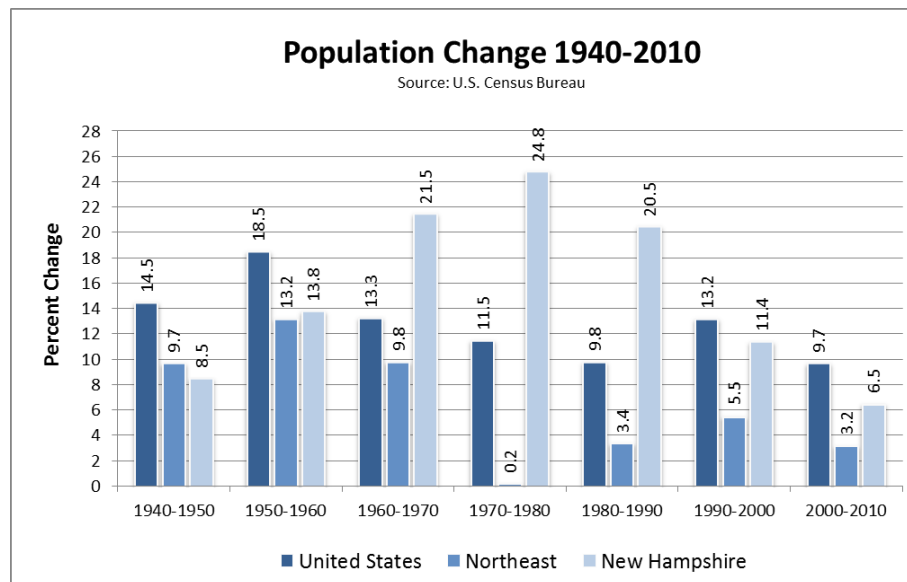
Background Information

All material in this background summary can be found on the Granite State Future website at: www.GraniteStateFuture.org. Several partners and sources contributed to the compilation of materials on this site and all full references are available there. In the following section, some materials have been adapted. They have been shortened and reformatted. This web address was sent out in advance to all who registered electronically.

The regional planning commissions (RPCs) were formed by New Hampshire's legislature in 1969 with a duty (among other things) to prepare advisory regional plans and provide an opportunity for coordination among municipalities. Each RPC is tasked with working with local communities and seeking direct input from citizens when developing the regional plan. The intent is to ensure a democratic process and to develop regional plans that reflect local voices. The plans created by each regional planning commission are advisory only, ensuring that local land use decisions remain local.

Issue 1: Who Lives in New Hampshire and How are We Changing: Aging, migration, and attracting people to live or stay in the State

- New Hampshire is still growing but not nearly at the same rates of change that were seen in the past six decades.
- New Hampshire's increase of 80,700 persons between 2000 and 2010 predominantly occurred in the first half of the decade.
- Nearly half of the population growth in the last decade was from net migration into the State: 35,400 from migration and the remaining 45,300 was natural population change (births minus deaths).

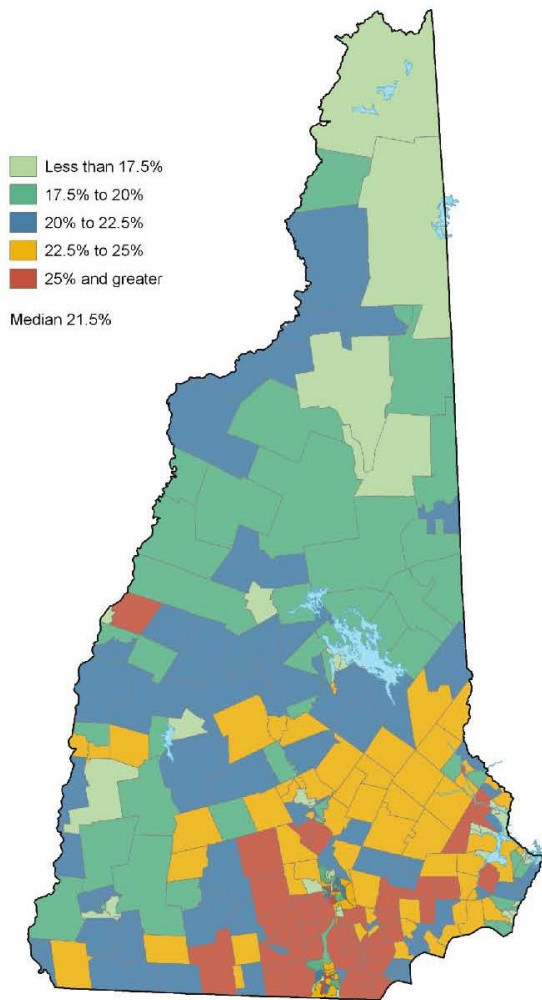


- New Hampshire's has a high proportion of its workforce near traditional retirement age, its population is growing older, and families are having fewer children.
- New Hampshire has the 5th highest median age relative to other states (2005-09 American Community Survey).

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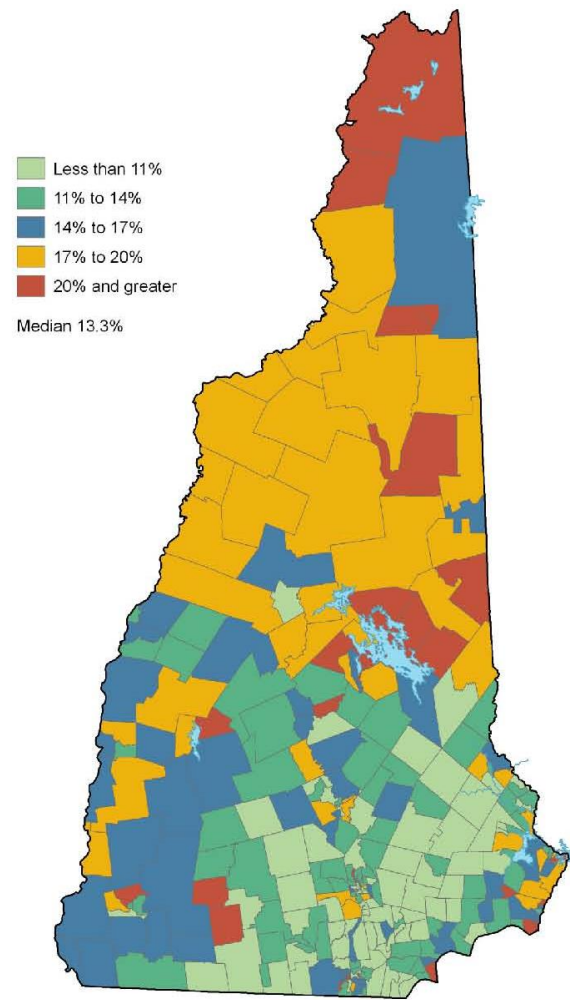
- New Hampshire is the 31st highest state for population over the age of 65 (2005-09 American Community Survey).
- Past high rates of migration into New Hampshire that shifted the state away from having a high native born population have declined, losing both residents and the State’s workforce.
- The state will soon be facing a rapid increase in the size of its oldest population cohorts.
- Between 1990 and 2000, the state experienced a net out-migration of those between 20 and 29 (>-5,000 persons) and a net in-migration of those aged 30 – 39 (>15,000).

FIGURE 12A. PERCENT OF POPULATION AGE LESS THAN 18, 2010



Source: U.S. Census 2010

FIGURE 12B. PERCENT OF POPULATION AGE 65 AND OLDER, 2010



Source: U.S. Census 2010

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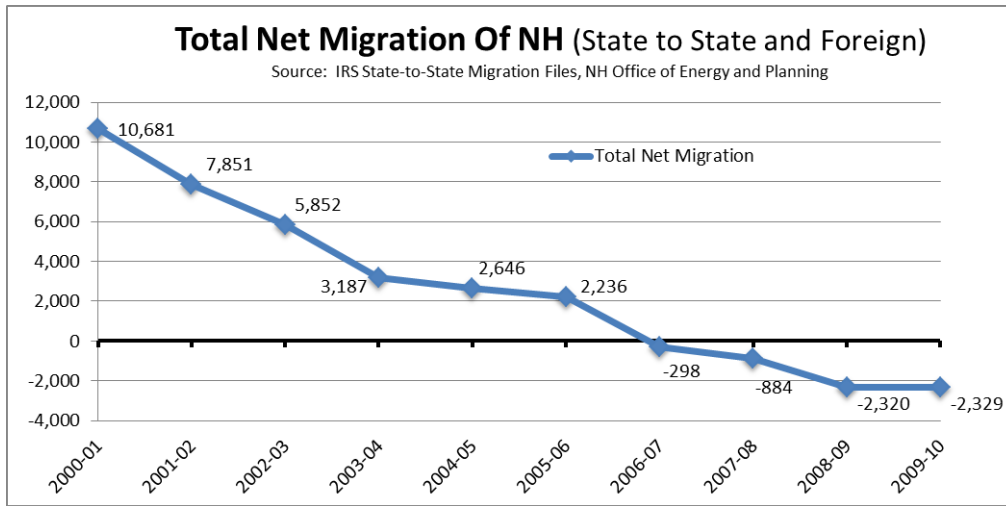
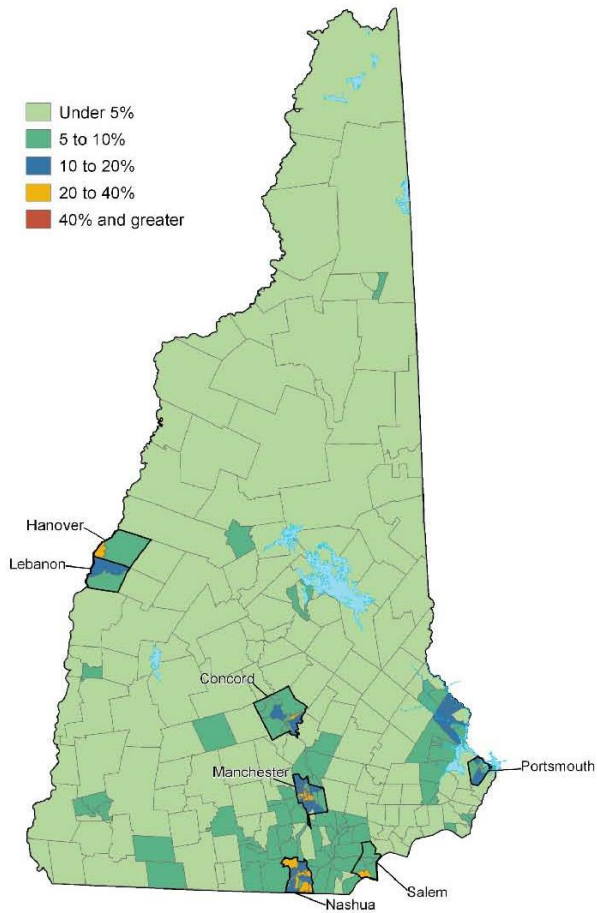
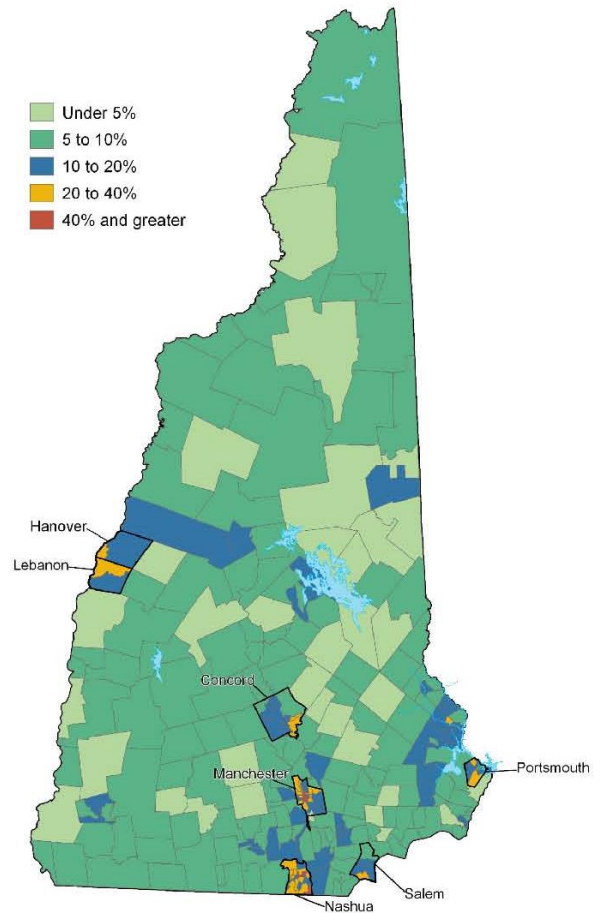


FIGURE 16. PERCENT MINORITY BY CENSUS TRACT, 2010



Source: U.S. Census 2010

FIGURE 17. PERCENT MINORITY UNDER 18 BY CENSUS TRACT, 2010



Source: U.S. Census 2010

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Issue 2: How we Use Land and the Impacts of Our Choices: Land use, development, proximity to services, and community centers

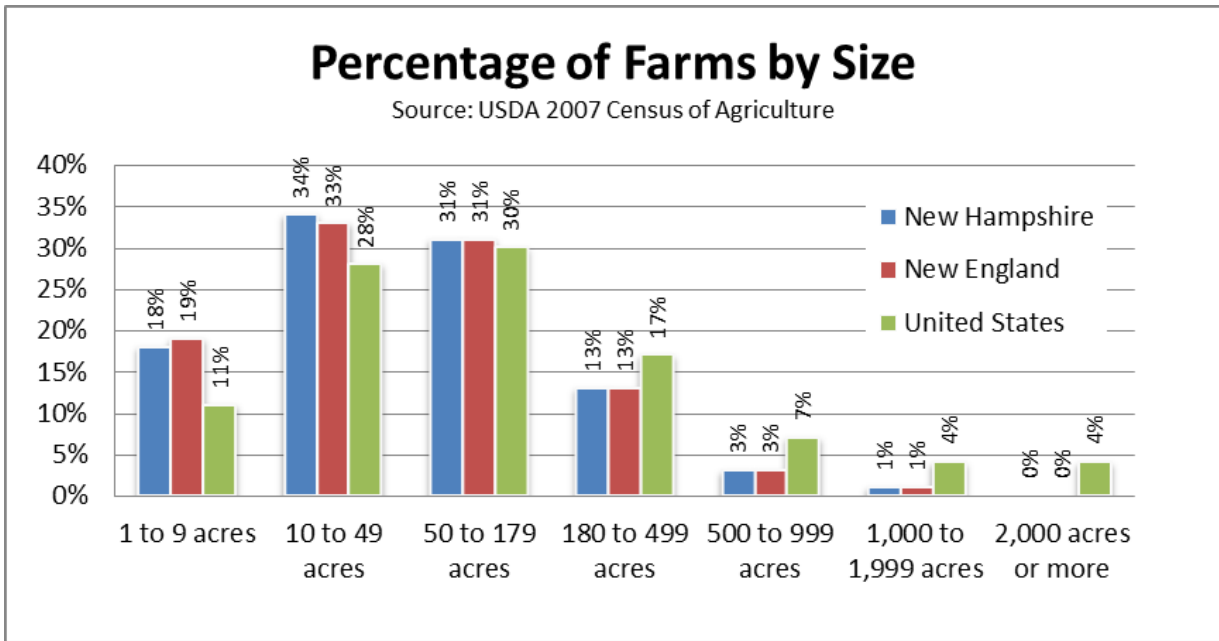
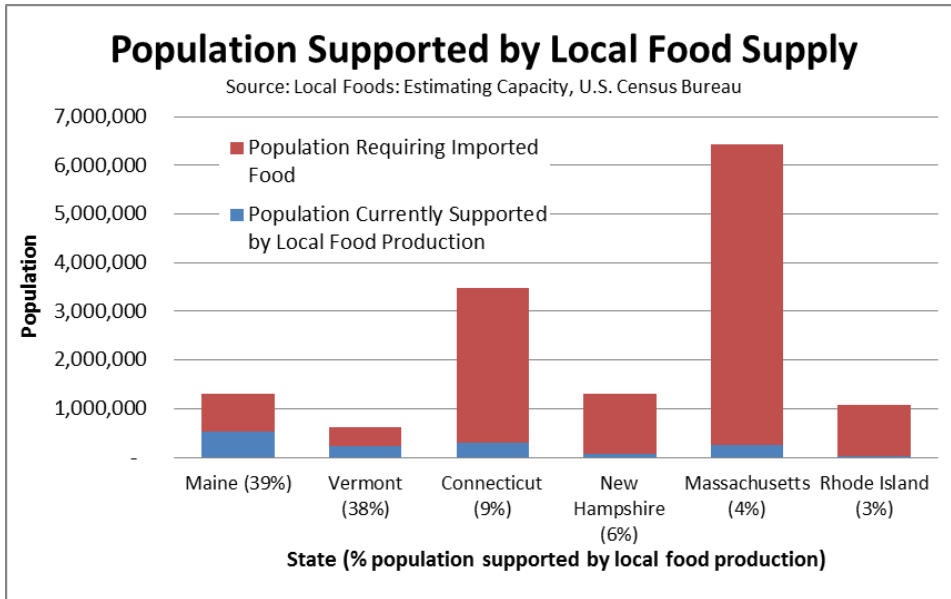
Development

- New Hampshire's regions each have a mix of development patterns including rural, suburban and urban that each present different opportunities and costs for residents and businesses.
- Proximity to full-service grocery stores varies greatly across the State requiring some to drive longer distances to purchase healthy food for their families.
- Across the State, nearly all households pay on average 50% of their income for their combined housing and transportation costs.
- Over the last 20 years New Hampshire's urbanized areas have expanded, growing from 269,874 acres in 1990 to 412,185 in 2010.
- Beyond the SE portion of the state, much of the rest of the state still contends with high property values (land prices have risen 61% since 1998), lower incomes and long drive times, which make these areas less affordable.
- From 1960 to 2010, NH's population more than doubled from about 600,000 to over 1.3 million people. This resulted in a loss of open space (approximately 17,500 acres of forestland every year) and for many communities this can represent a loss of the rural landscapes that drive NH's economy and define a sense of place.
- Most notable expansions of urbanized area corresponded with those areas that saw the greatest population gains – Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties which grew from 336,073 and 245,845 persons in 1990 respectively to 400,721 and 295,223 in 2010, and where the urbanized land areas expanded from 74,700 and 88,922 acres in 1990 respectively to 125,915 and 165,783 acres in 2010. This represented a 19% population growth and 69% increase in urbanized land area for Hillsborough County and a 20% population growth and 86% increase in urbanized land area for Rockingham County.

Open Space, Habitat, and Diverse Landscapes

- New Hampshire is the second most forested state in the nation with 84% or 5.95 million acres of its landscape forested.
- While the federal government has preserved the most acres, nearly 46% of all conservation land in the state, over the last 10 years private acquisition of land has seen the greatest increase in conserved acres.
- From 2006 to 2010 land preserved by private owners increased by 37,093 acres, a 13% increase and all preserved land increased from 1.67 to 1.72 million acres over the same time frame, a 2.9% increase.
- There is a strong and growing interest in local food production in New Hampshire and preserving local agriculture, which can ultimately contribute positively to the State's food security, environment, health, and nutrition system.

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Water

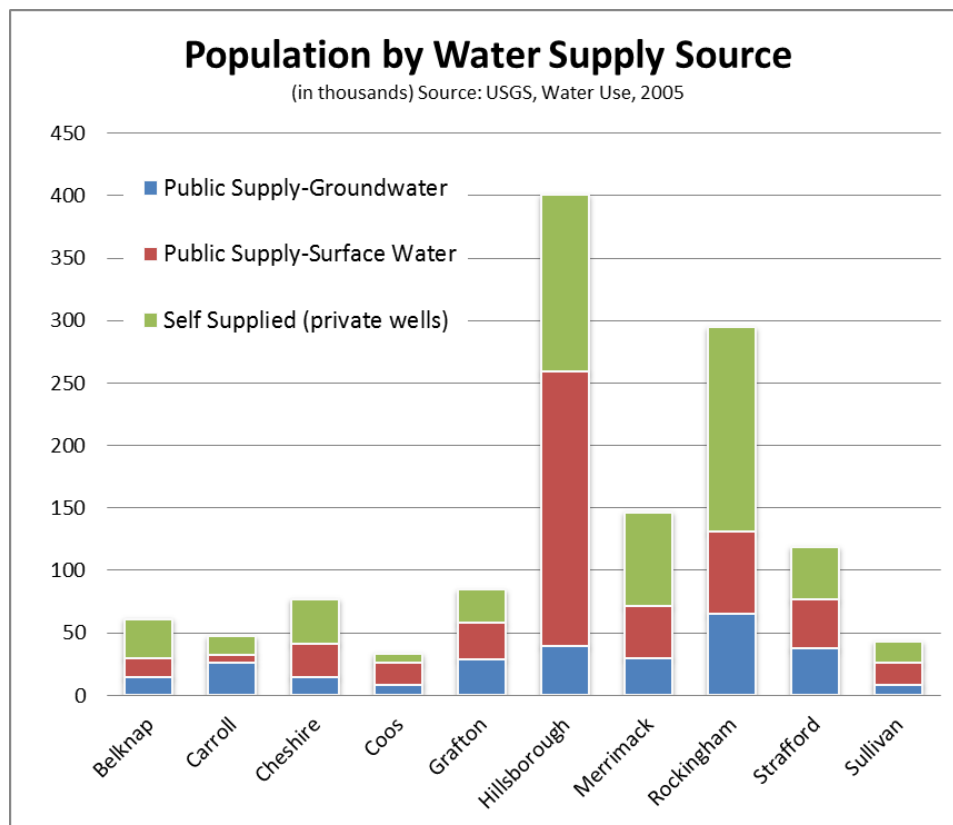
- **Vulnerable Water Supply:** Only 58% of NH residents are served by public water systems. The majority of these systems (82%) are small community systems serving fewer than 500 residents. The other 42% rely on private wells with over 4,700 new wells constructed each year. Significantly, just 10% of the most critical lands around public water supply wells and aquifers are protected.
- Compared to the national average of 14% of the population dependent on private wells, in 2005 42% of NH’s population relied on private wells, which was a 54% increase over 1985 levels in state.
- The high proportion of self-supplied water sources in NH compared to national averages may be largely attributable to the state’s more rural nature, however, within the state, the most rural county, Coos, has

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the smallest percentage of its population served by private wells (21%) and Rockingham County, the greatest share of its population supplied by private wells (54%).

- From 1985 to 2005 the amount of water withdrawn from private wells has doubled from 21.65 million gallons per day to 41.65.
- New Hampshire has 16,984 miles of rivers and streams, 164,615 acres of lakes and ponds, and nearly 1,000 lakes greater than 10 acres.
- While the State's coastline is only 18-miles long, there is a strong seacoast environment with a balance between ecology and tourism.
- Tourists are estimated to have spent \$775 along the Seacoast in 2010 (*New Hampshire Fiscal Year 2010 Tourism Satellite Account*, Plymouth State University).
- 83% of impaired water is due, in part or in whole, to stormwater runoff pollution (source: NHDES Section 305(b)/303(d) Water Quality Assessment Report)
- Clarity of NH Lakes has declined by 1% per year since 1985 (Source: NHDES Water Quality Program)
- Currently NH has a 2.3% chance of a beach advisory for poor water quality any given day (Source: NHDES Water Quality Program)
- The total sales generated by recreational uses (i.e., boating, fishing, swimming) of New Hampshire's freshwaters, and by public drinking water supplies, range from \$1.1 billion to as much as \$1.5 billion annually. (Source: NHDES Lakes program)

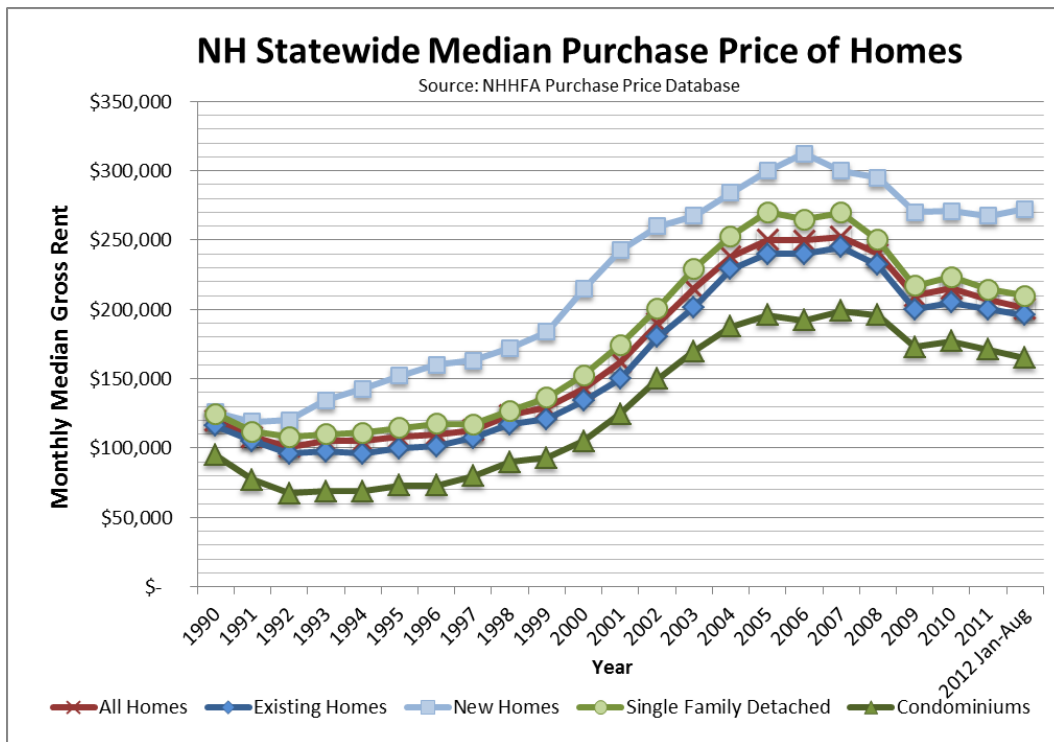


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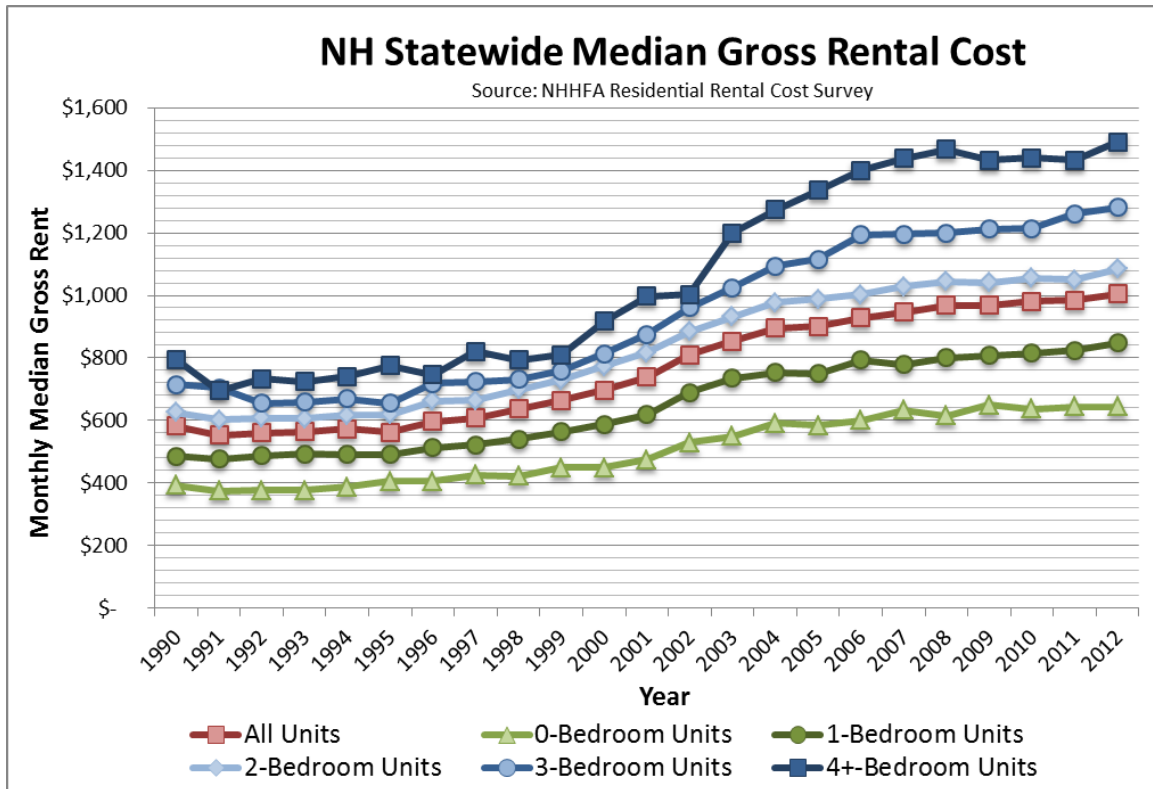
Issue 3: Where We Live and How We Move Around: Housing, transportation, and the infrastructure for both

Housing

- A variety of housing choices ensure that everyone, no matter what their income level, has convenient and affordable choices in where they live. This includes a variety of housing options and ownership types that appeal to people at any stage of life and is convenient to where they work, shop, and play.
- According to the US Census American Community Survey, NH is ranked 5th highest nationally in housing costs. In 2007, while the average housing cost as a percentage of income in the US was 37.5, NH's housing cost as a percentage of income was 40.5.
- NHHFA reported a record number of foreclosures in March of 2011, the highest monthly number recorded (543 foreclosure deeds) - an increase of 21% over foreclosure deeds recorded in March 2010.
- NH's housing stock is predominantly comprised of owner occupied single-family housing, with little diversity and little growth over the last decade.
- New Hampshire saw its largest drop in median home prices in 2009 – down to \$210,000. While there was a modest gain in 2010, a median home price of \$215,000, home prices have since continued to decline to a low of 200,900 median purchase price for January to August of 2012. (*Purchase Price Trends*, NHHFA, October 2012)



Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension



| Percent of Homes Affordable to Households Earning 80% of the Area Median Income | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| Region | Renter | Owner |
| Central NH Planning Commission | 54.0% | 11.0% |
| Lakes Region Planning Commission | 55.0% | 13.9% |
| North Country Council | 55.4% | 22.3% |
| Nashua Regional Planning Commission | 52.6% | 7.3% |
| Rockingham Planning Commission | 49.6% | 38.8% |
| Southern NH Planning Commission | 56.3% | 9.0% |
| Southwest Region Planning Commission | 52.0% | 15.0% |
| Strafford Regional Planning Commission | 59.1% | 13.9% |
| Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Com. | 49.0% | 14.0% |
| New Hampshire | 54.2% | 11.4% |

Source: HUD Community Planning and Development Maps, 2005-2009 ACS, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data

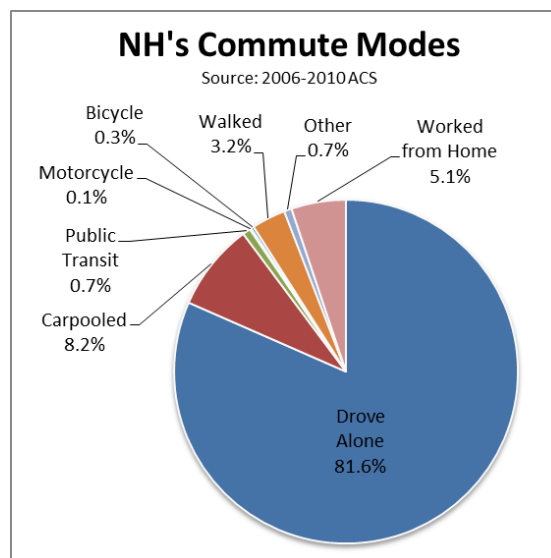
Transportation

- Transportation choices provide a number of options that help people safely and efficiently get where they need to go, whether it is by walking, driving, biking, public transportation, carpooling, or taking a train or plane. Transportation networks should make it easy to get from one place to another, and should also allow the efficient movement of goods to support the economy (commercial freight, rail, and air transport).

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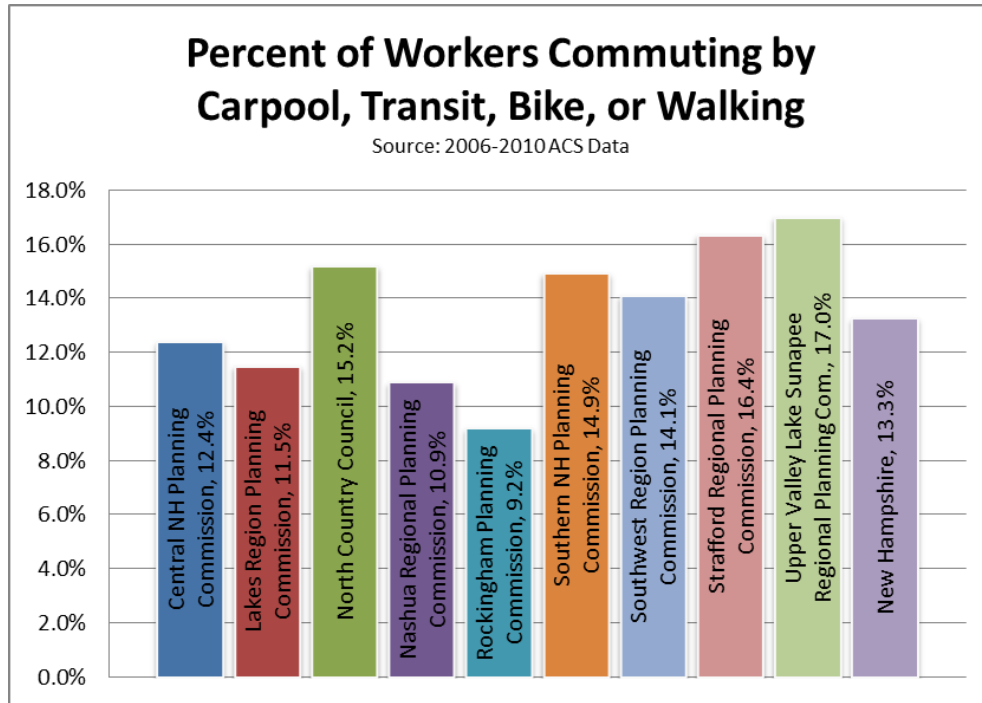


- Traffic on NH highways has increased at nearly double the rate of population growth between 1960 and 2000. Approximately 90% of commuting trips in NH are by automobile (95% in rural counties). Most of the rest is accounted for by intra-city bus transit in a few urban areas including Manchester, Nashua, Concord, and Hanover-Lebanon with comprehensive community routes and service to select locations in Portsmouth, Dover, Durham, Newington, Rochester, and Somersworth (11 out of the State’s 234 municipalities).
- Inter-city bus connections are available between major shopping centers on the seacoast, as well as, Concord, Manchester, Londonderry, Nashua, Portsmouth, and Boston and train service connecting Dover, Durham and Exeter with Portland, Maine and Boston. Otherwise, NH is lacking in comprehensive alternative transportation options and for the vast majority of residents their car is the only option.
- In 2009, 82% of all work commutes were by single occupant vehicle. In a survey conducted in 2008 by the Southwest RPC, the lowest-income households spent over 30% of their income on transportation, largely the cost of maintaining an automobile and fuel.
- New Hampshire is projected increase in the share of the population over the age of 65, and some counties more so than others. This creates an increased demand for transportation options, transit, and emergency services.
- New Hampshire’s residents are highly dependent on personal vehicles, yet despite the greater percentage of individuals driving their own vehicles to work every day, we are safer drivers.
- Drivers in New Hampshire own slightly more than the national average number of vehicles per licensed driver (1.68 compared to 1.61) however, overall the number of vehicles registered in New Hampshire has decreased over the last 5 years.
- NH has one of the lowest rates of public transit ridership in the nation (0.7%) compared to the national average of 5% and one of the highest shares of drivers who ride alone (82% compared to 76% nationally).
- Most people outlive their driving ability – men by an average of six years and women by an average of 10 years – and ability to operate personal automobiles may become limited due to declining vision and decreasing reaction times. The resulting reduction in mobility increases the demand for regional transportation services.



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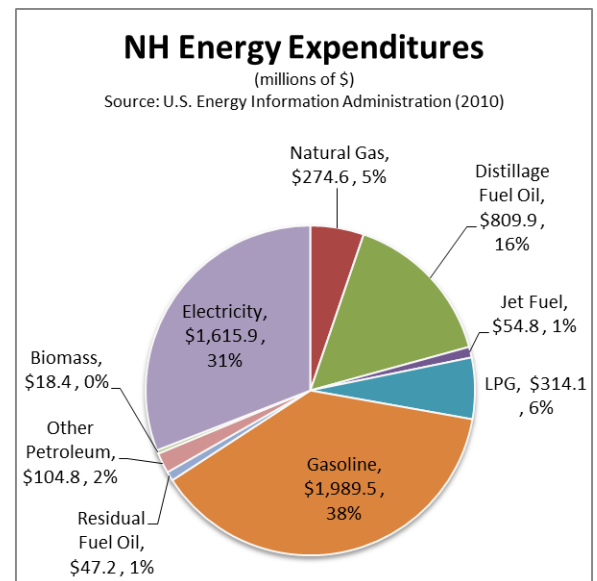
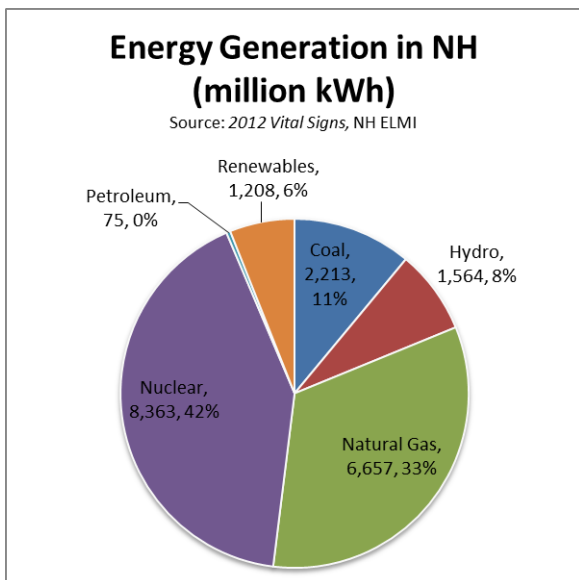
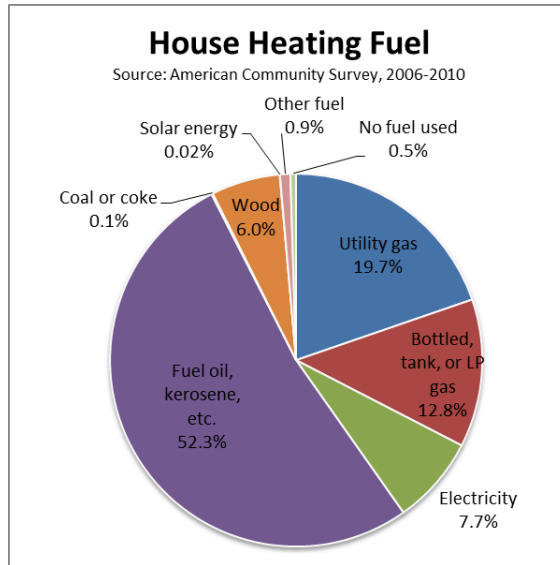
| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| State Highway Pavement in Good or Fair Condition | 2,695 miles |
| Red Listed State Bridges | 149 bridges (6.9%) |
| Rail Lines Capable of Speeds of 40mph | 103 miles |
| Airport Runway Surface Average Conditions | Good |
| Remaining Useful Life of Transit Buses | 49% of life remaining |
| 2011 Measures of State Transportation Mobility | |
| Transit Ridership | 3,415,291 riders |
| Rail Ridership | 210,231 riders |
| Air Ridership | 2,831,673 enplanements & deplanements |
| Total Freight Shipped via all Modes | 68,667,213 tons |
| Average Level of Service on Selected Highway Segments | C (.68) level of service |

Issue 4: New Hampshire’s Natural Environment, Climate Impacts, and Energy Efficiency: Including preservation of natural resources, energy diversity, and climate change adaptation

- In recent decades, New Hampshire has seen an increase in extreme storms and flooding coupled with steadily rising fuel and energy prices.
- New Hampshire depends on foreign oil and home heating can be costly, however, there are great opportunities to lower State energy dependencies and become more efficient.
- New Hampshire nationally ranks as the 44th lowest for total energy consumed per capita, 224 BTU compared to a high of 948 in Wyoming and a low of 187 in Rhode Island. (U.S. Energy Information Administration)
- New Hampshire was the eighth lowest per capita consumer of energy among the States in 2010.

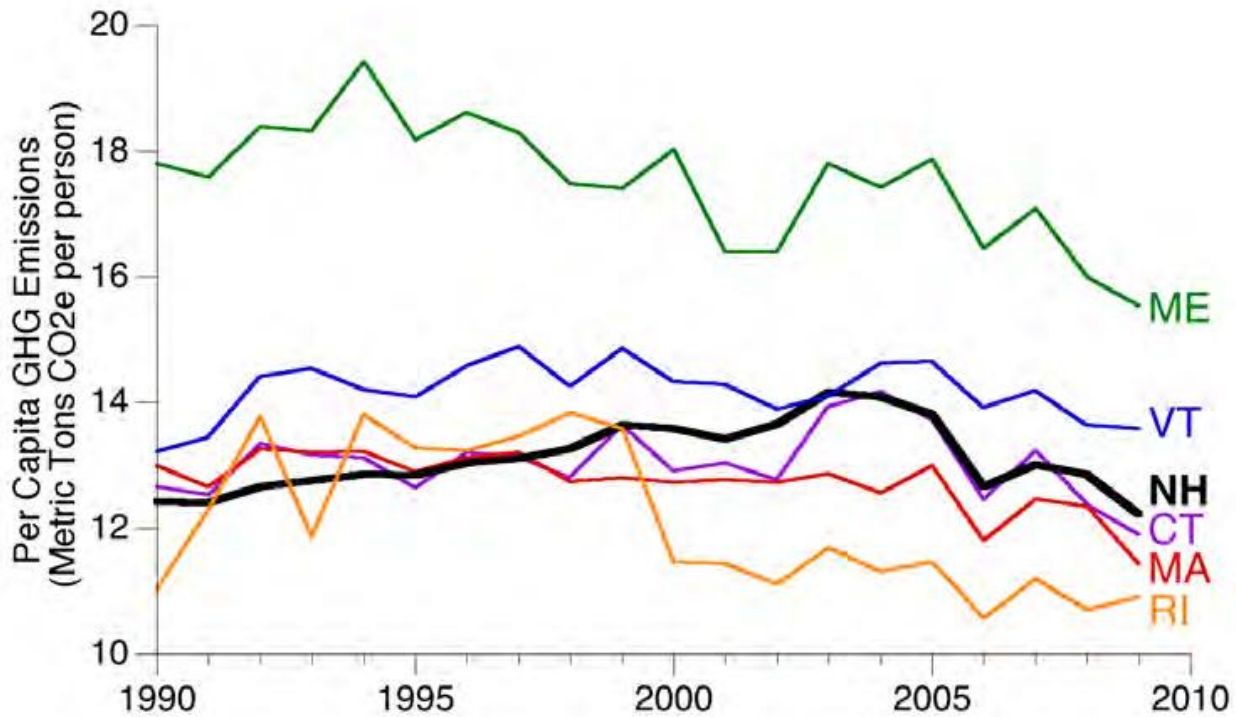
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- The transportation sector accounted for 36 percent of the State’s energy consumption in 2010. (U.S. Energy Information Administration)
- From 2005-2008, average household expenditures on thermal (heating) and electrical energy increased from \$2,823 to \$3,210 (in 2009 dollars). It then decreased in 2009 to \$2,818. Most of this was a reflection of change in the price of heating oil. (NH’s Energy, Environmental, and Economic Development Benchmark Report, NH Energy and Climate Collaborative, 2012, p. 19)



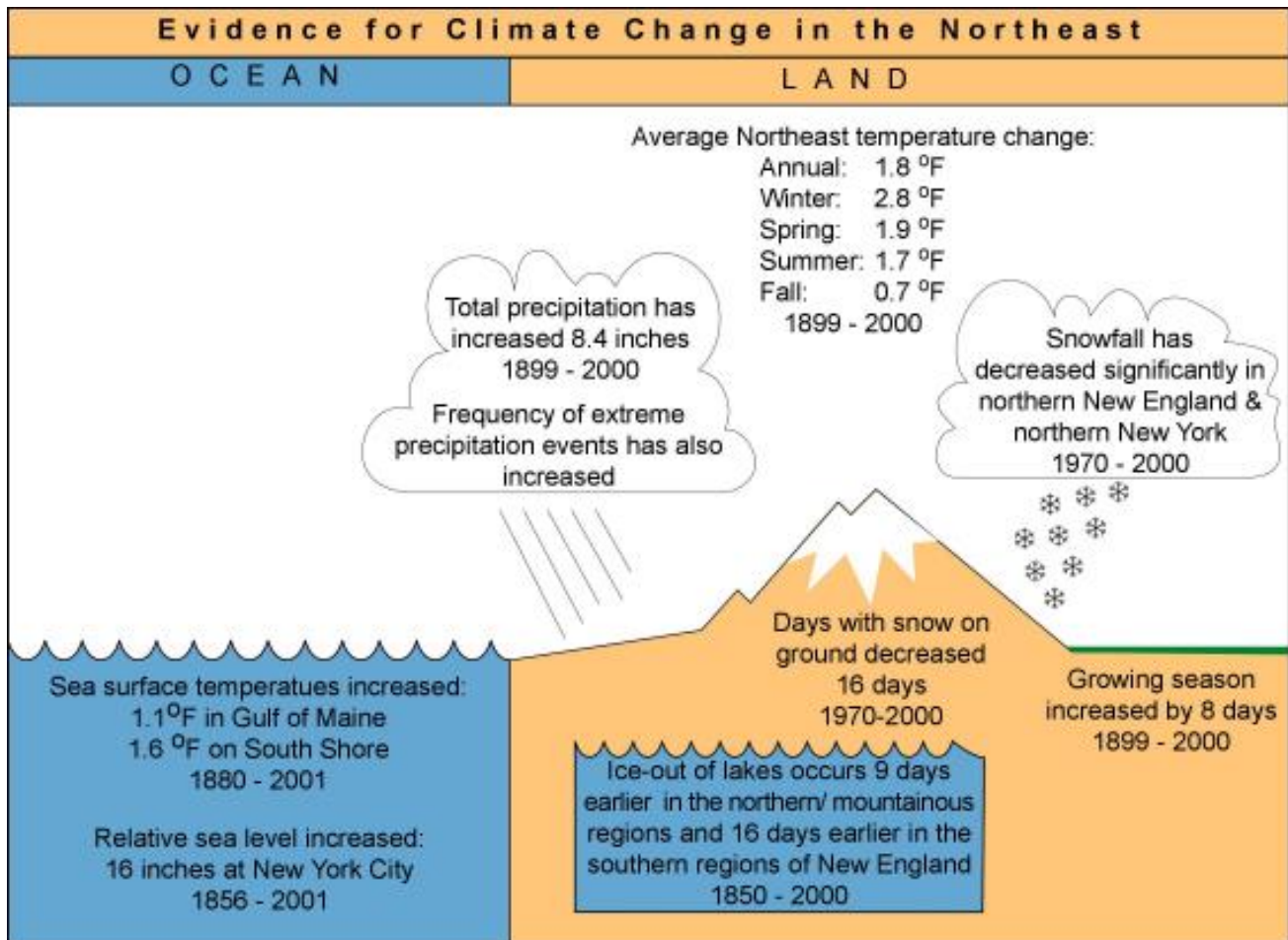
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- From 2005-2009, NH's per capita emissions of GHG from in-state energy consumption for electrical, thermal, and transportation uses decreased from 13.8 to 12.2 metric tons of CO2 emissions, mimicking trends in other New England states. (*NH's Energy, Environmental, and Economic Development Benchmark Report*, NH Energy and Climate Collaborative, 2012, p. 17)
- Changing climate and emergency management influence how we shape future land use patterns.



Source: *NH's Energy, Environmental, and Economic Development Benchmark Report*, NH Energy and Climate Collaborative, 2012.

Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*



Source: *Indicators of Climate Change in the Northeast 2005*, Clean Air – Cool Planet and Cameron Wake, *Climate Change Research Center, University of New Hampshire*.

Issue 5: Community and Economic Vitality:

Including poverty rates, unemployment, and educational opportunity

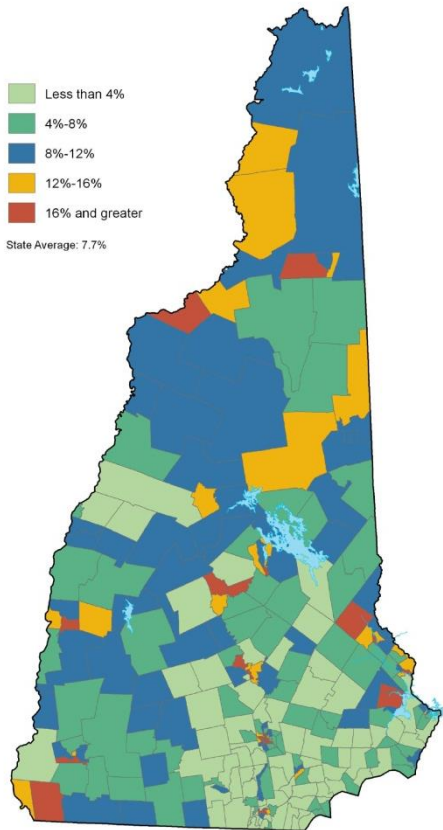
Community and Economic Vitality often means financial investment to attract and retain economic opportunity to foster community growth and ensure the highest quality of life for New Hampshire residents.

- The six most rural of NH's ten counties, comprising approximately 27% of the state's population have an average per capita income (PCI) of \$40,000, below the state average. Four of the State's counties, representing the northern and western most areas of the state, are below both the state and national average PCI.
- Access to childcare, healthcare and basic services is a critical issue for non-driving residents of the state. A NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) report estimates that while childcare accounts for a near equal share of state GDP and jobs as travel and tourism, childcare centers operate under a chronic 35% deficit, making this critical component of the state's economy tenuous for working families to identify quality and consistent childcare near employment centers.

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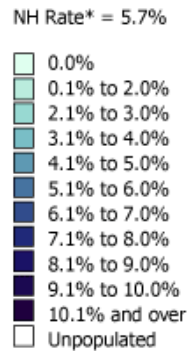
- New Hampshire residents, as a whole, have more wealth compared to the overall national averages; however, there are pockets within the state where poverty levels are rising.
- NH’s jobless rate peaked in 2009 at just over 7% (nationally peak was just over 10%)
- NH’s current unemployment rate is approximately 5.4%, still above pre-recession rate of just over 4%. The current national rate is just below 10%.
- NH’s 2011 average unemployment rate is the 4th lowest nationally – 5.4% compared to 8.9% nationally.
- NH’s 2011 per capita personal income was \$45,881, which was above the national level of \$41,560; however, below that of New England (\$51,274).
- NH’s 2011 unemployment rate was highest in Coos County (7.6%) and lowest (4.5%) in Grafton County. (Bureau of Labor Statistics)
- According to the 2009 American Community Survey, 5.5% of New Hampshire families were below the poverty rate, nearly half the national level, and its median household income was \$60,567, which was 120% of the national average.

FIGURE 21. PERCENT POVERTY



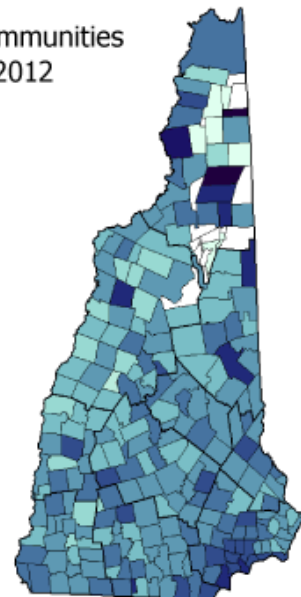
Source: U.S. Census 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Unemployment Rates* for NH Communities
Preliminary September 2012



*preliminary, not seasonally adjusted

Source: Economic & Labor Market Information Bureau, NHES
25-Oct-12
Next Scheduled Update: Nov-12



Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

- | | | | | | | |
|--------------|------------|--------|------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Berlin | Claremont | Dover | Greenland | Keene | Kingston | Laconia |
| Littleton | Manchester | Nashua | New London | Pembroke | Plymouth | |
| Other: _____ | | | | | | |

Small Group Facilitator Name: _____

Group Letter: _____

Number of people in your small group: _____

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.

2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.

4. What are your group’s specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?

5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

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| | |
|---|---|
| <p>How Did Your Dialogue Go? <i>To be administered to participants when the session(s) have ended.</i> Please be sure to answer the questions on both sides of the page. Thank you for filling out this form.</p> <p>Please be sure you leave this form in the envelope that has been provided.</p> | <p align="right">NH Listens The Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire NH.listens@unh.edu www.nhlistens.org 603-862-0692</p> |
|---|---|

NH Listens Participant Evaluation

Facilitator Name(s) _____

Your age: _____ Gender (circle): male female Occupation: _____

Employment status (circle): employed full-time employed part-time unemployed retired student

ABOUT THE GROUP PROCESS

1=Disagree strongly 2=Disagree 3=No opinion 4=Agree 5=Agree strongly

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The facilitator(s) were always prepared. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. The facilitator(s) helped the group set ground rules and stick to them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. The facilitator(s) helped us talk about different points of view. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. The facilitator(s) made sure everyone took part in the dialogue. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. The facilitator(s) helped the group work out disagreements. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. The facilitator(s) helped us come up with our own ideas for action and change. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. The facilitator(s) explained how our input fits into future decisions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANT GUIDE

1=Disagree strongly 2=Disagree 3=No opinion 4=Agree 5=Agree strongly

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8. The participant guide was easy to understand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. The information was helpful for our conversations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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ABOUT THE CONVERSATION

1=Disagree strongly 2=Disagree 3=No opinion 4=Agree 5=Agree strongly

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10. | Our group talked about the most important issues. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. | It seemed as though everyone had an equal chance to express their views. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | Our group identified the most important steps that should be taken. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | I learned new things from other members of my group. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. | The conversation helped me to become better informed about the issues. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | Because of this conversation, I had a better understanding of people who I disagree with and their opinions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. | The time allotted for the session(s) were (circle one): Not enough time Just the right amount of time Too much time | | | | | |

YOUR OVERALL ASSESSMENT

1=Disagree strongly 2=Disagree 3=No opinion 4=Agree 5=Agree strongly

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|-----|----|---|
| 17. | I am glad I participated in these community conversations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. | I would attend another community conversation on this or a different topic. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. | What would you have changed about this event to make it better? | | | | | |
| 20. | Would you be willing to be contacted for a future one-on-one or phone interview? | | | Yes | No | |

If yes, please provide name and contact information:

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

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Claremont, NH February 26, 2013

- A main theme of interconnectedness emerged – there seemed to be a sentiment that all of the issues discussed over the course of the evening were related to one another and that it would be difficult to address one issue without simultaneously addressing another.
- Growing senior population – With population getting older, both tax revenue base and growth of economy could be slowed. The value of trying to attract younger, educated, skilled workers to the region was common among groups.
- All groups mentioned public transportation as a concern – growing senior population in the Upper Valley region means that more will be using public transport. Concern that what already exists is not used frequently enough. Increasing public awareness on this topic may help to increase use. Groups were mixed on what kinds of alternative programs to implement and whether/how to fund them.
- Concern emerged over access to transportation – for both tourists and businesses, people need to be able to easily get where they want to go.
- Integration and partnerships were also mentioned by all groups. Some mentioned that the public and private sector need to be able to partner up more to allow businesses to feel involved in their local community (allowing them to keep/train local workers).
- Trained workforce – Do not want just any kind of jobs coming to region. Want jobs where skilled labor is required. Concern over whether enough is being done within region to get workers trained to hold skilled labor jobs which exist or could exist. Businesses may choose to not come to region due to lack of trained workforce.
- Need to address supporting struggling families with employment opportunities, relevant education, and quality childcare.
- Education – Some groups chose to mention cost of university system as a factor in out-migration of young people. Some groups also mentioned quality of local schools as important, people deciding to move to Upper Valley may choose their community based partly on quality of schools.
- Housing – Related to goal of attracting workers to the region. The only way to ensure that people move to and stay in the Upper Valley is to provide affordable and accessible housing.
- Infrastructure – Similar to housing, some groups suggested that one way to attract people and businesses to the region is to upgrade older infrastructure which may be in need of revitalization.
- Land/Natural Beauty – All seem to agree that the natural beauty of the region is part of what makes it great. Must be able to strike balance between use and development of land to boost economy while also preserving natural beauty. Some participants expressed concerns that private property rights be respected and preserved as decisions are made about land use practices.

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- Regardless of the issue there were consistent struggles with whether and how to fund improvements.

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Regional Themes

Dover, NH March 4, 2013

- Groups addressed the fact that the population of the state is one of the oldest in the nation and getting older – The causes for this demographic change were debated.
- Jobs were a widely addressed issue – Concern over a growing disconnect between jobs requiring specific skills and available training for those skills. Some communities in Strafford County appear to have very healthy job statistics while others appear to be doing quite poorly – highlights fact that NH job data as a whole does not tell the entire story. Some mentioned connecting local businesses with community as a way to help growth.
- Education is key to job growth – Concern over lack of state support for university system as well as a lack of training available for people who choose to not pursue four-year degree.
- Concern over lack of state support for local schools and state standards for public education. Lack of adequate civics education was a prominent topic.
- Workforce housing was also addressed as part of job growth – People are more likely to take jobs in communities where they are able to find affordable housing. It was noted by some that working close to home also allows people to become more active participants in their own communities.
- Taxes are directly connected to the problem of affordable housing – Many groups had participants mention that their property taxes had gone up significantly over the last several years. What groups could not seem to agree on was how to fix this problem – some suggested broad-based taxes, some gambling and some that any changes to revenue structure may slow economic development.
- Budget cuts were also a concern, groups pointed out that NH is a very wealthy state yet we continue to hear about items in the budget being cut. This is connected to the desire to find some kind of alternate revenue structure.
- Groups mentioned lack of long-term thinking by town planners leading to disjointed development.
- Concern over a lack of accessibility (or a lack of citizen education on how to access) public officials/decision makers. Agreement that more informed/engaged citizenry leads to better outcomes.
- Public transportation – While some areas (specifically Dover/Durham and nearby towns served by Wildcat Transit/COAST) have a strong system of buses, other parts of the county do not – these are also the more rural parts of the county. With an aging population, ability to get to major commercial centers through public transportation is a growing concern. Stigma of public transportation remains a concern, especially by older generations.
- On the subject of Environmental health/sustainability, there was agreement that energy use needs to become diversified. Communities need to better plan with multiuse facilities. More open biking/walking paths to connect communities. EPA was quality standards were of concern to many.

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- New infrastructure will help grow economy and, with education and the right amount of support, this infrastructure can be environmentally sound.
- Health care – General agreement that health care needs to be affordable for individuals and businesses, but little agreement on how to achieve this end.

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Regional Themes

Plymouth, NH March 14, 2013

This project asks us all to consider the critical question: How should we plan for the future? What core considerations should be the basis of planning for a thriving future? UNH Cooperative Extension and NH Listens have been asked by NH's nine regional planning commissions to design and host an opportunity for neighbors to talk with neighbors to identify local assets, local needs, and ways to effectively use limited government resources. Our work focuses on the core principles of traditional settlement patterns; housing choices; transportation choices; natural resources; community and economic vitality; climate change and energy efficiency.

- Groups noted that the population in the state is changing (especially in the northern part of the state). Younger people seem to be leaving and the state's population is getting older. This is most pronounced in the northern part of the state. Many felt that this trend needed to be addressed in some way. Some groups also noted the rather homogeneous population of the state.
- Some concern was expressed over the involvement of the federal government (HUD) in a local process.
- Some groups talked about lack of community centers/gathering places within communities. While some saw this as a problem others felt the lack of gathering places was reflective of a lack of demand.
- Many felt that current zoning laws are more restrictive than they need to be. There was concern that zoning can encourage a rural sprawl which is becoming less viable.
- Farming land is going away – Difficult growing conditions and farmers lack of ability to make a normal living is contributing to a loss of local food production. More support for smaller farmers is needed.
- Lack of access to essential services – For example there are hospitals in the Plymouth area but a person with cancer would be forced to go as far as Hanover.
- Cars are essential to getting around in area. While there is some disagreement on the need for public transportation, cars remain the only way for people to get around in rural areas. Many felt that more modes of transportation are needed.
- Large disparity in housing. Wealthier (often seasonal) property owners contribute high taxes to their towns while poorer people are often left with run-down, sub-standard housing which can still be quite expensive. Housing needs to be affordable and attractive for all demographics.
- Tourism is currently a large part of the economy and this can be very inconsistent from

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year to year and season to season. This helps to drive the need for a more local-based economy (i.e. more local businesses)

- Carbon-based energy is not sustainable in the long-term but it is currently very difficult and expensive to produce alternative forms of energy. Not complete agreement on whether fossil fuels are driving global warming but an agreement that region's climate is changing.
- Natural beauty of area must be preserved but not at the expense of private property.
- Communication needs to be updated – internet access for all is a key to economic development.
- Educational opportunities are crucial – Students must not be taught to cater to a test but instead to be able to develop critical skills which will help them succeed in professional world.
- Childcare is critical – It helps keep kids active and out of trouble.
- Businesses need to be given opportunity to grow – Lower barriers to starting and maintaining a business
- Agreement that we cannot ignore one segment of population to help benefit another – We can't focus all on helping young people while ignoring the elderly and vice versa.
- Collaboration is key – Communities/people need to work together to find solutions rather than separately.

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Regional Themes

Keene, NH April 2, 2013

This project asks us all to consider the critical question: How should we plan for the future? What core considerations should be the basis of planning for a thriving future? UNH Cooperative Extension and NH Listens have been asked by NH's nine regional planning commissions to design and host an opportunity for neighbors to talk with neighbors to identify local assets, local needs, and ways to effectively use limited government resources. Our work focuses on the core principles of traditional settlement patterns; housing choices; transportation choices; natural resources; community and economic vitality; climate change and energy efficiency.

- One thing that all groups seemed to notice was that the state's population is getting older. This was attributed to various things – some mentioned a loss of young people who leave the state to look for job opportunities in other areas and others mentioned an increase in retirees moving to the state who feel that the tax structure is to their advantage.
- One suggested way to keep young people in the state is to create greater access to recreational activities.
- It was noticed that NH is slowly and steadily becoming more diverse racially and ethnically.
- Participants connected access to services and transportation. While some felt that the Monadnock region offers more essential services than other regions of the state there is still the perception that the farther away from Keene one goes, the less likely they are to find services. This is compounded by a lack of alternative transportation options. If one does not own a car it is very difficult to reach these essential services.
- Cost of housing was thought to be another barrier to young people settling in NH. High property taxes drive costs up. This also creates a squeeze for many middle-income families.
- Participants noted that the state's reliance on the property tax for revenue creates many problems. They noted that it is hard to incentivize homeowners to make improvements to their property, it prices young people out of housing, and it can squeeze the elderly out of their homes.
- In this group, there was a fair amount of agreement that we are over-reliant on a single form of tax (Keene's property taxes are the 4th highest in the state). Groups mentioned the idea of attempting to reform the state's tax structure, although no specific recommendations were made.
- Some participants discussed expanding housing options and increasing economic growth by repurposing buildings and encouraging mixed use of buildings. Some pointed to zoning laws as a barrier to this.
- People are pleased that the region has done work to preserve the natural beauty of the environment but concerns still persist about pollution from things like stormwater runoff.

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- Climate is also an issue – Storms have become more frequent and severe in recent years. State provides limited incentive for people to create and use alternative energy.
- Infrastructure is a concern. There are many red-listed bridges and roads in dire need of repair in the region. Very little money to be able to do this and many were advocating for more support from the state in this area.
- Education is varied across the region and state. Some districts are well funded and others are not. Participants were concerned about this gap.
- One of the keys to education is to get workers trained for jobs that both do and do not require a college degree. Creating partnerships between schools and businesses is one way to accomplish this.
- Accessible and effective government. Some groups mentioned that they felt Cheshire County does not have the same kind of voice in Concord that other regions have. One suggested way to fix this is to reach out to elected officials as often as possible.
- Many groups pointed to a need for increased collaboration between local, state and federal officials.
- Sense of community is important. Need to teach younger generation how to be involved with where they live.

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Regional Themes

Manchester, NH April 4, 2013

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- Concern was expressed by some participants over the aging of the state's population. Some were not concerned with this issue and others thought that this was not something unique to New Hampshire.
- Some mentioned the fact that Manchester is a designated refugee resettlement city and wondered whether the city has the resources to serve in this capacity.
- Some took issue to the fact that the Granite State Future project is funded through a HUD grant and wondered if this made the entire project subservient to the federal government.
- Many participants expressed the need to preserve private property rights.
- While some forest land has been lost across the state, New Hampshire remains highly forested and participants seemed to appreciate this fact. Still, the southern part of the state has seen a much greater loss of "open space" than other parts of the state. One suggested solution to the loss of open space is reuse of space versus building new (such as the re-purposing of the Manchester mills).
- Land conservation – Some liked the fact that land was being bought to be preserved while others opposed the idea of groups buying land for conservation. Some perceived conservation as "giving land to the government."
- Housing was often mentioned as important. Some mentioned that people have a hard time finding jobs close to where they work. Others noted that rental costs did not go down during recent economic downturn and that something needs to be done to address housing costs. There were also some who did not feel that housing costs were a big concern.
- Some did not like the idea of zoning laws – felt such laws are unnecessary.
- Participants expressed a range of views on public transportation. Some felt that more was needed, especially in the Manchester area. Others felt that the public transportation currently in place does not have a high volume of riders and should not be supported.
- Some wanted to see increased energy efficiency in homes – this support was connected to a desire to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. Others did not like specific proposals, such as the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.
- There was a general sentiment that public schools were too crowded and had standards which were too low.

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- Some participants were critical higher education and felt it was inadequately training students for jobs in the current economy.
- While poverty rates tend to go with the economy, some noted that poverty tends to be consistent between generations. Some wonder what can be done to break this poverty cycle of “government dependence.”
- Some felt that only low paying jobs were available causing employment to be very difficult.
- Small businesses were seen as needing fewer restrictions to allow them to grow. Small businesses were seen as engines for economic growth and many supported an ease in regulations and taxes.
- It was noted that lower taxes would allow businesses to come into the state and create higher wage jobs.
- An overall concern over available resources came up – there are lots of things that were mentioned by participants but the state has relatively limited resources. Priorities will have to be established and choices will have to be made.

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Regional Themes

Berlin, NH April 9, 2013

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- While it was noted that the population of the area was growing older and decreasing, not all felt that this was a bad thing. Some noted that they appreciated population who were born/raised in the North Country as it allows a more “local” feel to the area.
- A large disabled population was noted by some.
- There is a lot of concern that issues of the North Country do not receive enough attention in Concord.
- Young people are leaving the area and not coming back. Some expressed concern that this was causing a great “brain drain” in the area. There must be a goal of bringing young people back to the region after they leave for college.
- There is higher poverty in the North Country than in other parts of the state – one reason for this is a lack of good paying jobs. Another reason is the high cost of living in the area due to longer drive times (low access to essential services) and high property tax rates.
- Participants were mixed on land use and zoning. A strong desire exists to preserve the “character” of the North Country. While development is necessary at times, people do not want to harm the overall beauty of the area.
- Tourism is recognized as a major economic force in the region and people are concerned over the impact over the Northern Pass project.
- Some felt that individual property rights should not be intruded upon in any way. Others noted the appearance of more windmills and felt this was an example of a choice by a property owner affecting everyone.
- There is a concern over a lack of accessible transportation. People have limited access to essential services like grocery stores and hospitals/medical. This severely limits choices. Public transportation is very limited. It was also noted that lack railroad options for shipping is an example of infrastructure development that would bring more businesses

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to the North Country.

- Concerns were expressed over available housing. There are waiting lists for many housing units. Some properties need to be torn down as they have been abandoned and become hubs for crime/undesirable activity. Some took exception to the idea of cluster housing.
- While residents of the North Country use proportionately more gas than in other regions (thus paying a lot in gas taxes) they do not receive greater road maintenance funding from the state.
- People wanted lower, more efficient energy options. One suggestion was increase in the use of pellet stoves. People seem to support solar energy options. Concern over effectiveness of wind power.
- Some mentioned that they liked the increase in recycling efforts in communities such as Berlin, Lancaster and Littleton.

(more...)

- Many people agreed that unemployment was one of the biggest challenges in the region. People also concerned that jobs which are available and becoming available are low-paying service sector jobs.
- There is a concern that the only way to implement anything suggested in this project is through taxes – some do not want to see taxes go up at all.
- White Mountain Community College is the lone source of higher education in the region and more must be done to support it.
- Some wanted to see less regulation on small businesses as they are engines of economic growth.
- Internet access and cell phone access must become widespread in the region. Very difficult to develop in modern economy without these things.
- Affordable health care was also cited as an important part of economic growth.

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Pembroke Regional Themes

Pembroke, NH April 16, 2013

This project asks us all to consider the critical question: How should we plan for the future? What core considerations should be the basis of planning for a thriving future? UNH Cooperative Extension and NH Listens have been asked by NH's nine regional planning commissions to design and host an opportunity for neighbors to talk with neighbors to identify local assets, local needs, and ways to effectively use limited government resources. Our work focuses on the core principles of traditional settlement patterns; housing choices; transportation choices; natural resources; community and economic vitality; climate change and energy efficiency.

- There is a general agreement that the population of the state is getting older. Some question whether this is part of a greater national trend or whether this is something more unique to New Hampshire.
- Most groups tended to agree that there needed to be something done to reduce the property tax burden. However, there was little agreement on any possible solutions.
- It is necessary to have a car to move around in the area. Some felt that this signaled a need for greater access to public transportation while others felt that friends, family and the private sector could take care of these needs. It was generally agreed that something had to be done to allow the growing elderly population to maintain mobility.
- All agreed that part of what makes New Hampshire great is the amount of open space in the state. While economic development is important, it needs to be done in balance with maintaining open space.
- Some participants questioned the validity of the information included in the discussion guide.
- Some felt that regulation has hampered the ability to grow a business. This in turn leads to less hiring and could be contributing to the state's loss of young people.
- Preservation of private land and water rights was something which was emphasized by a few participants.
- Poverty is slowly creeping up in the state and something needs to be done to change that.
- Community colleges are important and need to be supported. If these schools can work with area businesses to help train workers for future jobs the entire economy of the region could benefit.
- Affordable housing was also mentioned as something which could attract workers and benefit the local economy. Some expressed concern over the emphasis of "cluster housing."
- Energy use was brought up in groups. Some groups were pleased with New Hampshire's relatively low energy use statistic and others pointed to high electrical bills and few incentives for homeowners to make their homes more energy efficient.
- There was some disagreement on climate change and its potential causes and impacts. This ranged from a belief in man-made climate change to a denial of climate change.
- Many people pointed to deterioration of bridges and road quality. Several barriers exist to fixing these problems. These projects may cost significant amounts of money and will only cost more if they are put off until later. Additionally, if the projects are approved, local businesses may suffer from redirected traffic.
- The private sector has a role in the development of communities. While some wanted to get the

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government entirely out of community development, all could agree that the public and private sector needed to be able to work together for communities.

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Regional Themes

Nashua, NH April 30, 2013

This project asks us all to consider the critical question: How should we plan for the future? What core considerations should be the basis of planning for a thriving future? UNH Cooperative Extension and NH Listens have been asked by NH's nine regional planning commissions to design and host an opportunity for neighbors to talk with neighbors to identify local assets, local needs, and ways to effectively use limited government resources. Our work focuses on the core principles of traditional settlement patterns; housing choices; transportation choices; natural resources; community and economic vitality; climate change and energy efficiency.

- The most widely discussed topics include conversation about jobs and economic development in Nashua, and a discussion of New Hampshire's people and populations, with a particular emphasis on the trend of young people moving out of the state while aging populations stay put or migrate into the state.
- Other topics that many groups, though not all, focused on include transportation, affordable housing, city zoning and planning, the cost of higher education, taxes and spending, the environment, and making Nashua an attractive place for people to live, work, and enjoy recreationally.
- All of the groups in the conversation commented in some way about New Hampshire's changing populations. The particular focus and concern was the trend of young people leaving the state while elderly populations migrated in or stayed put.
- All the groups discussed the trend of young people leaving the community. Four out of six groups expressed interest in how Nashua could retain or attract youth to the community. Several groups (3/6) mentioned that the cost of higher education and subsequent debt was a challenge for young people.
- All of the groups took time to discuss how to best support aging populations in Nashua. In particular, there was concern from groups (3/6) that senior housing was too far away from the town and that seniors would not be able to access resources nearby.
- Four of six groups more broadly discussed the need for healthcare, mental healthcare, and child care for disadvantaged populations. Access to mental health was a concern for half (3/6) of the groups.
- All six groups discussed the need for increased jobs and further economic development. Five out of the six groups commented on the need for business development, and there were discussions about how this development could best be carried out. Half of the groups (3/6) expressed a concern that there were not enough jobs in New Hampshire and as a result Nashua was a bedroom community for commuters to Massachusetts.
- The majority of groups (5/6) spent some time discussing transportation in the Nashua area. There was an interest in both railways and bus systems, and one group commented also on the use of bicycles. In particular, groups (4/6) commented on the need for more effective transportation between regional cities such as Concord, Manchester, and Boston.
- Many groups (4/6) commented on Nashua's downtown and city layout. Several groups (3/6) expressed concern there was too much distance between residential areas and where people worked and shopped.
- Four out of six groups discussed a lack of affordable housing in the Nashua area. There was a discussion on the other problems this created for low-income and marginalized groups. One group commented that the town was segregated by income.

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- The majority of groups (5/6) discussed concerns about the environment. Half the groups were concerned in some way about water. The conversation about water ranged from discussion of lack of water quality to a water shortage.
- Almost all the groups (5/6) had a conversation about how Nashua could become an attractive place to live, work, and enjoy. There was discussion on how to encourage and strengthen Nashua's local identity and charm.

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Regional Themes

Laconia, NH May 7, 2013

This project asks us all to consider the critical question: How should we plan for the future? What core considerations should be the basis of planning for a thriving future? UNH Cooperative Extension and NH Listens have been asked by NH's nine regional planning commissions to design and host an opportunity for neighbors to talk with neighbors to identify local assets, local needs, and ways to effectively use limited government resources. Our work focuses on the core principles of traditional settlement patterns; housing choices; transportation choices; natural resources; community and economic vitality; climate change and energy efficiency.

State Populations

- The majority of groups (6/8) discussed the issue of migration from the state of New Hampshire. This conversation centered mostly on young people leaving the state, either for more affordable higher education or for job opportunities.
- Three out of eight groups also discussed the issue of a decline in school age children. Several groups (3/8) commented on an influx of immigrant and refugee populations.
- Almost all of the groups (7/8) spent time discussing the “greying” of New Hampshire as a state. As elderly populations increase, groups questioned where resources for aging populations would come from – in particular there was a concern about healthcare, transportation, and care for the elderly. Several groups expressed concern about crime and drug and alcohol use in their communities.

Jobs and Economic Development

- The majority of groups (7/8) commented on the need for greater economic development and job opportunities. Several groups commented that in particular there was a lack of jobs for young people. Two groups suggested that the regional area focus on attracting manufacturing opportunities.
- Several groups commented on a lack of job opportunities and industry necessary to attract and keep individuals in the community. Some groups discussed the phenomenon of individuals who live in the community and work elsewhere, or individuals who work in the community but live elsewhere.
- Many groups recommended that the regional area focus on educational quality and affordability as a means of creating future job opportunities.
- Several groups (3/8) commented on a lack of internet availability and issues exacerbated by a digital divide in communities.
- Several groups commented on the potential for tourism as a pathway of economic development, though it was made clear that a balance between industry and the regional area's local rural character was crucial.
- Three groups discussed tax issues – some claiming that the taxes were too high, some that the

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taxes were not high enough.

- Two groups expressed concern about regulation and restrictions from the government or local authorities.
- Several groups commented on the need for strategic planning of how land and community spaces would be used and zoned.
- Several groups commented on the need to create access to local resources without a car and to create town centers with various support systems.
- Several groups placed value on maintaining the regional area's rural character in the face of economic development.
- Several groups discussed the complexity of the issue of land conservation.

Housing and Transportation

- Housing availability and affordability was a widely discussed subject at the Laconia Granite State Future event. Five groups expressed concerns over a lack of affordable housing in the regional area. Two groups commented on the high cost of renting housing. Three groups spent time discussing the pros and cons of subsidized housing such as Section 8 housing. Two groups discussed an increase in homeless populations.
- Two groups expressed a concern over a lack of walkability from residential areas to local businesses and resources.
- All of the groups spent time discussing transportation in the regional area. Four groups expressed concern that the current transportation structure was not affordable. Four groups expressed concern that the transportation was of poor quality and that individuals who could not access transportation faced further challenges such as access to jobs and healthcare. Three groups felt that it was challenging to access non-automobile forms of transportation. Two groups talked about the need for a broader public transportation system that connected the regional area to other cities and towns in the state.

Environmental Issues

- Five groups discussed issues related to water quality. These issues ranged from septic systems to commercial extraction of water to infrastructural upgrades. One group felt that there were differences in water quality from town to town in the regional area.
- Five groups discussed the relationship between water such as lakes and ponds and tourism.
- Several groups discussed ways to support local agriculture. Two groups expressed concerns over keeping and maintaining clean forests.
- Three groups discussed issues related to climate change, though there was disagreement about the roots of this trend.
- The majority of groups (6/8) spent time discussing current and alternative forms of energy and fuel. There was a desire to have more strategic and extended conversations about steps for the

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future in relation to energy and fuel cost and conservation. Oil, wind power, and solar energy were all discussed, with a particular focus on wind power.

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Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*



Kingston, NH May 14, 2013

This project asks us all to consider the critical question: How should we plan for the future? What core considerations should be the basis of planning for a thriving future? UNH Cooperative Extension and NH Listens have been asked by NH's nine regional planning commissions to design and host an opportunity for neighbors to talk with neighbors to identify local assets, local needs, and ways to effectively use limited government resources. Our work focuses on the core principles of traditional settlement patterns; housing choices; transportation choices; natural resources; community and economic vitality; climate change and energy efficiency.

Who We Are and How We are Changing

- There was an interest in both the increase of senior populations and the declining populations of young people in the state of New Hampshire

Seniors

- Groups expressed concern that seniors were untapped potential in the state, and that there was a need to motivate this population to bring time and talent to the community.
- There was also a concern about how elderly populations would function in the future, particularly in relation to transportation and getting to needed services and resources.
- Participants discussed the need for competitively priced healthcare, particularly for seniors.

Youth

- In particular, groups expressed concern about youth migration out of the state.
- As groups discussed lack of jobs in the area, one focus was creating more jobs to support and attract young people.
- Another concern was the quality of education in general and a lack of affordable higher education in the state for young people

How We Use Land

- Groups discussed how to balance economic development with the local charm of the area, the beauty of the natural landscape, and a clean and healthy environment.
- There was discussion of the value of natural resources, the environment, green spaces, and an interest in developing local agriculture.

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- The groups also discussed the potential and complications of attracting more tourism to the area. One concern was that people come to NH just to get affordable cigarettes and alcohol.
- There was some controversy among groups about land and taxes.
- Many groups discussed complications with zoning and guidelines in relation to development.
- Overall, there was a desire to value natural resources while supporting economic development.

(over)

Jobs and Economic Development

- Groups discussed a need for support of business growth.
- Many groups agreed upon a need for more types of job opportunities and increased availability of local jobs.
- There was discussion about a need for infrastructure that is supportive of a new economy and technology (broadband, cell phone coverage).
- Groups also commented on a need for educational training and improvement of education in general.

Quality of Life

- Many participants talked about maintaining our “quality of life” but admitted we think very differently about what quality of life means.
- Groups want to maintain the character of the state, enhance infrastructure, and attract jobs.
- There was an interest in building safe and healthier communities.
- People love the quality of life in the area but feel there needs to be jobs to support the community.

Housing and Transportation

- Groups discussed a need for more effective transportation for populations who experience challenges driving such as the elderly, sick, disabled, or low-income individuals.

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- Some groups felt that this transportation should be publically funded whereas others discussed how a transportation system could evolve from volunteerism and local initiatives.
- There was a concern in the groups about where the funding would come from for public transportation.
- Some groups discussed an interest in creating more walkable communities and ride and walk services in addition to cars.
- There was discussion about the importance of proximity of local business and jobs to where people live.

How We Govern Ourselves

- There was discussion about a need for more effective communication both within towns and between different towns.
- Groups discussed a need for transparency in regional planning.
- Some groups commented on a distrust of the government.
- There was discussion about the limits of local and state regulations.
- Groups expressed some controversy over taxes and local funding.

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**Granite State Future
Claremont
Group A**

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Berlin **Claremont** Dover Greenland Keene Kingston Laconia Littleton Manchester Nashua New London Pembroke Plymouth Other: _____

Small Group Facilitator Name: Charlene Baxter / scribe Deb Maes

Group Letter: AAA

Number of people in your small group: 11

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information

and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing: *Note: This information was presented in our group report.*

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.

- Focus 1. Age group approaching retirement – brain drain unless younger age groups are educated in NH and stay in NH.
 - grow up in NH, leave, return to retire
 - note where people choose to retire
 - Some choose very affordable communities
 - Fewer natives, more “transplants”, lose soul of the state
 - At risk population is not as visible
 - Small state (close together but still isolated)
 - NH least religious state; high percentage of millionaires (1/2 within 5 years of retirement)
- Land use – avoid sprawl, preserve the working landscape
 - Turf battles – city/town gov’t, county government
 - Lebanon area looking at public transportation
 - Role of tourism – important to NH
 - In urban areas – young people want to live close to job and amenities

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- People live near NH/MA border – want to influence political systems
- People who are local are not paying attention
- Wind power – where it fits in overall energy plan for this region
- Workforce Housing – affordable to young families to move to the communities where they want to live, close to where they work. Related to transportation & related to energy use, overreliance on automobiles.
 - Young families can't afford to purchase "starter" homes
 - \$10-12/hr. can't afford to live
 - Impact of current use laws on local taxes – burden on some taxpayers
 - Land in current use – doesn't need as many services
 - Large differences in per capita income
 - Look at communities – people want "city centers"
 - 1990's - lived on 3 acres in the middle of nowhere – now there's a change in attitude
 - takes a long time to renovate empty buildings
 - Important to think about whom is living here and what they want
- Access and affordability of higher education
 - Gap in new people to serve on school boards
 - Loss of institutional knowledge
 - Fewer students; education costs go up
 - Need to find replacements for retirees
 - Lack of broadband – impacts higher Ed (online learning)
 - Young people don't want to live in an area without internet

2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

Land use

- value of land
- use of land
- preservation and protection of land
- drain on land resources
- open space, recreational opportunities, keeping landscape as it is
- Social fabric of our communities
 - how to increase, preserve the social capital we have and grow it
 - The further people have to commute to their jobs the less time they have to be involved in their communities of residence (Being concerned about community and our neighbors)
- Can we continue to live the way we have been?
 - Concern over rush to use wood pellets

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- Midwest (cleaner, cheaper, natural gas)
- It's getting warmer → causes increase in ticks
- 2nd most forested state in the country
- More pests moving North – could devastate forested lands
- Northern forest is a unique ecosystem
- Water has become a huge issue
- Developers may not be careful of water/use
- *Poverty rates in Claremont and Newport:*
 - High cost of higher education
 - Crime – addressing symptoms and not the problem
 - NOT education problem in Claremont → we have a poverty problem
 - We are a resource challenged state
 - Disparity b/w towns with wealth and towns with poverty
 - Workforce readiness
 - High costs of housing to owners and renters
 - Transportation issues
- *Barriers:*
 - Unwillingness to look beyond backyard
 - Real resistance to invest in problems
 - The time involved to work on problems
 - Human nature – quick fix rather than long term solutions
 - What needs to happen so that we don't continue to have the same conversation in 10 years
 - Ability for hardworking family to thrive
 - Where does the government come in here?
 - What role does and should they play?
 - Government should not get in the way (equal playing field)
 - How much is paid by the federal government?
 - Transparency on costs (not hidden but true costs)
 - Preservation of property rights and protection of current use law

3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.

Develop more mechanisms to connect all the communities in the Upper Valley

- Working landscape honors the environment & natural resources
- Need awareness of issues related to “working poor”
- We need to think regionally – way to solve problems
- Provide more options for young people
- Businesses need to invest in community

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- Think past the “how” – look long-term
- Start with our schools – community service
- Make it easier to become involved in the community

4. What are your group’s specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?

- Regionalization as a concept
 - seeing more attempts at regionalization
 - see the concept of regionalization working as a way to strengthen intercommunity
 - a means of problem solving on issues that affect several communities (so not every community is trying to solve the same problems independently of one another)
 - caution: only solve regional issues with a regional approach
 - If it is a community’s own issue let them solve it and not treat it as a regional issue
- Enhance ways to make connections between land issues and human issues – it is all interrelated
 - This discussion showcases many aspects of these interconnections
 - People here represent factions or interest areas
 - Notice how similar their concerns were to the ones shared by others representing other interests

5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

*** There was great appreciation in this group for the forum here tonight. It offered a chance to hear new voices; people met folks from other communities that are not routinely connected – i.e. Lebanon/Hanover with Claremont.

*** They also ended by expressing a spirit of optimism and hope – particularly citing this forum tonight as an example of the fact that people care and are interested in investing time in positive problem solving and finding effective solutions, not just complaining.

What was unique about this group?

- New voices heard
- Bring up “the land” as an issue
- How important the building of social capital is
- Connections between land and people
- Regional mindset growing communities

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Granite State Future

Claremont

Group B

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

| | | | | | |
|--------|------------------|-----------|------------|--------|------------|
| Berlin | Claremont | Dover | Greenland | Keene | Kingston |
| | Laconia | Littleton | Manchester | Nashua | New London |
| | Pembroke | Plymouth | | | |

Other: _____

Small Group Facilitator Name: Nancy Collier

Group Letter: B

Number of people in your small group: 11

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.
 - Aging population, lack of opportunity for young people
 - Demographic shift not equal throughout population
 - Lack of community centers
 - Communities not being brought together
 - Land for agriculture and energy
 - Regional communication needed
 - People who do not own cars face difficult transportation situation
 - No real public transportation
 - Resources available are not always well advertised
 - Affordable housing needed
 - Must work to protect water supply
 - Addressing childcare (\$\$\$)
 - Also child abuse in NH statewide
 - Energy efficiency needed
 - Attraction of new businesses

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- Community in need of a renaissance of sorts
 - Lack of volunteerism
 - Conflict in public discourse needs to be healthy
 - Remove reliance on old manufacturing-based economic models
 - Diversification of employment
2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.
- Lack of support for struggling families
 - Lack of employment opportunities
 - Lack of relevant education
 - Lack of infrastructure
 - Energy efficiency
 - Attracting new business to NH
 - Tax pros and cons
 - Regionally addressed impact assessment
 - Funding sources for new projects
 - Transportation/housing are not affordable (car-centered)
 - Sprawl, multi-use roads
 - Need more diverse alternatives
 - Lack of age diversity
 - 20-somethings leaving
 - Aging state
3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.
- Integrate education and business as well as family care, transportation and community resources
 - The more integrated things are the better for both the economy and a sense of community
 - Land use:
 - Reuse of vacant/underused properties
 - Preserve land for local ag production
 - Renewable energy production
 - Healthy community dialogues
 - Develop opportunities for employment (diversification)
4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live,

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learn, work, and play for everyone?

- Limit barriers for participation in public affairs
 - Integration – Communities need to attract innovative businesses that use local resources
 - educate and train their workforce and act as more involved community members
 - Businesses should include community services in their business model
 - Integrate business with education/schools/childcare/government systems and infrastructure/transportation
 - Use local resources to create value-added products (furniture, etc.)
 - Invest in local businesses
 - Encourage employers to provide on-site childcare programs
 - Use resources for many different needs (ex. School buses)

 - Encourage vocational/technical education
 - Needs to be tailored to the local job opportunities
 - Consider apprenticeship programs with employers
5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

We need hope and cooperation.

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Granite State Future

Claremont

Group C

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

| | | | | | |
|--------|------------------|-----------|------------|--------|------------|
| Berlin | Claremont | Dover | Greenland | Keene | Kingston |
| | Laconia | Littleton | Manchester | Nashua | New London |
| | Pembroke | Plymouth | | | |

Other: _____

Small Group Facilitator Name: Duncan Fleming

Group Letter: C

Number of people in your small group: 9

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.
 - Economic development vs. Maintaining natural beauty
 - conservation tied to tourism/natural beauty
 - Effectiveness of current use – Loss of resources/farmland, lack of affordable housing and lack of public transportation
 - Different modes of public transportation.
 - Highest percentage of seniors with lack of transportation
 - Bus system doesn't have enough riders.
 - Educating public on transportation options
 - Employment needed at all levels
 - People choose towns based on schools
 - Availability of health insurance
 - Contrast of property values
 - Lack of recreation activities
 - cheaper opportunities outside of NH
 - Prepare for aging population, housing, etc.
 - Lower unemployment here, lost people in workforce, lack of skilled workers

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- Few colleges/hospitals/engineering
 - Access to credit
 - Lack of affordable in-state tuition; state support.
 - Zoning
 - Unemployment in the state
 - Lack of educational and capital resources, loss of upfront workers/skilled workers and youth
 - Aging population
2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.
 - NH needs new revenue structure
 - Shrinking labor force and aging population
 - Lack of jobs with good benefits
 - Healthcare incentive through NH legislature
 - More public/private partnerships
 - Use higher education to support start-up companies
 - Support for public education (k-12, tech schools)
 3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.
 - Natural environment; healthy resources
 - Educational opportunities
 - Presentation of the arts & culture
 - Economically healthy community – good paying jobs, skilled labor – converting unskilled labor
 - Maintenance of healthcare – access to care
 - Population diversity
 - Towns need to work with local businesses
 4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?
 - Economic health driven by skilled labor of the region is driving the quality of life and the sustainability of natural resources
 - Labor force & amenities & resources = economic health
 5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

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Granite State Future

Claremont

Group D

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Berlin **Claremont** Dover Greenland Keene Kingston
 Laconia Littleton Manchester Nashua New London
 Pembroke Plymouth

Other: _____

Small Group Facilitator Name: Mollie

Group Letter: D

Number of people in your small group: 10

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.
 - Population migration by age (20-something leaving, mid returning)
 - Affordable housing (connected to population migration?)
 - UNH attraction? (expensive funding?)
 - Skill disparity in region – employment?
 - Population static
 - Decline in manufacturing
 - Integration of tech & healthcare (training needed where?)
 - Education in rural areas
 - Promote educational initiatives
 - New tech businesses need more high-skilled NH residents to work
 - Agriculture (in new form) become a vital economic endeavor? (land costs?)
 - Decline in self-sufficiency, centralization of power
 - Literacy – concerns
 - Local farms – crop diversity, demand?
 - Wellness

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2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group. (*items underlined were repeated during round-robin exercise*)
 - Transportation (bus between Claremont and Lebanon)
 - Affordable housing for younger
 - Old building restoration, esp. abandoned mills
 - Workforce readiness
 - Infrastructure decay a problem
 - Roads
 - Water works
 - Etc.
 - Bankrupt us?
 - Increased individual opportunities and choice for all
 - Dependence on safety nets
 - More independence from federal system (esp. in education requirements)
 - Ability for hardworking people to support themselves – and thrive!
 - Wellness infrastructure
 - Getting people moving
 - Access to natural environment
 - Farming & property rights
 - Competing currencies
 - Preserving the rural landscape (to preserve NH identity & tourism)

3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.
 - Transportation (*our group went into this topic in depth*)
 - Patterns of employment and workforce placement (e.g. Rt. 120 corridor between Upper Valley and Claremont)
 - Transportation of good & services
 - Use of tourism
 - More connections and jobs
 - Opportunities for communities to be better connected (bus between urban areas, or little town connectors)
 - Funding always a challenge
 - Other types of transportation appropriate to small communities
 - Senior and those who don't have cars (displacing single occupancy vehicles)
 - Ability for hardworking family to support themselves – and thrive!
 - Preserving rural landscape
 - Workforce readiness

4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?
 - Ability for hard-working families to support themselves – and thrive

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- Where does gov't come in here? What role do/should they play?
 - Gov't shouldn't get in the way
 - Create equal playing field
 - Referee, play fair
 - How much paid by fed gov't?
 - Transparency costs, not hidden true costs
 - Preservation of property rights, protection of current use laws
5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

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Granite State Future

Claremont

Group E

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Claremont

Small Group Facilitator Name: Molly Messenger

Group Letter: E

Number of people in your small group: 10 including one Regional Planning staff member who simply listened

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.

- Topography is both advantage and disadvantage
- How to attract new residents to the area of working/family age
- Plus is location's environment
 - but, in other areas measure of time to major population centers shorter
 - (e.g. Portland, ME to Boston short in time)
 - Here it is miles of slow travel roads
 - Can go north or south on i-91 but not east-west
- Data on how fast aging
 - 27% over 65 by 2020, this is a real wakeup call
 - Therefore to survive and thrive how does the region attract younger adults back into region after college or into region as new residents?
 - Several members of the group had children leave for college or jobs
 - Migrated out of state (e.g. Boston & NYC areas)
 - Is it lost cause to target young adults who seek urban environment?

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- Should our branding of the region target a niche of young population who see our isolation, potential, environment, and other characteristics as advantages?
- Young adults want good pre-k to HS education, activities and use of natural environment plus living wage jobs.
- Struck by the region being very poor, not educated, rural etc. compared with rest of NH
- Are we a region that reinvention and new prosperity passed us by?
 - Did the political power and economic vitality evaporate and appear in the Southern Tier of NH (Seacoast, Manchester, and Nashua)?
 - Concord has as many residents as all of Sullivan County
 - Claremont used to have 13 of the 400 reps
- Today's migration into NH is educated, successful & talented people
 - How does the region attract them?

2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

- Transportation
 - Half of income used for housing and transportation
 - People are attracted to rural area and some do not have cars
 - Transportation to services needed for all age groups
 - It is just not available or when available not used (stigma about using public transportation in region vs. urban attitude that is natural to use public transport)
- Problem in Hanover area is cost of housing prices becoming out of reach for service workers
 - Plus no transit for workers who are now forced to live a distance from their jobs
- Branding
 - Sullivan county highest tax base in state? Is that correct?
 - How can that advantage be used when making hard choices by towns and the county in changing from business as usual to collaboration being the new way to think?
 - Concerned that no officials from city of Claremont present in the room
- Development
 - Develop moderate price housing and shorten the commute time, though the advantage of commute is appreciation that drive is through beautiful vistas, farms and mountains
 - In Utah, rural, planned growth kept rural quality through rapid growth
 - So planning and strict conservation rules need stronger teeth in the region
- Any change should not sacrifice that the region remains both economically viable and affordable

3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.

- Earlier era of region within memory, people who lived on farms during winters worked in town - that changed

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- Now too little farming
 - Rapid change adapted to in past
 - Early 20th century state was only 15% forested
 - Transformed from agrarian and mill economy to manufacturing to high tech
 - This pocket of the state failed to take opportunity to transform to high tech economy
 - Design charettes are sitting on the shelf
 - Need to go from Vision to venture capital and public/private investment to bring vision into reality
- Can the future of the Region take advantage of past patterns and now move to small local farms whose folk also begin again to work in shops/factories etc. part time?
 - One vision of the region's future is to encourage development a la European villages that are population centers for farmers and shopkeepers with the surrounding area agriculture and support local village sustainability
 - Everything within bicycle distance

4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?

***Noted that group has not addressed climate change and use of energy in region's natural environment.

- Transportation
 - Consistently say need transportation but where are the plans and the political will of the people to bring it into reality (the current infrastructure on a 30 year paving cycle for roads for example)
 - There is a disconnect between people knowing they need good roads and alternative affordable transportation vs. political will to make the expenditures necessary)
 - Too many red bridges
 - a gas tax unchanged since 1991
 - Need infrastructure but don't want to pay for it
 - Even service jobs that require going into people's homes and therefore need private vehicles vs. public transport
 - Need good PR program to help the public understand what present and future public transportation can do for them
 - Return to comment that currently people are afraid to use public transportation
 - feel it carries a stigma, esp. for elderly
 - Public marketing transportation process a la metro areas that naturally use subway etc.
 - Here even a Segway could not be used on sidewalks due to city ordinance
- Jobs.

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- We keep returning to a vision of the future where livable wage jobs for people exist
- Energy
- Energy diversity not present in region
 - Very little solar
 - Dependent upon gasoline for cars and oil and wood for homes
 - See no way out of dependence on limited alternatives

5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

- Theme of economic vitality assumes Region will grow in population, jobs, quality of education, attraction of young adults and families.
- Radical transformation has taken place before. At one time all towns had factories. Region has not responded well to its loss of jobs. (E.g. Littleton shoe factories. Here woolen mills. Claremont did not make transition to high tech economy as did Southern NH Tier.)What can be done to replace lost industry with production jobs with living wage? Not just service sector jobs for an aging population.
- Regions with growth all have universities, are we misleading ourselves about prosperous future. Is our future challenge to adapt to a lower standard of living for the shrinking middle class and the growing senior class?
- Education. Education is huge, but NH has highest in-state tuitions so our children go out-of-state and do not return. Reverse the consequence of an underfunded higher education system. Education not affordable here but should be in future. We also emphasize that education does not begin with college. Need consistent regional quality pre-k to high school education systems. (E.g. currently there is no equality between communities in getting children ready to learn pre-k.)

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Granite State Future

Dover

Group A

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Dover

Small Group Facilitator Name: Molly M.

Group Letter: A

Number of people in your small group: 8

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.
 - Aging state - how do care for aging population?
 - How do we keep young people raising families?
 - Out migration and decline in young population (losing talent)
 - Attracting younger population connect to jobs - reason to stay or leave in future
 - Migration into state - Why aren't people moving here?
 - How prepared are we to care embrace with elderly people in the community?
 - obligation to care and a resource to enrich the community
 - Economic impact aging population and health costs
 - The 5th highest median age in the country
 - Migration half here (less native NH born) not ethnically racially diverse

How we use land and the impact of our choices

- Lower incomes and long drive times beyond southeastern portion of the state making area less affordable
- Less rural sprawl is eating up land in NH
- 50 percent of income is spent on housing and transportation (challenge to work so far away)
- Affordable housing
- bad planning - towns requiring large lot 2-3 acres lots (non- New England design)
- Large lot minimums

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- revalue density in urban cores
- Tax base because more reduces the diversity of people that can live in community
- Rolling fields of McMansions
- Homes built on small lots with conservation land alternatives
- Evidence local level not vast experience in planning
- Expertise is not at the local level (2 acres while VT has 10 acres)
- Inconsistence access to food local page 11

Where we live how we move around

- Need to be creative on how to plan for housing single family (what is needed?)
- Single family - American dream - homeowners (what is the reality?)
- Address lack of affordable housing in close proximity to work
 - compounded transportation options limited
 - People have to drive half an hour to work
- Transportation options
 - 82% of all work commutes single occupancy vehicle

How to attract and keep younger people while caring for older populations

- Policies in places - property tax inhibits people from living here
 - Mismatch: 4 or 5 employers but not enough skills to meet the need of the companies
 - Matching up who we have for employers (missing skills in the middle)
 - need technical expertise/usable skills that can be applied
 - Don't put money in the education partnership between employers or employees
 - Years ago businesses trained
 - Albany international is not going to do that
 - Amount of college student loans that people have 50% of income now a days goes to college loans
 - Help students creating a state fund to pay for education professional businesses to help pay for loans (incentives to stay)
 - UNH is the 2nd most expensive college in the state
 - Mismatch: we're putting too much focus on college
 - more people need to go to vocational tech education is not broad enough
 - Students attending post-secondary career technical colleges → no debt
 - State of NH doesn't have enough revenue to support Medicaid- and student tuition
 - 50th in state in paying for higher education
2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

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Community involvement

- How towns communication to share resources
- NH is a wealthy state
- Want something different need to plan for it
 - Are we committed to creating and implementation of long term plans?
- Concern if not happy with the way things are
 - we committed to action as a state (Social media and technology)
- Attracting businesses into the state
 - money into state on taxes and education
 - Economic vitality
- Where is the money going?
- How do we access the wealth in the state of NH?
- Do we take care of the people social services falls by the wayside?

*** Some community members shared the perspective that we in NH need to find creative ways to attract businesses, to help bring more wealth into the state and create jobs to attract a younger populations. Other community members shared the perspective that we in NH need to find creative incentives to work with the revenue existing in the state, pointing out that we are something close to the 5th wealthiest state in the U.S., but are making state budget cuts as if there was little wealth in the state, With this second perspective, it was a shared thought that we need to work more on the distribution of resources.

3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.

What actions take place over the next 5 years?

- Policy making to tax into the wealth that is here
- Tax reform
- Small businesses incentives (creative) that is just tax rates for people to stay here
- Incentives to tap into people's skills and talents for younger individuals to stay in state
- Utilize the talent and skills in the state
- Incentives would drive policy change
- Non-financial changes
- different funding for education
 - hard not to get back to revenue in the state property tax in state
- Revenue problem - need for adult conversation
- Investment in kind of life we want to have here
- Half of the funding for alternative transportation lost in the state engagement of people and services needed
- Decisions that are made are grass roots

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- NH DOT how is the budget spent without accountability
 - voices not being heard
 - Built environment being done in vacuum wasting tax payer money
 - Redefine infrastructure networks
 - capital in communities
 - move conversations together
 - Need for a Department of Community
 - breaking down traditional concepts where the resources are where are they?
 - How do we go back to basic community organizing?
 - 423 Representatives
 - how do we access people at levels of engagement?
 - Going to places to make sure we are being inclusive meeting people where they are beyond conversation to implementation and action
 - Need for Towns to think outside small circle - start expanding
 - Town departments maximize wealth vote in tax caps
 - Collaboration across towns barriers - no incentive to work together
4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?
- Investing in infrastructure/community/people
 - how do we call forth better investments?
 - Limited tax options in state
 - Value statements
 - choices are good if understand the consequences/we are comfortable with them
 - Resilience/vulnerabilities/adaptive to changing conditions/not to be afraid to take actions
 - Addressing common values
 - Creative incentives for collaboration
5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

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Granite State Future

Small Group Facilitator Name: **Tonya**

Group Letter: **B**

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Berlin Claremont **Dover** Greenland Keene Kingston
 Laconia Littleton Manchester Nashua New London
 Pembroke Plymouth

Other: _____

Number of people in your small group:

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.
 - Population getting older, less homogeneous
 - Support for people being able to raise young children and young professionals
 - growth pattern in population moving north in county
 - affordability/infrastructure there
 - some of this has to do with taxes/school system
 - Goal of keeping the 20-29 age bracket in the state – Tied to economic opportunity
 - Land conservation
 - Keeping the downtown feel in individual towns – Losing it in some areas?
 - Making communities walkable – it is very variable right now?
 - More multi-use facilities
 - Question of foresight within planning boards – what is the vision within communities?
 - Divide in public transportation between northern/southern parts of the county
 - Centrally locating key facilities make them less accessible
 - What's the vision for the volume of residents?
 - Do we have the resources to support needs?

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- Schools/transportation
- Incorporate more consideration for environment impacts when developing roads, buildings, etc.
- Bus service is strong in Seacoast – public transportation
 - Not so great in Northern Strafford County
- More centralized communities will facilitate around town access
- Add more bike-ways connecting towns and walkways in building campuses
- Transportation to schools is difficult – too far apart
- Gotten away from “popside community”
- Small business development is tough
- Focus on shop local, buy local, grow local
- Community lending organizations
 - Lack of these
- Tools, libraries, sharing resources

Transportation:

- Energy efficiency
 - Invest in sustainable, safe, and responsible energy use
- RPC
 - Investigate alternative energy options when planning
- Promote information/resources to community for their own use and implementation

Biggest challenges:

- Need help in creating the multi-generational community building
- Building resilience/preparedness for disasters
 - Enhancing sustainability
- Create multiple generational activities/goings-on for community
 - Community connection tool
- More opportunities for Dover Listens-type discussions
- Lack of engagement of local citizens
- Build more community/local input
 - Sense of place = engagement

2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

- Inter connectivity of communities
- Building a resilient community – sharing of resources – enhances sustainability
- Connecting communities with activities for all ages
- Lack of local engagement
- Workforce housing
- Good school systems

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- Energy efficiency and diversity
- Strengthening local communities – Business and beyond
- Accessibility of local officials
- Getting older
- More immigrants from out of state and country
 - Workforce/succession plan
- How can we support the growth of younger families?
- Concerns about affordability of infrastructure?
- Electric attractive for younger generations
- Walkable
- How real is the impact of age in state/city?
- School system needs more support
- Taxes too high
- Limited opportunities for college graduate

3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.

- Needs to more foresight in zoning/regulations
- Have local businesses promote/complement each other
- Mixed use development
- Promote increased school standards and funding
- Allowing communities to be accessible to all people (walking, biking, transit, etc.)
- Impact on water supply w/ construction
 - Degradation
 - Preserving the quality of water supply
- Good support for land conservation efforts (LEE)
- Need more restrictions w/ conserving green space in other areas – commercial
- Increased more multi-use areas in Durham
- Creation of more vibrant downtown in Dover w/repurpose
- Would like to see more gardening/farming in towns so people can do more in their own yards
- Repurposed McConnell community center for multi-use, non-profit
- Great amount of festivals in parks
- Varying community accessibility
- Creating more integration between housing/business
- Too many apartments, what's the vision/impact?

4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?

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- Communities need to be closely tied together
- Development needs to be mixed
- Jobs should be good paying to attract young workers

How do we do it?

- Create more affordable housing options, less zoning restrictions
 - Higher paying jobs
 - Keep people living in the community that they work in
- Preserving open space – water
 - Interactions with nature
- Promote mixed-use development with purpose
 - Must have a town center
- Provide resources/access to low-income residents for implementing alternative energy solutions
- Review/develop master plan to make sure these things are planned for
- Provide regional clearinghouse for greater purchasing power (co-op)
- Strengthen school systems
 - Quality, access, size, support
- Engage public and get more citizen involvement
 - Get to know your public officials
- Build sense of community/place
 - Support local/buy local
- Invest in your community

5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

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Granite State Future

Dover

Group C

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Berlin

Claremont

Dover

Greenland

Keene

Kingston

Laconia Littleton

Manchester

Nashua

Small Group Facilitator Name: Ernest Cartier Creveling Group Letter: CCC

Number of people in your small group: 6 participants in addition to a scribe, one observer and facilitator

Participants from Rochester, Dover, Rye, Barrington, Middleton, Durham (UNH student)

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.

Transportation Communication /Broadband Education Healthcare/Access to Services

Environment/Climate

- Decreasing population in NH, and the population we have growing older
- Why is there a decline in population? Up until recently there was huge population growth
 - Maybe the younger population is moving out, there is not enough to hold the young population (jobs, etc)
 - People in the 30-39 age range may be moving to NH for jobs, retirees may be moving into the state
- We are still building many new houses and housing developments, that doesn't correlate with the migration patterns
 - Maybe the building isn't happening as much now, but was happening at the time of the statistic
 - 2010 census may be outdated, there is a lack of up to date information

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- The age change is a fact, not a problem
- Should we find ways to bring people into the state?, I/we don't know that
- The problem with migration has been recognized, now what can the town(s) do?
 - Maybe there could be programming for career-oriented professionals so that they stay in NH, or are attracted to come live in NH
 - i.e. access to healthcare, dentists, physicians in more rural areas (having those types of professions here in local areas, we have them close by in Boston, why not here)
 - Communities offering scholarships for students to study, live, and work in those communities, communities in ME do that
- There are groups of young people that are not going to college, these groups are not getting much attention, this all leads back to the education system
 - There needs to be assistance for people not going on to college to find a career trajectory where they have support and help planning for a job, and this all comes back to education
 - Such programs exist, there is a program called JobCorp (a few in MA) for ages 17-25 where they provide job training, security and help with finding them a job
 - Locally we could have a program like this that connects with communities
- Student: wouldn't have come back to NH (went to school outside of NH) if she hadn't found a job
 - companies need to do outreach to get people to want to come back/ come/ stay here in NH
- In the 70/80s there was no growth in Northeast, but growth in NH...what happened? Why is this? The 70s weren't that great of economic times, so what explains this?
 - One participant returned with husband from the Vietnam War and came here
 - Maybe Pease base was a factor with the end of the Vietnam War encouraging people to come here
- Participants questioning statistics, the accuracy of them in general
- In every instance except the 40s/50s, NH had a higher population change than the Northeast
 - NH is a nice place to live
- Unemployment is a universal problem
- NH has lots of service industry, so wages are typically low, if we do not add other industry how are things going to change
- What can communities do to attract businesses?
- Somersworth unemployment center statistic at 12 % unemployment in the state, actual statistic is 4.5 % so gap in real unemployment and stated,
- NH may be above national level, but misleading because in NH there are pockets of extreme wealth, but then horrible poverty
 - This leads to misinformation relating with the per capita income

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- People who are not full time residents in the state could affect this statistic as well
- These statistics do not tell the story
- NH may be worse off than the statistics show
- In NH we need more support for education, and a stronger connection between education and businesses
- Employers in the state cannot find adequately prepared people to fill their positions
 - Mismatch between training people have, and training needed for jobs
- Considering the in-migration over past 20 years, it has brought in people with degrees, this may have skewed numbers of educated individuals in the state
 - This is part of the issue
 - There should be an emphasis on education among people who live here, and have grown up here
 - 60% of the state was not born here
 - Dynamic of NH changed over the past 30 years

2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

- The problem is that the vast majority of growth (land wise) in NH is on the border next to MA, so NH doesn't benefit as it should

How can we overcome that?

- There are areas in NH with no access to grocery stores, medical offices, etc., why not focus there?
- Cooperatives could be helpful, public transportation allows an individual to get from rural locations to Portsmouth, but then once dropped in Portsmouth there is not transportation to needed places
- If neighbors coordinated driving trips, it might be better
- Something that provides a more cooperative arrangement, even if the town(s) get involved to some extent
- More farmers markets, so less trips to the grocery store
- Access to internet connection, some places still use dial up, not everyone has the infrastructure, the funding to bring that to communities is a another challenge
- Libraries with free internet access are helpful
 - Does UNH have access for residents to a network, i.e. for state residents, a data system that could be accessed from home?
- Nice if town offices could have a computer residents could use with a good internet connection
- A community board with printed matter where the towns could help the citizens, i.e. if you need this, go here
 - Where would these be? They would need to be visible to a vast majority.

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Focus 1: Aging population linked to need for more public transportation opportunities; Loss of younger population linked to lack of job opportunities, lack of affordable housing and expensive post-secondary education.

Focus 2: Proximity to services linked to aging population and public transportation inadequacies; cooperative efforts such as carpooling and better access to information locally and via internet linked to lack of access/knowledge about services.

Focus 3: Lack of adequate public transportation linked to energy usage, climate impact and lack of access to recreation; Lack of affordable housing poses problem for workforce and in general.

Focus 4: Climate change linked to New Hampshire's lack of alternative energy use like wind, solar, thermal and natural gas; lack of public transportation and people's unwillingness to use it linked to climate change; the cost of "green" building (disincentive) linked to higher heating costs and energy usage and, resulting in greater environmental impact.

Focus 5: Better focus on education to support business and industry linked to lowering the poverty rate, sustaining economic development and attracting business, industry and people to the State.

Patterns

- Easy/easier access to services via transportation
- Helping rural areas (how can we do that?)
- Different regions have different problems

- *Focus*
- There should be some way for the town center to educate their residents about what they can do to change problems
 - Access, services, transportation, internet service
 - Education for the town as well
 - Town/City volunteers, commitment different dependent on that factor
 - I.e. Rochester Mayor is a mayor and has a full time job, citizens need to rely on other people as citizens can't always connect with the volunteer officials
 - Chamber of commerce should send out resources to citizens, not just members of the commerce, resources should be spread to everyone

3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.

- There is a need for more affordable workforce housing
- A lot of the housing in NH isn't affordable for the average working person, which pushes people farther north, so a farther commute, and for those with no transportation, that becomes a problem
 - There are issues relating with young people coming into the state to find a job, and then being able to find affordable housing
- Transportation, there are pockets, you have to fit a criteria to be able to get a certain

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type of transportation, not a lot of public transportation

- (Participant lives off 125 and wonders why there aren't more stops along that route, especially when it's busy)
- There is a need for inter-city buses
- How do you become more "green" when there isn't enough public transportation/access?
- People make assumptions that public transportation is for low income or those without transportation
- America loves independence and demand; they do not want to take public transportation because they want to go where they want, when they want
- There is a need to add safe bike paths, there are few safe areas to ride bikes between communities
 - In Western MA they have bike paths through multiple communities
- Transportation in the area connects Durham/Dover to Portsmouth/Rochester, but there are no stops in Hampton, Rye, areas to visit in the Summer
 - Concerns with public access to recreation

What can we do to make the Strafford Region the best place to learn, live, work, play?

Broadband

- Encourage bill in the Technology, Energy, and Science Committee for broadband that would allow committees to bond or bill cable companies to get that "Last Mile" fiber.
- Give people access to the internet in a central community location (community center/town hall/library)

Transportation

- Encourage cooperative efforts like carpooling
- Provide more access to busing, more connectivity between communities
- Neighbors helping neighbors-both at community level and the regional level
- Provide incentives for community cooperative transportation

Environmental

- Get people recycling - some towns cannot afford to run a recycling program, so regionalize recycling efforts
- Target construction companies to educate customers about environmentally friendly options, like concrete Styrofoam insulated walls (saves money over time)
- Lighten up of government regulation/restrictions (specific example: access to compost was discontinued at a local landfill because there was a potential hazard from the sources of the compost material)

Education

- Need improved foundational, formal education and a more equitable way to pay for it
- Need to educate the general public about community topics, like recycling, sea level rise, climate change

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- Need to educate contractors/building inspectors/general public about options for more eco-friendly

4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?

- Not much green energy
- The pipeline from Rochester to UNH, garbage gas, is a good thing
- There is very little use of solar power in municipal buildings, that type of thing could be improved
- The issue of heating oil is very important, as it is very expensive
 - Vs. natural gas
 - Reliance on heating oil, how do you get out from underneath it?
 - There are options, but you have to use several services to overcome it
 - The upfront costs are excessive
 - The weather and temperature swings make it difficult, how do you build houses and businesses to deal with that
 - More use of solar a good answer, but so expensive to set it up
 - Expensive for construction
 - ICF-insulated concrete forms used in participant's construction...walls about a foot thick, use little fuel to heat home, in a few years will gain back the amount lost in extra construction costs
 - The public needs to be educated to how they can do this, how they can build differently to save money in the long run
- Wind power-the potential of use this alternative form of energy

5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

Further Discussion

- We could have sister cities in NH! Larger communities helping smaller communities
- Regional cooperation across regions would be helpful
- *More cooperative approach to some of these issues
 - I/e wastewater issues, increased nitrogen levels
- NH independence can be both a good and bad thing
- One participant believes people in Barrington aren't aware of the services that can be taken advantage of
- Selectman struggle, how can we help people understand the resources available
 - Participant feels like the selectman could do a better job, maybe other elected officials feel that way, what else can we do being volunteers, and having other

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jobs, and lives, it's frustrating

- Revenues/Taxes (TOPIC)
 - We try to accomplish our goals with inadequate funds
 - One participant is all for and income tax
 - This state has been running on this revenue model for over 250 years, with the influx of population and influx for service, the demand was changed
 - UNH only gets 7% funding from the state
 - The issue now, do we want a casino to meet what is in the governor's budget
 - Does this create more services?
 - Fairness of current tax structure
 - What is the fairest way, the burden is on the people who own

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Granite State Future

Dover

Group D

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Berlin Claremont **Dover** Greenland Keene Kingston
 Laconia Littleton Manchester Nashua New London
 Pembroke Plymouth

Other: _____

Small Group Facilitator Name: __Cynthia__

Number of people in your small group: _____6_____

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.
 - Population change
 - northeast had very little change overall, but NH has big change
 - 70-80 than region
 - We are getting more stable
 - We are losing population but also aging in state.
 - We had a lot of technology companies in the 1980s bringing in folks to the state
 - Migration into the state is decreasing
 - We have many in the college students leave and not come back
 - Walmart is the largest employer in the state
 - Many want to retire in the lake country
 - Senior population is not mobile and maybe able to sell house
 - Higher pop youth in south
 - Higher seniors in the north
 - As you get farther north there are not many hospitals for aging populations
 - We have development increasing but very little food to support economy or clean water
 - Multi -layer problem
 - Many farmer markets are thriving and coops

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- Historically we have not done food farming in NH
- Someone said everyone in community has their own garden that they produce their own food
- There has been an uptick in the farmer's market community
- We are getting back to be self- sufficient
- Locally grown food to support budget and you know what is in your body
- Transportation cost to grow food, so locals can compete with costs and pollution compared shipping in food from far away
- Maybe they don't understand local governance and that's why they don't want to fund it
- Don't understand the basics of community governance
- Most towns gone to referendum government regret it
- Not the interconnectedness we need
 - Bring back town meeting
- How do we get more people involved in the decision process like today?
 - How do we get working families to participate?
- Dover has changed quite a bit
 - Rochester is like Dover 10 years ago
- Is there a chat room or social network that could come out of these group meetings?
- Is there an appropriate online forum for groups to discuss issues?
- Computer access up North is not great for some populations
- Many parts of the population do not use computers or social networking
- We do not have many renewable energy sources
- Travel to work commuting to other states is a major issue

2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

- Employment trends
 - We've traditionally done better compared to neighbors, but there is a trend that we are not growing fast and neighbors are growing fast
 - We are losing population and it is the first time this has happened
- States south of us are doing better
 - In 80's we stole grads from other states
 - Now MA schools are competing with us and winning
 - We need strong elementary and high schools, build skills and technology
- It is expensive to live here and income is low
- We have lost many young people and tech companies
- Cost more to build here and land prices expensive
- Education is important to us and most people do not understand.
 - We are not rich and we don't have energy resources other than forests

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- We have to grow smart people to bring in tech business and smart businesses for labor force
- We need more education data
 - Education should be number one priority
- If we attract high tech business then we bring in more population
 - Make us an attractive place
 - Plus our natural resources attract
- We need stronger community college and university system to attract big business
 - Companies I have talked to said the work ethic is impressive in state
- We need to have something on work force and employment data
 - There is a big trend on the self employed
- We need innovators in future
- There is an incubator in Pease and UNH center
 - Had budget slashed 25%
- Mobility and transportation is a huge issue for people in NH
 - Some isolated elderly folks may not have a life line
- How do we absorb an aging population with no resources to help people?
- Budget is stressed by not having money coming in.
- Para-transit services are needed for folks with ADA and elderly
- We need more public transit like Europe
 - We are used to driving our cars and being independent
- It is difficult to get working families to get involved and have a chain reaction with other folks

Values:

- It seems like we have more and more distrust of our government
- Then we do not fund adequate parts of our community
- Folks who are yelling loudest and longest are winning
 - We have good universities and tech colleges
 - We have some good arterial roads, condition bad
 - There is a huge back log of housing projects in Dover
- People are seeking private schools other than pay taxes
 - Dover is in a precarious time
- Taxes- Property tax is a hurdle to most people and a disadvantage.

3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.

- Politics
 - we stress local control, but there is not much

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- it goes back to the state house
 - The governor and counsel have great control on contracts for state
 - Governor should have less control on contract power
 - We are not a local control state. The state has to authorize contracts
 - Very little local control in State constitution
 - We should have collective decision making in local town level
 - Other states have strong local town government
 - We would have large benefit to schools and collect data from local towns to plan schools, for example
 - There needs to be a measurable goal at the end of the process
 - We need more Civic classes and community governance in schools
 - No rail system extensive in NH
 - We need more rail and affordable
4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?
- We should have countywide school board and work for greater good of all schools. Thinking town by town is a barrier to being efficient.
 - Target companies you want in state and then build programs for that.
 - Land use the rural areas are built out
 - Strafford county does not have developing land, not suitable
 - Allow more infill development for parking lots
 - Need more equitable taxes
 - If you like public services then you should accept taxes
5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

Someone likes the Portsmouth Listens process. It is a way to connect the community.

Final Priorities-

- We want Civic courses back in school and community governance education
- Education and bringing businesses back to NH
- More diverse venues for community dialogues
- Over reliance on property taxes is troublesome
- Celebrate the community, community harvest dinners

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Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Berlin Claremont Dover Greenland Keene Kingston
Laconia Littleton Manchester Nashua New London
Pembroke **Plymouth**
Other: _____

Granite State Future

Small Group Facilitator Name: Duncan Fleming

Group Letter: AAA

Number of people in your small group: 8

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

NOTE: Person wants to have this done on a local level.

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.

Focus 1: Aging population

- general divide (3 tiers of state)
 - southern part of state younger and more affluent
 - **exporting young workers south and out of state**
 - multigenerational households
 - census data only covers residents and not seasonal population for about 8 months out of the year
 - we don't recognize what we have up north
 - stats don't show the actual population (part-time or seasonal residents)
 - There is a drop in school enrollment
 - **Homogenous population**
 - **Retirees migrating to northern NH**

Focus 2: Void of services

- lack of hospital specialty services, social services
- new zoning laws had encouraged separation and now NH Smart Growth principles (8)
- agricultural to forest (loosing farming land)
- local food surge, food security is an issue, some agriculture tough to sustain in large quantities and climate,

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- lack of food self-sufficiency
- **Lack of adequate community centers, supply and demand, wants and needs, question of choices What is our sense of our community?**

Focus 3: Lack of public transportation

- question of need
- secondary vs. primary road maintenance on the corridor
- **lack of accessibility, gas expensive**
- rural poor situation
 - underprivileged - housing is in poor for renters across age spectrum, rich are rich the poor are poor, seasonal property owners on the lake (wealthy here, pay taxes, net benefit to economy but not using services)

Focus 4: Northern Pass – taking advantage of land and not receiving the energy from it

- **Local energy sufficiency/conservation**
- **lack of energy resources**
- **carbon-based vs. renewable energy (wind, hydro plant – question of cost and cost efficiency for people to run plants – there are a scale situation)**
- **Lack of snow** (snowmobilers are hurting, smaller ski areas are having difficult times)

Focus 5: Build local economy, tourism comes and go. What and we do locally to sustain our communities. Lifestyle can attract. Need a plan for the future. There is no plan to keep educated students in our NH that will be developing micro-businesses. What can sustain us? Startup money and ease of doing business.

2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

Patterns/Challenges

- Building the ideological divide
- Poliarization
- Startup capital and good business environment (if you make it easier to build a business businesses will come)
- Getting people involved at the local level
- Adapting youth to the changing world
- Education
- Employment opportunity
- Lack of incentives

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- Interconnectedness of focus areas

3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.

Business:

- Ease of starting/operating a business/ease of credit
 - Need \$\$, justify business model, banking model broken
- Entrepreneurship
 - tied to education (change the school curriculum to move towards business model, exportable products)
- Consumers shopping locally
- Not give the best and brightest the opportunities they can have
- Good ideas but no follow through for innovations.

4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?

- Strong/sustainable economy comes from training in entrepreneurship not just "cog in machine"
- Connection between education and business world

5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

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Granite State Future

Small Group Facilitator Name: Kathy Bush

Group Letter: B

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Berlin Claremont Dover Greenland Keene Kingston
Laconia Littleton Manchester Nashua New London
Pembroke **Plymouth**
Other: _____

Number of people in your small group: 10

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.

- Preserve national assets
- Internet access
- Loss of younger population
- High tech communication
 - Need for widespread internet
- Rural sprawl
 - Balance of economic stability and conservation
- Friendly business environment needed
- Preservation of national assets
- Higher percentage of people born outside the state
- Few opportunities for young adults has caused a decrease in migration
- Decline in manufacturing industry
 - no attraction to young families
- Has increase in fed. Gov't contributed to decline in business opportunities
- Some gov't impact/laws improve the environment (clean air/clean water)
- We don't want fed gov't in our pocket
- Concern – we don't own our own water
- Increase in amount of H2O drawn from private wells
- Do we have all the data?

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- What is a healthy population for the state to sustain us?
- Population seen its own level
 - economies, taxes, etc.
- Housing younger population because of lack of opportunities
- Some people want to live a connected life
- Rural sprawl
 - challenges to small town
- Want to preserve our natural assets
 - environment, not at expense of private property
- Friendly business environment
- Need for widespread internet access
- Bandwidth high-speed access across the state – now happening
- Underground aquifers → large lakes
- What happened when company taps large quantities of water?
- Some communities to choose to protect their water supply
- Problem when overdrawn water supply increases salination

2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

- North country poorer
- High unemployment
- Lower wage jobs
- Take on 2-3 jobs to survive
- Coos – bigger problem manufacturing to the service economy
- Issue – don't reduce attractiveness of north country by installing electrical tower
- North country always a strong service base
- Company SNS – provides servers for companies - < infrastructure
- Concern – they don't know North of Notch – untrue
- People live up north for a reason (environment, strong stewardship, snow mobile trails on private land)
- Great model
- Want to see more jobs for every segment of society
- Can put food on the table
 - but not afford insurance, etc.
- Wood club – potential for wood basket of NH
- Prison employs people
 - but had to live outside of area
- Closure of plant has gone up
 - more unemployment
- Healthcare/teachers – 2 good areas for north country
- Coos #1 employer is the government
- Global warming → longer growing season, less road maintenance, challenge for ski areas

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- Industrial revolution – burning of coal
 - Global warming since the beginning of time
 - Ice age – climate change 0 4 times – mother nature
 - More rapid climate change
 - we don't know how ecosystems will respond
 - We depend on ecosystems
 - rapid loss of species
 - Flooding on rte. 175 – rebuilding
 - Look to developing nations
 - their lack of regulations are contributing to problems
 - Loss of animals – discovering new ones
 - Change in NH – used to have much more snow
 - '67-'68 5-foot drifts
 - Cyclical changes – geology study
 - People relate it to what they know – myopic
 - Mini ice age in middle ages
3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.
- More internet access
 - Widespread to support local businesses
 - If you are lucky you have broadband
 - Electricity recognized as necessary utility (also telephone)
 - Internet not regulated by gov't?
 - Solution – regulate ISP?
 - Choose to live near broadband
 - High coasts for broadband and basic cable
 - Now means of access not transportation but broadband
 - Open up chance to work from home
 - Option now as fiber optics with phone line
 - Now use smart phones – cheaper option
 - NH far behind wireless speed
 - cost comes down and speed will increase
 - More cell towers to accommodate demand
 - What companies are willing to invest
 - not as much in small communities
 - Broadband penetration/cell phone penetration limited in north country
 - Some communities set up Wi-Fi towers
 - Eventually communities will be more accessible to WIFI
 - Transportation is a challenge - < public transportation cities attract young people due to cost of vehicles
 - What about people who want to live in rural areas?
 - If you don't use public transportation, should you?

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4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?
- At local level public funds are used and useful
 - Importance of local control – no strings attached
 - Local support for a friendly business climate
 - Keep planning local
 - Keep feds as limited as possible
 - roads and public transportation
 - money needs to come from federal gov't
 - Running volunteer driver organization – need organization
 - large % of population needs public transportation
 - Track record of changing environment
 - Our communities are not adjusting to changes in climate – i.e. we built near water
 - We are causing a significant amount of climate change
 - We need to adapt – turn out
 - If we don't resolve issue there will be problems
 - Attract retirees because of quality of life
 - High tech communication will impact job growth – economic growth
 - Buy local – local products, local food, locally operated businesses (a challenge to do this)
 - Keep feds out of the process
 - Discussion on local and not regional level
5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.
- communities make choices based on their values
 - sometimes with public transportation
 - not accessible (ex. tricityCAP bus)
 - do we have extra \$ to spend by federal government?
 - NH has “caregivers” volunteers
 - do not need government intervention
 - If we conserve land it takes off tax rolls
 - People choose to live in rural areas/rural roads
 - Tax burden of undeveloped land low
 - Gov't share to help purchase conservation land has decreased
 - Gravel road expensive to maintain
 - Are gravel roads cheaper?
 - (ex. Randolph Community Forest)

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- NH strong tradition of private property rights “barrier to adoption of GSF” – HUD documents
- GSF infringe on private property rights
- NH has local governance
 - why is HUD involved?
- RPC – role of regional planning
- Someone contacted HUD regarding planning issues
- Would regional planning commissions take on local planning commissions
- Local town see RPC as a resource
- No input from state/local gov’t re:GSF project

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Granite State Future

Small Group Facilitator Name: Cara Cargill

Group Letter: C

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Berlin Claremont Dover Greenland Keene Kingston
Laconia Littleton Manchester Nashua New London
Pembroke **Plymouth**
Other: _____

Number of people in your small group: 9

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.

Focus 1:

- The population of the state is growing older (people are retiring)
- People are also having fewer children
- Younger people are moving out of the state to seek other employment opportunities
- The demographics are also divided between the northern and southern parts of the state
- Places like Manchester have more ethnically diverse populations
 - (71 languages spoken in school district)
 - Yet North Country is very non-diverse and English speaking (not ready for major demographic change)

Focus 2:

- Decisions related to land use have gotten better over the last 20+ years
- Towns have to be able to find ways to repurpose old buildings
- People are also spending large portions of their income on housing and transportation
- People are having a hard time connecting with their community
 - Part of this may have to do with the lack of community gathering centers
- There are farms in the area but many of them are quite small and we need to find

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ways to support these farmers as full-time workers

Focus 3:

- There are numerous housing issues in the area
- Rents are often quite high and many homes have fallen into disarray and provide sub-standard living
- Workforce housing is essential to economic development in the area
- Housing also needs to be done in a more thoughtful way
- With many services being far away and a lack of public transportation having a vehicle is essential
- Many poorer families cannot afford a reliable vehicle
 - This also contributes to pollution.

Focus 4:

- Tourism is a major economic engine within the region
- Inconsistent winters and rainy summers can have an impact on tourism numbers
- Northern Pass and other energy projects would also have a negative impact on tourism

Focus 5:

- With rising poverty levels child care is extremely important
 - (both during the summer and during the school year)
 - Parents need flexibility from these programs which match their lives
 - Early learning opportunities are both rare and critical for childhood development
 - Older children recognize these struggles and see them as reasons to leave the area

2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

- Need for public transportation
 - More acute need in Plymouth than other parts of the state
- Attracting young families
 - Community culture, recreation, child care, education
- Affordable housing
- More economic diversity
 - Higher wage and non-seasonal jobs
- Ability of communities to adapt to quickly changing needs of population/economy
- Aging population not driving the economy as much as young families
- Fewer children
 - Need to give them all a chance to succeed

3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.

- Working in a collaborative way

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- Not trying to benefit one group at the expense of another
 - Whole systems thinking
 - Systems mapping
 - Collective impact concepts
4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?
- Focus on collaboration versus competition
 - With aging population, focus needs to be on transportation, economic development (good jobs), housing and child care
 - Systems thinking
 - Interconnectedness and define where these things start
5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

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Granite State Future
Small Group Facilitator Name: Molly Messenger
Group Letter: A

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

| | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|------------|-----------|--------------|----------|
| Berlin | Claremont | Dover | Greenland | Keene | Kingston |
| Laconia | Littleton | Manchester | Nashua | New London | |
| Pembroke | Plymouth | | | | |

Other: _____

Number of people in your small group: 9

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.
 - Young people are leaving the state and the state has an older population (median age is 5th)
 - Job opportunities should be appearing with people retiring
 - doesn't appear to be the case
 - Minority growth is slow, steady and unevenly spread
 - Vast differences in access to essential services
 - Monadnock region is doing better than most but is still Keene centric
 - High proportion of wooded areas
 - Much is privately owned
 - Runoff pollutes water supply
 - Used to be more industrially based but we need to start paying attention to runoff causing issues with lakes/rivers
 - can impact tourism
 - Lack of affordable housing is a concern and lack of range of facilities (esp. small communities)
 - Aging in place is tougher
 - less workforce housing
 - Policy decisions make this harder

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- Less carpooling (82% single occupancy vehicles)
 - Tough to rationalize with costs but lacking public transportation (lacking state funding)
- Question of what is distillage fuel oil?
- Surprised at low level of per capita energy consumption in state (due to wood stoves?)
- Fewer solar panels in state (support from legislature?)
- Need computer trained workers
 - Attraction/retention of educated people
- What is the education level of the people who are leaving the state?
- Issue of publicizing the job opportunities which do exist
- Issues with red listed bridges and road degradation
- Lack of parking for public service areas

2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

- Over reliance on property taxes
 - Increases costs of housing and limits ability for state to use revenues
- Uneven quality of education across districts
 - Educating people for work beyond urban areas
- Cheshire County needs to start advocating for it as the North Country
- Coos has partnerships of employers and schools to get skills matching jobs
- Tougher to solve issues of energy consumption and water quality with current tax structure in the state

3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.

- Environmental beauty
 - State is well taken care of in terms of conservation and this needs to be preserved
- Area needs to increase advocacy in Concord
- Area has strong sense of community involvement and this needs to be preserved
 - Especially among the younger community
- Transcending economic status for people to be able to have access to housing, transportation, education
- Educate students in being citizens and getting them involved in positive things in the community

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4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?

- Changing the structure of the tax system away from the property tax
 - Disincentive for a lot of towns to do the "right" thing (like providing tax credits for green home improvement)
- Environmental preservation is crucial
- Civic involvement and maintaining a sense of community
 - should be taught to children
- Access to transportation must be done for all groups of people
- Education for all income levels to provide job training

5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

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Granite State Future

Keene

Group B

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Berlin Claremont Dover Greenland **Keene** Kingston
Laconia Littleton Manchester Nashua New London
Pembroke Plymouth
Other: _____

Small Group Facilitator Name: _____ Mollie _____

Group Letter: __BBB_____

Number of people in your small group: _____14_____

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.
 - Changing demographics
 - Tax structure
 - in relation to income, home ownership
 - affects land use state vs. local (property taxes)
 - explore broad-based taxes
 - Education and Training
 - higher, vocational, k-12
 - Land Use
 - food production, sprawl, transit, open space, trails, transportation
 - Job Opportunities
 - make it more economically attractive and viable, scaled manufacturing, low and high tech. (Industries and manufacturing), various scales, concentrations
 - Healthcare
 - Quality of Life

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2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

- Education of workforce
- Poverty – much in the north
- Transportation
- Environment
 - Protection of land and resources (water, etc.)
 - Future of climate change
 - Conserve “right” acreage
 - tourism
- Infrastructure
- Jobs
- Healthcare
- Migration (costs and benefits)
- Rural make-up vs. urban south
- Regional barriers
- Scope – big picture is limited, lens is small
- Housing/land costs
- How to attract 20-30yr. olds?

3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.

Planning and Zoning-

- Get away from restrictions vs. encourage and enable
- Collaboration among local/regional/state planning
- Funding healthcare, ambulances, end of life care
- Transportation for older people
- Balance needs of ageing population and younger populations needs
- Conserve and protect land
 - Tourism and recreation, valuable
 - Conserve natural assets & ecosystem services
- Minimize urban sprawl
 - Village model (maximize community)
- Funding education
- Providing infrastructure for business, etc.
-

4. What are your group’s specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?

- Create more affordable housing options
 - less zoning restrictions and higher paying jobs
 - smaller houses

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- less paving
 - storm water management
 - Keep people living in the community they work in
 - Preserving open space
 - water/interactions with nature
 - Promote mixed-use development with a purpose
 - Must have a town center
 - Provide resources/access to low-income residents for implementing alternative energy solutions
 - Review/develop master plan to make sure things are planned for
 - Provide regional clearinghouse for greater purchasing power (co-op)
 - Strengthen school systems (quality, access, size, support)
 - Engage public and get more involvement of citizens
 - Get to know your public officials
 - Build sense of community/place
 - Support local/buy local
 - Invest in your community
 - Public service announcements
5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

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Granite State Future

Keene

Group C

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Berlin Claremont Dover Greenland X Keene Kingston
Laconia Littleton Manchester Nashua New London
Pembroke Plymouth
Other: _____

Small Group Facilitator Name: __Dan Reidy_____

Group Letter: _CCC_____

Number of people in your small group: ____12_____

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.

Focus 1

- Aging population
 - NH has trouble attracting young people but people my age (30-40's) are not from here
 - We lose the brightest and best; we educate them and they leave
 - Young people leave in their 20's
 - a student: I don't plan on staying for a long time after I graduate
 - There are more things to do elsewhere; more available down south or out west
 - Whether that is perception or reality doesn't matter
- In the state as a whole, there is an increasing immigrant population
- A number of people came after retiring
 - Family members are close
 - they choose to live here because they think the tax structure is to their

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advantage

- We need to look at different areas of the state
 - different reasons for moving here
 - Often students/new grads don't stay because they don't have the skills needed for jobs here
 - young people don't have skills needed to match to available jobs

Focus 2

- Proximity to services is poor in this region
 - access to social services is poor due to transportation
- Sprawl and rural development
 - = continued dependence on driving and fossil fuel
 - areas are not potentially available for public transportation
- A lot of land preservation and use of current use status
 - in New England generally, new development is harder in older places/towns (repurposing older areas) because they not set up for development
 - (ex – small towns on RT 101).
- Lots of small farms – amazed at how many there are
- Keene has developed downtown as a core and tried to redevelop downtown
 - that's a plus for the city but there is pressure to develop outside the bypass
 - There is pressure to balance development and preservation of land
 - There is a good balance in terms of land use. Good emphasis on preservation
 - the community tries to figure out a way to repurpose what's already been developed
- Good recreation thru bike trails, baseball fields, parks, and places for children to play
 - Skating rink and more hockey would be good
 - There has been effort for a vital downtown center – a core place to come to

Focus 3

- Non-auto transportation is virtually nonexistent
 - No local transportation options for people who don't have a license or car to go between towns or around town
 - This area doesn't lend itself well to transportation – there's no artery to drive
 - in NH alternative transportation has not been of interest to the state which is a problem
- Downtown Keene needs parking
 - we need a park and ride lot for people commuting from Peterborough and other places
 - existing commuter lots or commuter boards are not well advertised

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- mistrust is an issue for folks looking for a ride
- Existing public transportation is not good for work but good for running errands, etc
 - Not a schedule that can be used for getting to work

Focus 4

- We've had more flooding; electric outages; more frequency and intensity of storms due to climate change
 - problem in low lying areas
 - The city has a couple of climate adaptation plans
 - transportation emissions and a vibrant business community will contribute to air quality/climate problems – they are all interrelated
 - If we don't find a way to deal with air quality, it will limit growth
- We are not part of a natural gas pipeline, which limits fuel alternatives
 - need for alternative fuel options.
- NH state parks are not taken care of
 - NH is one of only a few states in which parks are funded solely by admission fees
 - the state doesn't provide any finances and the parks don't look attractive
- NH has cut back on budgets/bridges/infrastructure, which means people don't want to stay in the state
 - the state is not friendly to the use of alternative power, (ex hydroelectric power or solar)
 - there is no incentive to create alternative extra energy
 - The city of Keene has a group to encourage acquisition of conservation land, incentives for solar power
 - state doesn't fund Lchip program.

Focus 5

- NH has an unemployment rate lower than the national average
 - Keene does better than the rest of the state
 - Some people need 2 jobs to have a standard of living to support themselves – underemployed
 - This part of the state is one of the more expensive parts of the state to live in
 - this part of the state also has poverty
- Difficult to find land that's zoned for development, which makes land use more of an issue.
- Education – the state doesn't value education as a whole
 - The state underfunded the university system and local school system
 - If you want the state to prosper, why the cuts?
 - Having 3 colleges in a town this size is a huge asset.

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- Cheshire Medical is a huge employer and an economic engine
 - We have a good infrastructure and services
 - it's critical to keep needed funding in place
 - Surrounding towns are different
 - different pressures, development schemes
 - Can Keene absorb more?
2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

Most important topics and issues

- Affordable housing
 - good drinking water
 - education
 - transportation
 - Technology
 - if we want to attract people who can do jobs and retain the people who get educated, we need technology connection and broadband.
 - We want to be able to match education to jobs.
 - Another question: are there enough opportunities in this area to attract/keep young people?
 - What does it take to bring back a healthy portion of young people who have left – to contribute to a vibrant economy?
 - We haven't figured out what the talent needs of the economy are
 - This has to be a desirable place to live
 - How do we maintain the employer base we have – providing talent needed?
 - Number of children in NH is decreasing
 - With the aging population, it's tougher for hospitals to get Medicare reimbursement
 - harder for hospital bottom line.
 - We need to provide the skill set employers need
 - need a balance for young people who don't want to go to college – skills
 - Zoning process may be too difficult to encourage development
 - may need flexible zoning for new development
 - need to examine - is it too difficult to build in Keene or is it just right?
3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.

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- Attention to our infrastructure – it’s crumbling – roads and bridges
 - surface drainage systems because of intense frequent storms
- More ways to keep young people in area
 - there’s nothing to do
- Make the area more accessible to different groups of people
 - high speed rail would make commuting a more attractive option
 - could attract tourist if fair prices
- Need Broadband everywhere
- Need a plan – like a roadmap to set prioritize
- Interdependency of education and jobs
 - both important for a healthy workforce in the state
 - There’s a problem with job opportunities meshing with education/skills
- We need more collaboration across sectors/organizations/agencies
 - (local, state, and federal) for the greater good
- A significant portion of workforce in Keene doesn’t live here but commutes
 - How do we embrace them and make them part of the community (relates to housing, jobs, living here)?
 - What would it take to sustain the people coming after us to live here and enjoy it?
- Quality of life comes with employment
 - You want to come to an area that has a quality of life not just for a job
 - includes sense of community, which Keene has
- Quality of life won’t be the same for everyone
 - have to worry about becoming too big

4. What are your group’s specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?

Quality of life and quality of community.

- Make this area an attractive place to migrate to
 - make people to move here after college if they go to college somewhere else
- Physical infrastructure
 - have that in place to build on top of
- Transportation is key
- Community leaders are right there to be part of the dialogued – engaged interested leadership
- Volunteers in communities help to enhance communities by taking on responsibilities that need to be done

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- value of community
 - collaborate to effectively use resources
 - Invest in public school education to provide opportunity for every child in NH
 - getting more involved, motivating students
5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

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Granite State Future

Keene

Group D

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

| | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|------------|-----------|--------------|----------|
| Berlin | Claremont | Dover | Greenland | Keene | Kingston |
| Laconia | Littleton | Manchester | Nashua | New London | |
| Pembroke | Plymouth | | | | |

Other: _____

Focus 1

- Native, older
- Transcent/not native
- Aging population
- Mostly not native
- Loss of young
- Natives aging in place
- Young moving to warmer climates
 - Jobs – at least perception
- Increasing immigrant population – less so locally
- Retirees moving here – tax structure is good
- Employers need skilled employees – are they here?
- Need more parking in Keene
- Need park and ride to outside communities
- Some commuter lots but not marketed
 - Also feeling/question of safety
- Questions of system reliability
- Homeless population
 - Tent community
 - Also Ashuelot tent community
 - 2 shelters in town
 - Also hundred nights
 - Including children –
 - High frequency of reduced lunch

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- Have senior centers

Focus 3

- Non-auto transport does not exist
- Overnight (bus) only out of state
- No public transit out of town
- Limited bus transit
- Limited east/west access
 - One lane road each way
- More options needed
- Vt. Has rail
- Multi-use rail system – all 4 quads of city

Focus 4

- 2005 floods and other since
 - Increasing frequency
 - Losses of food, heat systems, etc.
- More frequent and intense storms
- Climate change
 - Impact on low-lying areas
- Keene has climate adaptation plans
- Links to economic vitality
- Air quality – Keene is in the bottom of a bowl
- Also wood stove emissions
- No natural gas pipeline
- Need alternative fuel sources
- State parks not well cared for
 - Only support through user fees
- Cutbacks on roads, infrastructure, etc.
- State not well prepared for creating incentives for alternative fuel development
- Keene provides tax credit for solar improvements
- Special fund for conservation of land from current use funds

Focus 5

- Our NH unemployment rate lower than nation
- People underemployed
 - Not getting jobs that can support yourself with one job
- Pockets of poverty
 - Some communities in particular
- Student population effects/skews rates
- Keene population doubles or more during the day

Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*

- Not so many development opportunities for industrial opportunities
- Education
 - State does not value
 - Including the University system
 - Need to fund University system for state to prosper
 - Underfunding in public schools as well
- 2 colleges is a huge asset (really 3+ colleges)
- Medical services – important economic engine
- Facilities are in place – need to keep funding
 - Issues however with surrounding towns

Land use:

- Poor proximity to services (access/transportation)
- More flooding
- Possibly from more construction
- Sprawl
 - Rural development's impact on transportation needs
 - Delivery of goods and services
- Good land use preservation and current usage rules
- Development in small towns
 - How to redevelop successfully?
- Many small farms
- Keene keeping its core development with historical heritage
- Healthy activities, parks/trails
- Need approval of local to Keene – Hockey rink

Patterns and Challenges:

- Affordable housing
- Good drinking water
- Education
- Transportation
- Technology – “fast roads” broadband
- Employment
- Young people coming and staying
 - Young work force attracts business – money to spend
- If influx of younger can we support?
- Need a healthy share coming back for thriving economy
- Jobs are more tech less manufacturing
- Maintain employer base
- Keene State and hospital are economic engine
 - Medicare reimbursement issues

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension

- Planning and zoning may be too difficult
- Main St. Keene – mix – maybe more flexible zoning
- Determination of what is best may take time

Values and Actions:

- Attention to infrastructure: roads, bridges, drainage, storm water
- More ways to keep young people (activities)
- Area more accessible
 - High speed rail to metro areas
 - Possible on East coast
 - Affordable, reduces cars on road
 - Also good for tourism
- Broadband everywhere
- Plan to accomplish this – road map
- Reduce fossil fuel use
- More power to regional planning
- Education and employment are inter-dependent
 - Job opportunities
- Global economy
- More communication and collaboration with agencies
 - Local, state, and federal

Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*





Granite State Future

Manchester

Group A

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Berlin Claremont Dover Greenland Keene Kingston
 Laconia Littleton **Manchester** Nashua New London
 Pembroke Plymouth

Other: _____

Small Group Facilitator Name: Paul- Facilitator, Molly- Scribe

Group Letter: AAA

Number of people in your small group: 8

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.

Focus Area 1:

- We are an 'aging' state
 - one participant didn't understand why it was a concern at all, another said it was a phenomenon not limited to this state
 - who will take care of us as we age if young people are leaving?
 - A couple participants said the free market will take care of 'us'
- Why are young people leaving?
 - High cost of housing, hard to find jobs
 - One participant observed she has a lot of friends that also grew up in Manchester and left have since come back to raise families
 - She said perhaps it's not an issue that is specific to Manchester

Focus Area 2:

- Policy to follow concentrated development practices
- The preservation of natural resources as well as existing buildings is important

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension



- Look to where we can use existing infrastructure
 - fix it up for re-use- instead of focus on building new
 - Concern that people are forced to conserve land because of taxes
 - Land is being preserved for tax purposes when it could be used for economic activity and more productivity

Focus Area 3:

- Surprised that NH is 5th highest housing costs
- Why is it so expensive?
 - Someone suggested local taxes
- NH has a high reliance on cars
 - concern as being a pedestrian and having such high traffic
 - A request for more footpaths, which is a safe alternative for pedestrians to get around in rural areas in the state
 - The more roads we build, the more we have to maintain them
 - How do we plan in a thoughtful way so we don't have to get in our cars every time to get what we need?
 - design for livability and walk-ability
 - Concern of why we need zoning at all
 - Agenda 21 will have complete and utter control of our lives
 - Building codes increase costs and discourage high-density development

Focus Area 4:

- Loss of open space, but second most forested state
- How does it compare to the rest of the nation? Request for more context
- Concern that only 10% of water and aquifers protected
- Reduce dependency on gasoline
- We continue to build in a way that is not accommodating for a changing climate
- Look to ways we can be more resourceful where we live
 - how to use our more local environment instead of relying on resources from afar

Focus Area 5:

- Smaller businesses, less than 25 people, did better during this economic downturn.
 - Fewer restrictions for small businesses can be helpful to our economic vitality
 - How to make home based businesses or small businesses more accessible for people to start and sustain?
 - reduce obstacles so they can flourish
 - Concern that people that are the planners are not as informed
 - that the voices of small business owners need to be considered
 - Idea for a public bank in NH to help fund this
- Concern for public schools - issues such as under resourced, drop-out rates, performance levels not so well

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension

- connecting it to why young people may want to move out
- if public schools are strong, young families will not leave
- Low poverty level in the state
 - poverty is concentrated in specific areas- so other areas don't benefit as a result (point wasn't clarified)
- Concern from several participants about education system not best supporting young people.

2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

What are the most important topics and issues to be discussed?

- Three people wanted educational reform;
- Two people expressed Federal grant money means federal control
 - We don't need the federal government
 - NH should be self sufficient
 - we don't need the federal government be more resourceful
 - The less government the better
- Making livable communities
 - a place where people want to live and stay
 - it means different things to different people
- Three people expressed need to 'reduce housing costs', and have more 'affordable housing';
- Energy issues - where and how we get our resources
- Need for early childhood education
- State is diverse as well as the lifestyles we choose to live

Do you see any patterns across the focus areas?

- Housing, energy and education
- We have gone away from self-governing
- Need to be more resourceful
- Pattern of all discussion points matching and mirrors the federal sustainability initiative

What do you see as our biggest challenges?

Facilitator proposed that we have already answered this, a few group members agreed.

3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.
- Resources
 - A lack of money, how can we bring in more?
 - How do we make up for a loss of budget from federal money if this is what we want to be receiving less of?
 - Granite State Future is a massive federal top down program that has mandatory outcomes that will take away private property rights

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension

- Participant is appreciative of this process and the opportunity to discuss HOUSING
 - Education and employment opportunities - an issue which participants wished they could explore more.
4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?

 5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.
 - Is Granite State Future going against local structures? Genuine question, wants to better understand
 - Community initiatives - this Granite State Future - mirrors agenda 21

Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*





Granite State Future

Manchester

Group B

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

| | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|------------|----------|
| Berlin | Claremont | Dover | Greenland | Keene | Kingston |
| Laconia | Littleton | <u>Manchester</u> | Nashua | New London | |
| Pembroke | Plymouth | | | | |

Other: _____

Small Group Facilitator Name: _____ Cara C _____

Group Letter: ___Group BBB_____

Number of people in your small group: _____

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.

Focus 1

- Building over 55 communities is aiding (encourages) an increasing age in NH
- Baby boomers are increasing over age people
 - Manchester is a refugee city which is aiding in low income housing
 - Manchester's mayor is concerned with the growing refugee population
 - Does Manchester have the resources to maintain the refugee pop?
- Other Towns are using Manchester as a dumping ground for low income housing
 - Some type of refugee assistance up to 5 years?
- The slow economy will affect the funds to address the refugee problem
- 25-29 years old are leaving Manchester/NH -Manchester has transformed its mill area from a low wage area to a high tech area, high wage area

Focus 2

- Loss of forest in last 20 years
- 88% of NH is still forested
- Like that NH is naturally diverse

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension



- Drive north to see forest and south to be in an urbanized setting
- Growing local produce is making a comeback
- Spending a lot of money on transportation in NH
 - No public transportation (Some disagreed with this statement)
 - In Manchester area, you see a lot of empty buses
 - Park and rides are swamped with commuters
 - Make a decision where you want to live based on whether or not they have public transportation.
 - Lack of information about public transportation

Focus 3

- Like the option of having their own car
 - Good taxi service
 - Got into the mindset of being able to drive long distances
 - Good jobs are located further away from where their initial homestead is located
 - People are locked into an area due to mortgage
 - People live in NH and work in MA
- People who live in NH and work in MA, would like to find a comparable job in NH
 - Rental costs have not gone down even in a recession - Pressure on the rental market

Focus 4

- Energy efficiency
- Many NH older facilities are not energy efficient
 - Should be incentive to encourage energy efficiency
- There is a need to improve
- Community's natural environment have remained stable
 - Don't like the granite curbs
 - Downtown revitalization programs
 - Nashua took advantage, Manchester a little
- High populations of rental, who may not have the same attachment as an owner, which leads to a lower aesthetic appeal
- Sound walls, maintained by the state, are often defaced
- More pride in area
- Graffiti is an issue along state highways
- The weather has been relatively stable
- Some feel that there are more floods in Manchester area

Focus 5

- Poverty rates go with the economy
- Appear that there is a subculture accepting of poverty

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension

- Some people are waiting for their check from the Gov., instead going out to find work - Frustrating
 - Pressure on the Manchester school district to address overcrowding
 - Area towns are deciding to move their kids out of the Manchester area due to overcrowding
 - Higher education is good
 - Financially it is challenging if not impossible
 - Employment seems to be difficult
 - Not many job are there and for the one that are, there are few
2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

Patterns and Biggest Challenges

- Employment opportunities
 - Not many businesses are starting and not many moving here.
 - Ability to get housing
 - Having skilled job and getting skilled workers
 - Why are we (NH) not providing the skilled workers that the employers want?
 - College is overrated
 - Need to be easier to start a business if you cannot find a job.
 - Need to be a partnership between the schools and the employers
 - Salable skills
3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.
4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?
- Remove the barriers to homeownership
 - Private property rights need to be respected (Northern Pass info shared) -High poverty rates causing food banks to be over stressed (No or low reserves)
 - Lobby our legislators to work toward getting more businesses and jobs in NH. Start businesses in NH The money spent on the food served at the college are more elaborate than they need to be. Could save money to lower education costs.
5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.
- Final Thoughts

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension



Granite State Future

Manchester

Group C

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Berlin Claremont Dover Greenland Keene Kingston
 Laconia Littleton Manchester Nashua New London
 Pembroke Plymouth
 Other: _____

Small Group Facilitator Name: _____ Dan R _____

Group Letter: ___ Group Ccc _____

Number of people in your small group: _____ 8 _____

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.
 - Diversity
 - Relocated refugees
 - Aging population
 - Housing
 - Land use
 - Transportation
 - employment

2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

Focus one:

- Building over 55 communities is aiding (encourages) an increasing age in NH.
- Baby boomers are increasing over age people -Manchester is a refugee city which is aiding in low income housing -Manchester's mayor is concerned with the growing refugee population - Does Manchester has the resources to maintain the refugee pop

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension



- Other Towns are using Manchester as a dumping group for low income housing -Some type of refugee assistance up to 5 years?
- The slow economy will affect the funds to address the refugee problem.
- 25-29 years old are leaving Manchester/NH -Manchester has transformed its mill area from a low wage area to a high tech area, high wage area

Focus two:

- Residential single families
- Conserved lands
- Parks and open space in Manchester
- Vacant lots
- Some neighborhoods seem to get more attention
- Dense population
- Loss of forest in last 20 years
- 88% of NH is still forested
- Like that NH is naturally diverse. Drive north to see forest and south to be in an urbanized setting.
- Growing local produce is making a comeback -Spending a lot of money on transportation in NH - No public transportation (Some disagreed with this statement) -In Manchester area, you see a lot of empty buses -Park and rides are swamped with commuters -Make a decision where you want to live base on whether or not they have public transportation.
- Lack of information about public transportation

Focus Three:

- Brookline all wells, no public sewer
- More wells than I thought in NH
- Mix of infrastructure
- Brookline transportation works = everyone has a car
- Youth and aging population has a harder time getting to activities
- Mobility issues, not everyone has a car
- Some transportation to doctors' appointments exists through hospitals
- One person thinks there should be no bus that family members can drive people around
- Churches support transportation for elderly
- Everyone in my town of Meredith takes care of themselves and drives themselves
- Everyone owns their own home in Meredith
- Affordable housing is an issue in most places
- Different determination of affordable housing
- Challenge finding home owners to buy the homes that are out there
- Like the option of having their own car -Good taxi service -Got into the mindset of being able to drive long distances -Good jobs are located further away from where their initial homestead is located -People are lock into an area due to mortgage -People live in NH and work in MA.
- People who live in NH and work in MA, would like to find a comparable job in NH -Rental costs have not gone down even in a recession -Pressure on the rental market

Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*



Focus Four: Natural environment and ...

- Brookline has businesses a conservation commission
- Conservation is good but I don't like the easements
- Energy efficiency

Focus Five:

- Multifamily and businesses for a mix in an area, less zoning
- Challenge that vets don't have jobs
- Blue collar workers perceived by those without jobs as ...

3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.

- Biggest challenge is need more jobs coming to the state
- Some would like a right to work bill in NH
- Should be more tax friendly for business
- We have high energy costs in NH
- One person does not like "Reggie"
- Why isn't hydroelectric power stopping rather than going through?

4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?

Property rights and long term use: is it a barrier to investment that imminent domain might come through and ruin your land

5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension



Granite State Future

Berlin

Group A

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Berlin Claremont Dover Greenland Keene Kingston
Laconia Littleton Manchester Nashua New London
Pembroke Plymouth

Other: _____

Small Group Facilitator Name: ____Molly____ __Pam____

Group Letter: ____Group AAA____

Number of people in your small group: __seven plus facilitator and note taker

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.

Focus 1:

- Conway sent individual to Berlin
- More resources, rent is cheaper, HUD wait is long and those who get here drain on resources when state benefits end
- Welfare needs exchange of community services for resources.

Focus 2 – Use of land – pages 11-13:

- NH publish reports for every dollar spent in tourism, the state gets 10 dollars back
- City pushes industry rather than tourism – industry is not as viable a source of income as it used to be
- Technical industry welcome
- Need qualifications for job – degrees
- Tourism means a lot to Northern Coos –
 - Northern Pass will hurt it
 - tourism jobs are difficult

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- the grand hotels are hard to work for and tourism jobs are low pay
- lots of the staff are brought in - overseas program
- local jobs are needed
- How we use land – impact of WMNF on economic development
 - Government has lots of land “out of use” what is the right balance? (Between conservation and development)
- Conserved land does draw tourism
- Fluoride in water
 - Berlin has chlorine in water
 - concern about quality of water, lack of animal shelters
- Grocery stores – lack of – serves many demographics, not a lot of choice
 - access to medicine

Focus 3 – how we live and move: 14-17

- Does not reflect Coos well
 - houses are under 50K
 - apartment dwellings are cheaper
 - extremely rural, lots of low income and elderly
 - some cannot afford to drive to their jobs → need to find some funding for transportation programs here
 - reimbursement rates is the same as urban places (we travel further)
 - not enough apartments to go around for disabled and section 8
 - have to pass housing standards to qualify for HUD vouchers
 - can you get fuel assistance while on sec 8
- Where we live
 - we don’t have specialized health services – CMC, Dartmouth, Portland
 - people don’t have cars or funds to get there
 - Medicare/Medicaid difficult to get timely reimbursement for driving
 - not enough health insurance for adults – like healthy kids

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- access to services and home visits – not feasible here in Coos (?)

Focus 4 – Environment: 17-20

- Need more recycling centers
- Berlin does not require recycling for businesses
- Littleton pay to throw
- Berlin is starting to be more enforcement about recycling – Lancaster needs to buy bags
- Alternate fuels – may have heard about alternate fueling station
- Berlin Housing authority- pellet silo – pellet boilers
- Coos lots of renewable, biomass, solar for residential – state rebate, RGGI money goes back to communities –
- Climate change is wonderful, gardening season is now about 3 weeks longer than normal!

Focus 5 – community info:

- Disparity between Coos and the rest of the state – as well as other pockets of low income, etc.
- we should really have Portland to Montreal rail link – line needs to be re “laid” demise of rail
- education opportunities – WMCC – has a 2 + 2 program – a good thing
 - project running start – helps prepare high school students get credits while still in high school
 - more towers needed to get better broadband, makes us less isolated
 - cell phone towers needed too
- Whitefield head start is closing – sequestration.
- NH gets taxed for everything – but not income and sales – for everything else – nickel and dime
- See lots of interconnection between focus areas
 - themes that pop out - how we can make NH the best place for everyone to live and work
- Jobs, housing, affordability, better understanding of Coos in Concord and points beyond
 - transportation, always defined by our deficits
 - there are so many positives – volunteers, sense of togetherness
 - how do we step back and understand our real issues but how do we see our opportunities and strengths (willing to have discussions, etc.)

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension

- Population density – Bedford, used to be rural and now there are lots of expenses
- What do we value about our area?
- Hotel in downtown – hotel in center of downtown Berlin → hotel would be an eyesore

2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

Any patterns?

(Example – across the four of the five areas – jobs mentioned – so a theme)

- Several people brought up internet access
- Access to higher education, jobs, creating high tech opportunities
 - ground level of structure for education
- New economy – potential change for rural areas – influence of internet
- Things are difficult but not as bad as 2008
 - Coos independent Garnet Hill and ISSI - now gone
 - how to try and revive that spirit - Lots of Berlin's all across the country
 - east and west coasts better off than mid/plain

Other patterns or challenges:

- More programs for teens needed
- Crime rate for the area seems high
 - although it may not be admitted, drugs are prevalent in neighborhoods
 - Cops turn their heads – don't see it
- Schools impressed with the schools in the area (like the system so far)
- Actions to help move forward.
- Full time kindergarten
- Need local facility for mental health services
- More transportation
- Lancaster has youth center – Colebrook too (Berlin teen center cut)

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3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.

Final Priority – common thought or idea.

- Finding a balance between job opportunities for young people activities for families, for teenagers, all different points that come out that
- Ensuring opportunity for younger people
- Support system in place for people with fixed income
- Affordable housing public transportation, services,
- Beauty of the communities small towns quaint
 - each of our communities look at what is valuable,
 - Berlin has control of zoning, no northern pass
- Collaboration – active point – between towns and services
- Preserve and revive – also a collaboration issue
- Second class citizens in many respects
 - Nashua can scream louder
 - bring awareness that there are differences between north and south
 - flip NH - see other perspectives

****their state promised jobs but didn't follow through related to the Prison****

4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?

What topics are of interest – report out

- Draw young people (young vs. old)
 - different perspectives on voting, baby boomers
- Lack of opportunity
- Can we afford burials (?)
- Not all older people are poor
- Jefferson attracts retirees
- How can we take advantage of their skills and get them involved – social capital – NH big state for volunteerism

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- How we provide services – doesn't have to be young graduates who get jobs?
 - Lots of elderly people want part time jobs – work for businesses
 - Good paying jobs needed
 - North Conway hires foreigners, summer hires → local people need those jobs
 - Provide services – all the silos, work together
 - Too many turf issues → need to get agencies to work together
 - Veterans have a van that travels south for medical patients, but have to work with hospitals too (more collaboration)
 - Errol to Shelburne – area needs to collaborate between communities
 - Lots of duplication – schools are talking, but Berlin is excluded – people like things the way they are
 - No support groups for illnesses like cancer and other health issues
 - narcotics anonymous closest in Woodsville,
 - Is there really not support here? We need to come together
5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*





How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Small Group Facilitator Name: Mary Lou Krambeer

Group Letter BBB

Number of people in your small group: 8

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

Nota Bene: Two of the eight group members felt strongly that the data was open to question, that private individual effort preferred over government taxpayer funded actions that entire conversation pivots upon sources of funds for recommendations.

1. Finalize a list of **the key topics raised by your group for each focus area** and note the **issues your group wants to address/discuss.**

Focus 1. Who lives in NH

- ½ of pop. increase from people migrating in
 - Fewer people in NH means a smaller tax base
 - People “from away” means that they may not have same values as current residents.
- students leave after H.S., go to college and don’t come back
 - This may be the cause of region’s higher % of workers without college education.
- Current and new residents recognize the need to make tradeoffs in order to live here.
- With an older population fewer young people as family support
 - this is distinctly North Country
 - average age going up, lowest in young population, highest in low income
- Only JOBS will attract people to North Country, therefore need to attract and support small **business as driver of economic development.**

Focus 2. How we use land

- How many towns have zoning re: land use?
 - majority do have zoning
 - Some whole town as the zoning district
 - Unincorporated towns have county land use zoning.
- Traditionally had a few large landowners (mill owners)
 - Now land owned in smaller parcels by absentee owners who seek shorter term revenue vs. long term stewardship

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension



- See on hillsides timber being harvested in unsustainable ways.
- Should forest be state or federal owned, community owned or totally private owned?
 - Feds do pay PILOT to towns.
 - These payments may actually be at a higher rate than current use property taxes.
 - In town of Errol the changing tax base has become a significant issue.
- Traditionally significant portion of the population lived from woods employment
 - Recent creation of community owned/managed forests
 - Towns cannot rely upon education funding from state or federal government
 - Therefore need local tax support / income from management of community forests

Focus 3. Where we live, how we get around. Housing transportation infrastructure

- Region has airports but not for commercial traffic.
- Strongly felt need to use bus to travel to Boston
 - Current route is via Concord
 - Desire for alternative route via route 16
 - Can state shift subsidies for improved mass transit routes?
 - Tie together routes in a West Ossipee intermodal hub?
- Bike corridor from Franconia to Twin Mountain planned but never built
 - Is the obstacle capital cost?

***Of significant importance to group was the impact of gas tax on cost of transportation paid by North Country. Has the lowest rate of transportation support. The issue is distribution of the gas tax revenue to regions roads that need it in right kinds of projects. Felt that currently experiencing consequences of a misallocation of gas tax revenues. Repairs must come from local taxes.

➤ Housing

Question validity of page 14 arrow four statement re “little diversity and growth” in housing stock

- Question use of phrase “little diversity”
- Feel may be pushing cluster housing.
- Why no growth in affordable housing?
 - Pent up need:
 - saw 300 applicants in N Conway for 32 units designed for energy savings but each unit cost \$200k to build
 - Housing development depends upon community needs
 - The master plan aims to preserve open space but the 200 ft. frontage per house causes sprawl; cluster housing keeps preserves open space.
- Jobs
 - Focus upon recreation industry future will lock North Country into minimum wage jobs
 - In this transition time the region is experiencing a disconnect between this strategy and need for life sustaining incomes
- Some Berlin buildings need to be taken down
 - Otherwise they take up the time of police – domestic violence, drugs, and arson

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension

- Vacant or neglected buildings become crowded and have absentee landlords
- Taking them down may lose tax base but fewer city resources spent on vacant buildings
- In North Country, greater need for attention to infrastructure
 - Transportation costs are higher
 - Housing and utility costs are higher
 - second homes pay property tax without requiring full time service

Focus 4. Natural environment

- Challenge to science of climate change
 - Is climate changing by people or by natural forces?
 - Are more 'extreme storms' actually occurring?

***Noted attention paid to Southern NH which has more paved over surface. Of two major ice storms 1998 one affected North Country but not emphasized.

***Objections raised to Northern Pass design of the line (towers instead of buried lines).

- Support alternative energy sources but does the cost of investment pay out little in local return
 - Will see little benefit to Androscoggin Valley from Northern Pass
 - retrofit of town buildings to use pellet boilers a savings to taxpayer only if energy costs savings returned to taxpayers
- Support energy efficiency
 - Questioning whether windmills viable (not moving when drive by them) and cost of alter landscape views

Need regional conversations about wind farms by private companies to include how does corporate profit come back to sufficiently benefit the town beyond impact of property taxes

- Noted a positive development in the cooperative building of solar
 - Resident purchases equipment with labor contributed by folks with experience doing installation.

Focus 5. Community and Economic Vitality

- Concerned about high percentage with high school diploma and percent with low college degree.
 - Must address related issue of youth not returning after college.
 - Highest poverty rate
 - High unemployment
- Questioning page 20 first sentence
 - What is meant by "financial investment"?
 - Two of us feel that should not be by government, private capital investment not a problem
- Berlin Community College tries to keep its programs and is sole source of higher education in Berlin area
 - Without state attention to North Country education needs, region will be greater burden to state

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- State investment required ... desire to reach same outcome but would take different paths to get there
- A specific North Country identity is desirable
 - Region uses different methods to reach solutions than in other parts of state

2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

Most important topics & issues. Biggest challenges.

Focus 1. Demographics.

- Region dominated by single family homes. Some Ok with, some reject use of cluster housing.
- Two members felt that all topics / focus areas have to do with taxation.
- If region had living wage jobs, all other issues addressed.
- Population loss of youth. How to keep and attract younger population.

Focus 2. Land and Impacts of Choices

- Costs and benefits of changes in current uses of land
 - See change in way harvesting wood for short term profit has generations of impact
- Everyone a steward of their own private property, important to not have outsiders come tell owner how to use land.
- Identifying priorities assumes there is money to spend
 - Government cannot produce money, has to steal via taxation.
- Positive about investment in community centers promoting a sense of community
 - Very important and as a taxpayer and will pay for it. Promotes a vital social network
 - Underscore value of community forest that owns land, manage timber, and promotes sustainable tree growth
- Agree on need to guide land use by community spirit but outside forces of county and state government either stop town's actions or come in and do it differently
 - E.g. what weight should town opinion have with private development?
- Balance conservation and public development
 - Community forest one model, national / state forests another
 - Desire balance between green growth and grey growth (infrastructure)

3. Housing, transportation

- Geographic isolation
 - Berlin hampered without 93 as Littleton with I-93 has developed
- Misallocation of gas tax revenues
 - Taxation is confiscatory by government authority
- Establish a mass transportation on route 16 from North Country to Seacoast to Boston
 - Region needs completion of an East - West transportation corridor with route 2.
 - Encourage passenger rail from Montreal to Portland through North Country. This worked in the past.

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- Need to balance recreational vehicle use (snow mobiles) income to region vs. local costs

Focus 4. Natural environment, etc.

- Energy independence, reduction of fossil fuel use desirable.
- Diversity of energy on right path in North Country.
- Abandonment of hydro energy not understood. Why no dams being put in but taken out.
- Climate change not a serious problem.
- If Northern Pass takes place, transmission lines need to be underground (and bury existing transmission lines region already has).
- Deal with climate change
 - Use of wood pellets desired
 - Berlin Housing Authority and St Kieran's Church installed pellet boilers as renewable energy
 - Spray foam insulation to older homes
 - Encourage recycling vs. landfill as energy savings
 - Seek cooperative/collaborative central solutions for energy efficiency that are beyond individuals or communities ability to afford, e.g. biomass boiler for district heating
 - Believe man made climate change will affect quality of life re species diversity etc.

5 community economic vitality

- Unemployment biggest challenge
 - Want see more locally supported agriculture (hydroponics, etc.)
 - Two group members cited creation of living wage jobs. Detriment is rules and regulations.
 - Support jobs and unemployment via education support.
 - All tax incentives are not bad. E.g. Fed Ex, Apple Computer had SBA loans so gov't has a role at start-up
 - Need to support creative, energetic, brilliant people with new enterprises
 - Community, cooperation and collaboration within region need to solve local problems, e.g. waste management.
 - Promote community investment in each other: local agriculture, create jobs, build community.
3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group. *Skipped due to time*
4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?
- General theme is that the statistics provided demonstrate that the North Country has different needs and desires to sustain its identity, natural and cultural characteristics

Expensive in to live in rural NH

- High transportation/heating costs and lower wages
- Higher % of income spent on day to day living, less left for discretionary spending
- This North Country character is strength
 - Need policies sustain identity within state's context
 - Natural and cultural characteristics include character, quality of life

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***Part of group
people. Would

good. Firm belief that strong independent individuals make for stronger communities. Others in group put more emphasis on the greater good of the community through public initiatives

5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

○ Character includes self-reliance and a concern for the common good puts emphasis on individual rights and self-reliant not take from others in form of taxes for common



**Granite State Future
Berlin**

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Group C

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

XXXBerlin Claremont Dover Greenland Keene Kingston
 Laconia Littleton Manchester Nashua New London
 Pembroke Plymouth

Other: _____

Small Group Facilitator Name: __Cara Cargill_____Scribe Ann
Hamilton_____

Group Letter: _CCC_____

Number of people in your small group: ____12_____

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.

Focus topic one: Who Lives in New Hampshire?

- *Opinion:* we don't want more people; houses are cheap; NH has the natural resources & a smaller population
- People come up here to get away from the highway
 - Like the area aesthetic beauty, hiking, fishing, natural assets
 - But locals may want Berlin to stay a secret
 - Young people migrating out, no one coming in, not sure if they want newcomers they don't know
- Don't embrace change and adapt well—like things as they have always been
- Late adult population—not enough jobs to bring in 20 year olds
 - younger populations might adapt better because they have to
 - but, very small young population—not many jobs
 - Older population—over 60—keep money close, own what they have—six banks (some money),
- Decline in young people—especially in the Great North Woods area
 - What about people coming into their own in their 30's
 - In general rural young people move away
 - The ones that are coming back are so self-sufficient and bring their jobs with them or support themselves
 - Who takes care of the older generation?
- Limited higher education, people come up here because they love it

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- Get an education but can't get job that pays for more than student loans, not a livable wage
- Brain drain with the population—knowledge from retirees may be lost
- Many jobs make 30% less because of location
- necessities more expensive (except gas)
- housing less expensive but taxes higher due to smaller tax base
- Locals have deep roots & know families for generations
 - comfort as a parent to know families
 - Does that make it a safe and secret place?
 - People don't know their neighbors in other places, but in Berlin that doesn't happen.

Focus group two: How we use land and impacts of our choices

- Berlin in the hub with high speed internet and cell service
- Recreation: one of the biggest job producers
 - Preserving the land key for people
 - Conflict between tourists, snow machines and ATV's
- Important to preserve natural beauty but expand use of recreation vehicles
 - more fun for people to come up here
 - support other local businesses, gas stations, hotels, restaurants
- Like having so much forests
 - But, worry as much is being bought up for conservation groups
 - means that the tax base is reduced
 - Federal government is buying land to protect it → causes differences of opinions
- NH policies on land use conflict regarding how we actually use it
 - Where we once had farm land, now it is forested
 - less incentive to own land and grow something
 - 2nd largest Farmers Market in state of NH but no one is growing food locally
 - Would like to see small family farm get the same incentives as the big incentives
- Lacking space for teens
 - in past YMCA built for teens (Not available today)
 - Need a community center for teens → lots for young people & elderly
 - but teens as a whole don't have many options
- The town used to have 10+ churches
 - Now 2 or 3
 - Building that we are in now was a church until last year
- Elderly may be isolated—same issue for the rest of the north country
 - Few things to do but no way to get there

Focus group three: how we move around

- Public transportation only available for elderly and medical transportation
 - There is a trolley, but stops are not known
 - we might need a secret password to get a ride

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- East side has sidewalks, no one else have them
 - in winter sidewalks are not usable
 - Walkability is an issue, poor lighting, getting out and around the community
- A few years ago, NH got together to collaborate about providing public transportation
- Housing
 - built new buildings but waiting lists
 - Assisted living taken up by the mental health clients or people with disabilities
 - If no assisted living, need to have more options available
- Important to keep people in homes
 - cheaper than nursing homes
 - we could use federal subsidies for seniors and local organizations
 - provide services for little money
- There are huge properties that have single people
 - Ne or two people living in them → keeping them heated, etc. at great expense

Focus group four: your communities natural environment

- Old homes, hard and expensive to heat
 - Tri county Cap weatherization—huge waiting list
 - More money for fuel assistance than weatherization
 - Other programs came with lots of restrictions (can't fulfill locally)
- Everything comes and goes—a committee does a study then leaves
- People getting into energy diversity—wood, now wood pellets
 - A program to bring more solar options available “energy raising” to bring people to see
 - Preserve their natural resources: what about Northern Pass project? Would hurt jobs in the local area.
 - Energy would go to Southern New England, not help locals.
- Our tax structure
 - we don't tax how much energy is produced
 - policy planning issues should be changed unlike VT (i.e. dams on the river generating power for companies, not locals)
 - Might be some creative ways to capture some of the power, taxes, etc., for local communities
 - Northeast Utilities offer choice of where you get your power from

Focus group five: Community & Economic Vitality

- Trend toward online higher education
 - Plus opportunities for other local businesses
- Hard for people to afford health care
 - An economic developer would be affordable health care
 - People hold onto their jobs to keep their health care
- What about a sales tax
 - Make things more affordable

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- Could be cheaper than surrounding states
 - Need to control where tax money goes—make it go to specific funds
2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.
 3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.
 4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?
 - Circle with infrastructure in the middle—all are connected
 - Transportation
 - consider rail service - it might be cheaper
 - High skilled and well-paid job creation
 - allows people to live in the area
 - K-12 and beyond education needs to be looked at to provide students with the best head start to do well in their future life
 - Taxes—connecting taxes where they are generated to a specific area, not a general fund
 - Infrastructure—high-speed internet/walkable communities/livability
 - State of NH using computers that are almost 10 years old (old technology)
 - Health Care/Insurance (health care is available but want to attract more specialists to the area)

Biggest challenges:

- Preserving the natural environment should be a priority
- Fairer taxes
 - so that people can afford to stay in their homes
- Job creation
 - Create and Retain high value jobs to attract people back into the area
 - we have a lot of really talented people but they need health insurance
 - Need to get higher paying jobs that don't rely on seasonal influx of tourists—low paying, low skilled jobs
 - Berlin has skilled workers running their own businesses out of their home
- Turning out high school graduates that haven't had the opportunity for many education classes due to local budget cuts
- So much housing and not enough people
- Development of trains for transportation of goods as well as commuter traffic/tourists
 - Difficult in certain areas of NH to get from Point A to Point B (i.e. East/West in southern NH)
- Traffic in highly congested areas
 - Next to impossible in certain areas i.e. Conway in summer

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- Conversations happen over and over again—time to move forward
- When people move here, they

really struggle with the isolation of the area

- Cultural, shopping, community activities

5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

Granite State Future

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Pembroke

Group A

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|----------|
| Berlin | Claremont | Dover | Greenland | Keene | Kingston |
| Laconia | Littleton | Manchester | Nashua | New London | |
| Pembroke | Plymouth | | | | |

Other: _____

Small Group Facilitator Name: Charlene Baxter

Group Letter: Group AAA

Number of people in your small group: 6

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.

Education
Energy
Demographics
Transportation
Environment
Government
Housing
Planning

2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

Focus one:

- Population is growing.
- Much more traffic.
- Aging population, fewer children replenishing the graduating ones
- Less “old family names” and more influx of new families = greater diversity

Focus two:

- Determined by the way we use cars – reflects what goods are available to consumers and proximity to services

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- Large box stores are negatively impacting the small retailers
- Farms are going away, government has purchased them and now that we want more local grown, it is not as available
- “Factory” farms have negatively impacted the health of the small farmers
- We have lost the local “granges” and gathering spots

Focus three:

- You need a car to do anything, receive services, work, shop, etc.
- Public transportation system is not strong
- Should explore bringing back rail lines so that people can move about the state
- Looking at the additional cost of services that will be needed in each of the communities will be excessive
- The NH laws are too allowing of cheap and affordable housing to be constructed instead of building more attractive, quality homes that will attract people to a community

Focus four:

- There are way too many people and it has an adverse effect on the environment
- The state does not adequately prepare for the preservation of the environment and the growth of the population
- Because we need to have cars for everything, we perpetuate pollution issues, infrastructure maintenance issues (more and wider roads)
- We need to invest more in mass transit options
- Until the costs of gas are higher, people will continue to use personal vehicles
 - Make it too expensive so that mass transit is more attractive
- Consider utilizing school busses that sit idle during the day for public transportation
- Have more children walk to school, meets needs for increasing exercise opportunities for kids

Focus five:

- Our economy has been hurt by the free trade agreements, losing the little guy
 - The big box retailers are overtaking the small retailer
- Our community (Pittsfield) has been successful with bringing in unique/nice type manufacturing companies
 - We are looking to attract more of these types into our area
- Increase of dual income families so that there is less of a connection to the community because they are working outside of their own towns
- Finding more of a need to build attachments to existing homes to allow for aging parents and returning grown children
 - Sandwich generation effects
- Pittsfield is changing its education focus to be more of a “student centered learning” environment
 - We received funds for this restructure from a grant

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- This is an investment that will build upon our ability to attract more families into the area
 - Pittsfield has suffered from past lack of zoning restrictions so it has seen a lot of low income housing built
 - This has attracted a group of citizens from Concord that utilize social services without returning funds to the community
 - We do not adequately work towards adaptive re-use of buildings
 - Example given was Concord Theater
3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.
- The state needs to adjust the tax structure
 - find a better way to give money back to the towns
 - Reconsider the way we are creating and delivering services
 - Fire, Police, and eliminating redundancies in expenditures amongst the towns
 - Create regionalized purchasing networks to create efficiencies
 - Concern with regionalization is there will be increased bureaucracy that determines unfairly where the money is spent
 - Example given in CA money was allocated for children but the money actually went to fund teacher's pensions
 - This did not impact the children at all
 - In order to attract more 20-somethings, create more good jobs
 - The biggest obstacle is the "Live Free or Die" mentality that prevents people from doing necessarily the "right thing"
4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?
- Create more outdoor recreation facilities, focus on natural environment
 - The younger generation is attracted to healthy lifestyles
 - Examples given were Colorado and Oregon, two states that have dedicated resources to preserving and enhancing recreation availability
 - In order to attract more seniors, we need to have more attractive and affordable housing opportunities
 - Increase aptitude in statewide resources to assist in planning and development with a focus on looking ahead more than 10 years
 - Create a government/private partnership in all of these planning areas so that progress can happen
 - Planning and zoning should look at the master plan and set the regulations that fall in line with that
 - Too many "deals" are made that vary from the master plan
5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

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The three things that the group feels are the most important things that need to be addressed:

- Get citizens to participate more
- Get more involved in town meetings, local government issues and have a voice
- This will decrease the feeling of distrust in the government
 - o Examples of what has worked in local areas to get this engagement:
 - Pittsfield summarized the meetings in a newsletter to help educate the community on the happenings at local meetings
 - o Invite people to participate and provide honest and full information
 - o Builds trust in the decision makers when the questions that are asked are answered honestly
- Education
 - o Support the UNH college system financially to make it affordable
 - o Bring back the voucher system
 - o Support more of the community college systems
 - o Provide more technical and skilled trade training to support the needs of the state
 - o Challenge the educational value of the mandates handed down
 - o Get rid of the sending of money to DC then having it come back to NH
 - It is coercive and inefficient
- Energy
 - o Invest in energy efficiency efforts, testing, and improvements
 - o Utilize federal and state initiatives to help subsidize the costs of energy efficiency improvements that need to be made in homes, schools, businesses, etc.
 - o Explore solar power options for municipal buildings
 - o Create a “green town” to use as an example
 - o Regional mass transportation initiatives need to be explored

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**Small
Fleming
Group Letter: B**

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Berlin Claremont Dover Greenland Keene Kingston
Laconia Littleton Manchester Nashua New London
Pembroke Plymouth
Other: _____

Number of people in your small group: 7

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.
 - Older professional workforce
 - Fewer young people
 - Population is aging
 - Maintaining bad roads/bad water
 - Going to cost a lot of money but even more later
 - Poverty is creeping up
 - Households were getting bigger
 - Fewer people able to live alone
 - Few incentives for landlords to make things energy efficient
 - Greater immigrant population
 - Putting pressure on local districts
 - Balance of development and protection of natural beauty
 - High dependence on property taxes
 - Fewer college educated people because people can't afford to go to school
 - Weather is changing
 - more severe storms, loss of food resources (increase in prices)
 - More local farmers
 - They need to be supported
 - Confusion between state/federal/local responsibilities
 - Lottery money is going to education

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2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.
 - Loss of available professional jobs is causing young people to leave the state
 - somewhat of a cycle
 - Employers having trouble finding out which workers are available
 - More counseling from employers
 - Roads and bridges (infrastructure) is in need of repair
 - Has an impact on social infrastructure (lack of revenue)
3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.
 - More businesses/jobs are needed in the state (at all levels)
 - Emphasis on manufacturing
 - Recreation
 - Needed to attract people to the state
 - More attractions needed for young people
 - There is a lack of public transportation in the state
 - not needed in some areas
 - Hard for people to find affordable housing
 - especially younger demographic
 - More home care needed
 - could provide business opportunity
 - Need to secure health care for elderly population
 - Coordination needed between local committees
 - Educated people rather than people who have a lot of time on their hands
 - Also coordination on zoning
 - Need to protect water supply
4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?
 - Planning should preserve community/neighborhood identities
 - Protecting natural resources (especially water)
 - Maintain/preserve transportation infrastructure (more modes?)
 - Need to budget for infrastructure improvements
 - Increase employment opportunities – Create business incentives
 - Smart zoning
 - Need to expand tax base
5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

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Small Group Facilitator Name: **Molly M**
Group Letter: **C**

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|----------|
| Berlin | Claremont | Dover | Greenland | Keene | Kingston |
| Laconia | Littleton | Manchester | Nashua | New London | |
| Pembroke | Plymouth | | | | |
| Other: _____ | | | | | |

Number of people in your small group: _____

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.
 - State population is getting older
 - Young people leaving or is population just aging?
 - Families having fewer kids
 - Regulations are harming industry and small businesses
 - these need to be able to attract workers
 - Want to protect open space
 - Rural towns becoming more urban
 - Want to protect private property/water rights
 - Want grocery stores in closer proximity
 - Northern Pass
 - Many in the area of the lines don't want it
 - People desire access to quality health care beyond just one hospital in a region
 - High property values and longer drive times
 - you have to be able to afford it to live in the area
 - Lack of a sales tax may encourage others to visit the state
 - Want more public transportation (feasible without raising taxes?)
 - Want more park and rides
 - Some believe in climate change and others don't
 - also disagree on causes
 - State does not consume much energy (compared to other states) but electricity rates are high
 - Concern over taxes on this

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- Immigrants are flooding the state
 - Need to balance support for them with support for natives
 - Desire to improve community college system
2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.
- Lower property taxes
 - Balance land conservation with development
 - Reduce regulations on commerce
 - Preservation of private property and water rights
 - Making sure aging population is able to stay mobile (transportation)
- Concern over unelected officials making decisions

3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.
- Student loans should be done by private groups
 - Need to understand that public works projects often disrupt businesses
 - Invest in infrastructure
 - Make sure we are not putting land conservation ahead of business
4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?
- Concerns over climate change being presented as fact
 - Need to have diverse modes of transportation
 - Protection of open space
 - Preservation of private property and water rights
 - Reduce regulation on businesses
 - Concern over aging population
5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

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Granite State Future

Small Group Facilitator Name: Paul

Group Letter: D

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Berlin Claremont Dover Greenland Keene Kingston
Laconia Littleton Manchester Nashua New London
Pembroke Plymouth
Other: _____

Number of people in your small group: _____

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.
 - Population is aging/becoming more diverse
 - Workforce is growing
 - People attracted by lower taxes and less regulation
 - Information in packet is slanted to a particular viewpoint
 - also lacking context
 - Concern about increase in urban area
 - Much land is government owned and thus not taxable
 - Foreclosures were due to lending standards and bad gov't policy
 - Don't understand why single family housing is bad
 - Don't understand connection between severe storms and fuel/energy prices
 - Question over 35% deficit of childcare centers
 - What do rising poverty pockets and wealth have to do with each other?

2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.
 - Area is already a great place
 - Small town heritage is being lost
 - More person to person involvement versus government

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- Maybe we are focusing on the wrong ways to attract young people
 - Individual town boards with agendas can mess things up
3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.
 - Regulations are burdensome
 - Consider becoming a home-rule state
 - More transparency in government
 - Less government agency overlap
 4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?
 - Elect better legislators and shorter sessions
 - Limit EPA
 - Go to home rule
 - Limit frivolous legislation
 5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.
 - Entire process leads to predetermined outcome
 - Facts are pejorative, outdated and presented without context

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Granite State Future

Nashua

Group A

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Group A: Mollie

Brainstorm

Focus 1:

- Young leaving state for work
 - Business tax too high?
 - Bring in high quality jobs
 - Cultural deficit, increase attractiveness, arts, etc
- Colleges in partnerships with businesses doing R&D to attract young workers
 - Need trained workers
 - Local training for appropriate skills
 - Emphasis on family (jobs to support them)
 - Aging population
 - What proportion of state budget will go to caring for these folks; mental health issues

Focus 2:

- How do we want to use our land?
 - How much development and green space?
 - Mines falls-protected
 - Have a plan, develop around, reuse spaces
- Public/private partnerships
 - Residents/businesses/developers, etc. to keep balance & perspective
 - Make process more transparent; taxpayers, public & developers are in communication

Focus 3:

- Encourage homeowner occupancy in downtown neighborhoods
- Affordable housing linked to transportation
 - Needs of walkers
 - Demand for
- Refugee population
 - Invisible beurocracy bringing

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- How will we pay for this?
- More information and human interest pieces for the public
- Effect on schools

Focus 4:

- Energy use – public trucks replaced, old ones not sold, should have been re-purposed
- Repurposing buildings (mills) instead of building new
 - Balance b/w old and new
- Energy efficiency
 - Light posts replaced w/ more efficient bulbs
 - Buildings brought up to code
- Transportation energy
 - Bus service in city good
 - Individual choice important
- Natural gas – expansion of infrastructure
 - Transition city trucks as they are replaced

Focus 5:

- Unemployment a concern
 - Refugee competition?
- NH first – take care of our people
 - First create jobs for these people
 - Social enterprising (what kinds of jobs can we create?)
- Underemployed – this is a problem connected to homelessness
- How to pay for these things? (education)
- Educational opportunities
 - Young people need skilled labor and jobs to accompany
 - Retraining opportunities

Patterns and Challenges:

1. Affordable housing
 - Quality
 - Safe
 - Affordable
2. Population: all kinds of ramifications
 - Aging population
 - No inward migration
 - Educational attainment affected
3. Businesses hire locally
 - Community should have say
 - City needs to be in partnership w/ businesses to do this (hire locally)
4. Balance affordable housing with taxpayer dollars

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- Immigrant/refugee influx
- 5. Create more rich culture in Nashua (directly related to youth retention)
 - Events, music, theatres, etc.
 - Bring people into community to spend \$ (red river, palace, etc.)
- 6. Intentional influx of people
 - Attract people we want to stay
 - Affordable housing to get people to stay
- 7. Fiscal; don't spend anything we don't need to
 - Keep \$ under local control
 - Keep spending down
 - Smaller footprint in
 - Keep federal debt down
- 8. How to use our land (developments)
 - Public oversight of developments
 - We aren't providing services, then get sued →this costs (fiscal and land connection)
- 9. Fiscal responsibility
 - Who pays
 - Define public/private partnerships
 - Need transparency
 - Entitlements
- 10. Public (gov't) and Private (citizens, developers, businesses) fiscal responsibility
 - Social enterprising; take local action, be less dependent on gov't & plan according to capacity
 - Transparency; responsibility for our government

Final Priorities:

- Balance on opinions
 - Fiscal budget; responsible planning
 - What do we want to pay for?
 - What do we take as subsidies?

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Granite State Future

Nashua

Group B

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Group BBB: Dan and Sharen

Who lives in NH:

- Aging
- True of NH – lg. number just sleeps in NH and works elsewhere
 - o Bedroom community
- Students → college level
- Lack recreational facilities for young
 - o They go elsewhere
 - o No way to retain young people
- Appreciate heritage and tradition
- Vibrant young professionals
 - o Lugo (Latin for to connect) through chamber, part of network of young prof
 - Aligned with stay, work, play
- Becoming “browner” – more Latino/diverse

How we use land:

- Public gardens at Greeley Park
- w/ awareness of healthy pursuits = some
 - o communities looking at walking CSA’s
 - o community gardens, better neighborhoods
- byway development to connect route 111
 - o public open space becoming endangered for transportation projects
- not very pedestrian friendly
- aging population wants access to community service
 - o have to drive to these – not walk
 - o distributed in rural areas
 - o hard to make population center
- senior development goes into areas with nothing around it
 - o need to rethink the development transportation part of it
 - o walkable, mixed use neighborhoods
 - o more front porches, knowing neighbors
 - o pedestrian access to community services

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- working in some parts of Nashua (southern part of city)
- industrial land west of Nashua hard to get to
 - hard to bring industry away from urban center due to transportation issues
 - how do you bring jobs closer to where people live?

Where we live:

- lack of bike access in Nashua
 - not sufficient infrastructure on major roads for biking
 - getting from one spot to another on a bike can be treacherous
- nice walking trails that are not connected in Milfork
- where we live depends on economic conditions
 - lending/borrowing
 - mortgages vs. renting environment
- median incomes in center city are significantly lower than surrounding areas
 - anyone who can does leave
 - end up with economic segregation
- not creating new jobs
 - need to bring jobs closer to where people live
 - limited access to telecommunications
 - hard to get internet
- we're being de-industrialized & need to look at that
 - bigger than N.H.N.E. (macro issue) – need to adopt (?) or redirect (?)
- industry just different
 - driven by technology
 - need to prepare market/workforce to meet changing needs
 - we just don't see it because some people work from home
- good jobs in technology, etc.
 - can work from anywhere & everywhere
 - more knowledge-based, not large central facility for work
- skill sets needed not being met by schools
- rail system – build upend on existing system
- promoted rail gives more options to families (opens up commuter possibilities)

Live/work/play options/access to employment

- educated workforce
 - all parts are here we just aren't using them
 - rail also makes us more attractive to bring educated workforce up here
 - rail in core center of Nashua makes more opportunities for people living there
- Can we talk about bus service? Connect Keene, Manchester, Nashua, for example

Make it the best place to live, learn, work, play:

Challenge: transportation options – rail, bus (east/west), roadways, bridges

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- culture and art component that could enrich tourism (doesn't get recognized)
 - o out there but you'd never know it if you didn't look for it
 - o way Verizon center is marketed differently than small, local art
 - o cater to people who live here not cater to folks in Worcester, MA
- in regional discussion – lose identity of smaller communities in discussion of Nashua
- transportation to arts, stores, and other services that Nashua has to offer is a need
 - o bus transportation would help
 - o hard to get region to think as a region
 - o every town wants its own identity
- conserving community identity is important but as a region economic viability depends on moving people easily (western communities have to collaborate/same rules)
- Park and ride locations
- Communities need to maximize their economic tax base (without +)
 - o More and better jobs in mass & more going on – I work in MA but live in NH
 - o More economic opportunity/jobs in NH would be better (limited opportunities in Mass.)
- Telecommunications companies cherry pick neighborhoods they want to develop
- Bottle neck on 101 limits development on Western side
- Towns not creating services/amenities people want because they cannot afford it
 - o People leaving state to get these amenities
- Continuum – multiple solutions depending on community integration of a lot of things
- Bringing in opportunities – will attract younger workforce
- New cottage industries? that bring people in but won't tax existing transportation system
- Access roads to limit development of new roads

Patterns & Challenges: Actions/Priorities

- Give towns/municipalities tools and guidance to become more self-sufficient and make own decisions
 - o Bridge inter-community conversations
- Development should dictate infrastructure not vice versa
- Maintain character of each community/concerned about drawing people into central hub
- We need to manage change or change will never manage communities
- Regional planning can help i.d. development opportunities & then let towns i.d. where they fit

Final Priorities: from what we talked about

- Transportation: multi-model combination of bus, rail, infrastructure, maintenance, bikes, linkages from one location to another
 - o Easy ways to get between activity areas
- A lot of interrelated dominoes that have to be in place
- Economic opportunities/jobs/vitality/attracting people, research success stories/models (Boston fed research, triangle in N. Carolina)

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Granite State Future

Nashua

Group C

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

GroupCCC: David

Focus1: What do you notice?

What is most important about this information?

Who lives in NH and Change:

- Aging – migration
- Attract people to state & to stay in state
- Changing demography (young out, old stay)
- Age group 20-30 out
 - Education, family, housing, ed. loans and rate of pay
- Cultural and marriage
- Children returning as well
- Changing face of “family”
- Nashua + with urban +/or suburban condo or home
- Move up in house (down), stay out

Focus 2: Land and impact

- Have been car oriented (now less so, downtown more so)
- NH most forested, good selling point
- Water vulnerable
 - Groundwater and salt
 - City water treatment
 - Town and private wells
- Density zoning w/ large lots, sprawl, cluster zoning down, wise conservation
 - Large lots, 2” soil for lawn
- Water short, no conservation or reuse of grey water
- Food supply and agriculture land
 - How keep open space for food?
- Shift from cows to grapes

Focus 3: Housing, transportation, infrastructure

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- Regional transportation minimal
 - Time to change habits
 - Bus to Boston up
- Housing: Starter housing, lots are \$\$\$
- Rental market – low end or high end (cost going up)
 - Multi-family slow for 10 yr Vacancy < 5%
 - NIMBY for affordable housing
 - Accessory dwelling unit (some towns not allowing)

Focus 4: Natural Environment

- Proliferation of generators
 - Power lines vulnerable (why?) – maintenance for power lines low
 - More underground utilities
 - Interconnected regional water
 - Regional water/sewer systems
 - Reliant on cheap gasoline
 - Water energy efficient buildings not there
- *Assets in trails, views, etc

Focus 5:

- Not enough high paying jobs in NH
 - Commute far to MA
 - More money in high tech and less in service industries
 - Lack manufacturing (products made overseas)
- Education knowledge base is low
 - Kids leave college and move out of state
 - Affordable higher ed
- Community college & business partnerships (more interaction)
- Bigger state priority for education

Most important issues, patterns, challenges:

- Market Nashua as a city and a region
- Communicate region-wide
 - Eg health plan, use the plan, and stick with the plan
- Region-wide resource plan
- Act with “shared” resources as a region
- Poised to act as a region
 - Hospital, public health, infrastructure
- Challenge coordinate education and jobs
- Regional voice to state legislature
- Adapt local control for 21st century

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- Planning with a regional impact
- Regional planning integration
 - i.e. bus to Manchester airport, train, commuter rail, bridge Hudson & Nashua, circumferential road
- Affordable housing of all types
 - Expensive rental and older stock

Housing:

- Planned Residential Development (PRD)
 - Mixed use
 - Outlawed 4 year
 - More of them/zoning changes
- Cost to towns and cities
 - Is affordable more expensive?
 - Or is large lot in long run more expensive

Action: What to do to keep future costs down?
What types are too high?

Housing → Jobs – middle class living wage benefits

→education→jobs

→vocational education→technician

State economic development w/ 3 development corps:

- to bring regional planning into state
- to help see use of this strategy
- need state economic development

Healthcare: regional focus as a model

Increase quality of life, natural resources, and people by economics:

- diverse housing
 - jobs for middle class
 - Keep pop. In NH (from kids to seniors)
 - quality, affordable education
 - implemented all of these with flexibility
- For future: addressing challenge resisting change and regional focus

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Granite State Future

Nashua

Group D

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Group DDD: Michael

Brainstorm:

- Aging - attracting people
- In & out-migration
- Young people out – bored
- School population down
- Capital
- Workers (?)

Land use:

- House & care: 50%
- Zoning (?)
- Affordable
- Open space vs. development
- Infrastructure
- Rail (?) – Boston
- Connecting between modes
- Trails
- Correct old plans

Climate Change:

- Water issue → drugs in water
- Air quality
- Agriculture
- Not prepared for storms

Economic Vitality:

- Big differences in income and education
- Space and \$ for new companies
- Education does not match jobs

Best place to live, learn, and work?

- Amenities to get to Boston

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- Sense of community
- Jobs and education
- Education primary/middle not work
- More inclusive for disadvantaged

Priorities:

- Building communities
 - through economic vitality
 - through a more entrepreneurial climate

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Granite State Future

Nashua

Group E

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Group E: Paul

1. Who lives in NH?
 - Why are we changing?
 - Aging population (maybe senior venue affected participation?)
 - Young leaving, but some moving in (3x)
 - Very white
 - Participants tonight are representative (white, over 40)
 - b/c less interest among other groups
 - 30's-40's are busy
 - 5th highest median age
2. Land use, impacts of choices
 - Ag land declining (ideal for housing as well as ag.)
 - Land important for recreation
 - Second most forested state
 - Varied land uses in small area
 - Urban, suburban, etc.
 - Growing interest in local food production & buying locally produced food
3. Transportation – need better roads, trains, mass transit
 - Housing a critical issue for patients at state hospitals – prevents being discharged
 - Housing relatively expensive, takes large fraction of income, esp. rentals
 - Majority SF homes
 - Transportation is an obstacle to independence

Transportation and housing & infrastructure

 - Low density → hard to offer transp. Options
 - Need vehicle and driver's license to get to jobs, health care, shopping
 - Roads in poor condition and design
 - Aging drivers may require changes in road design
4. Natural environment, climate impacts, energy
 - States re per-cap energy consumption are confusing
 - Largest re nuclear electric generation
 - Vulnerable sources: natural gas & nuclear

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- Natural gas supply more stable than oil
 - We don't use much biomass despite being second most forested
 - Snowfall (big \$ maker) decreasing
 - Water sources could be under stress
5. Community and economic vitality
- NH doing well economically
 - Earning > average
 - Personal wealth > avg.
 - Families < national avg. poverty rate
 - North-South disparity
 - Southern tier distorts state avg.
 - Econ benefits not dist. Evenly throughout state
 - Fewer manufacturing jobs – empty buildings

Process: how we conduct public meetings affects participation & outcome

- Day, time, location
- De-institutionalization not working for homeless, people in jail
 - but “recovery” works for some...

How can we make our region the best place to live, work, play, learn for everyone?

Patterns:

- Jobs, housing, etc. are spread out
- Result from our planning and zoning & economic forces

Challenges:

- Transportation – make easier, convenient, accessible, quicker
- More diverse housing: density
- Make plans to conserve land and nat. resources as we build
- Learn from what we “show off” as N.H.
- Protect “safety net” for all
- Meet everyone's diverse needs – balanced solutions

Values & Actions:

- Get young people to stay
- Jobs keep young here
- Stimulate business to create jobs
- Tax incentives to create jobs/startups
- Opportunities (part-time jobs) for older people
- Education (higher) opportunities in Hillsborough county
- Support and expand mental health courts and CIT
- More Diverse housing

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- Child care and family support
- Connect rules with what we say we want
- Transportation

Final Priorities:

- Provide job opportunities for everyone
- Provide for diverse needs
- Safety net needs work
- Affordable housing & transportation
- Connect rules w/ what we want

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Granite State Future

Nashua

Group F

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Group F: Duncan & Abby

Focus 1: Who Lives in N.H.

- Aging population
- Population growth impacted by in-migration
- Mean age rising
- Slowing of population growth
- Young people moving out
- Looking to move to warmer climates
- Jobs not available – jobs in cities
- Lacking affordable housing: overriding likeability of staying in N.H.
- Available jobs do not match skill sets
- Commute time too long
- Not family friendly
- Incoming folks are retirees
- Differing opinions on what's affordable
- No high salary draw

Focus 2: How we use land

- Nashua catchment area most diverse in state
- Farms, city, orchards all in Nashua region
- Rural heritage held dear to hearts: + or - ?
- Developers interested in available land \$\$\$
- Land being converted into “little cities”
- Shift in more people wanting village atmosphere as aging population grows
- “New England” villages → marketable
- Choice where you like
- Balance between new development and re-development
- Tax credit to rehab barn but not house
- People can afford to live in “palatial estates”

Focus 3: Where we live and how we live

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- Bus service: transport to doctors' appointments, services, etc.
- Automobile dependent
- Very high median housing
- 2003 levels of housing prices
- Younger pop. Renting instead of owning
- Student loans and interest rates too high
- No help for young
- Section 3 p.14 unsure about data
- How people live is their choice

Focus 4: Natural environment, climate impacts

- Improve energy efficiency of housing (existing and new)
- Surprising that N.H. is 8th lowest per capita consumer of energy
- 3 harsh months of heating home
- Data biased towards electricity
- Winter precipitation decline has huge economic impact – ski industry
- Aging population – snowstorms difficult

Focus 5:

- College students not measured in unemployment
- Skills being taught need to match available jobs
- Don't limit education to trade, want broad education
- Will students in poverty be motivated to go to schools
- Loans instead of merit
- 25% of children below poverty
- Unemployment stayed steady, surrounding states it went down
- Lack of access to quality, affordable childcare
- Childcare and home health wages too low
- Lack of help for mental health and most vulnerable

Patterns and Biggest Challenges: Key topics & priorities

- Aging – impacts housing, employment, transportation, social services,
- Lack of population growth
- Jobs: job creation, sustaining economy (everything else comes secondary)
- Lack of marketing state benefits of businesses coming in
- Existing companies need legislation to incentivize hiring young folks
- Housing, rehabilitation incentives for youth
- Utilize manufacturing facilities to enhance employment in small communities
- Zoning for small residences

Important Issues:

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1. Aging population
 - Strong network of support of support programs for seniors
 - Property tax break for elderly
 - More village communities to have access to everything they need
 - Have young mixed with old
 - Tax breaks for companies that help pay down student loans
 - Banks to help young people – renting bank owned, rent to own
 - Market N.H. as cool, fun for young people
2. Housing/land use
 - Put farms back in business
 - Fill vacant houses
 - Maximizing recreational opportunities on land
3. Employment/Education/economic imbalance
 - Get more interns doing work outside to get them interested in N.H.
 - Higher ed. more affordable to keep youth in state and attract out of state students
 - Match employment opportunities with skills taught
 - Increase availability of internships
 - State brainstorm on how to improve economy
4. Final Priorities
 - N.H. needs a call to arms
 - Need to get serious in thinking about how to strengthen our economy:
 1. Education: skills-based, affordable, locality driven, future focused
 2. Business: streamlined, innovative, incentivized regulation to support young employees
 3. Community: increase support for aging & vulnerable populations, enhance land use to generate accessible communities

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Granite State Future

Laconia

Group A

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Group A Brainstorm

Focus 1

- School-age children declining in #
 - Our 25-50 yr. old population is not here
 - Not just here?
- Immigration adding school-aged children in the southern US
- State is greying
 - Impact on healthcare, transportation, and civic involvement
- Out-migration of our young
 - Concern about cost of higher ed in NH & civic involvement
 - Lack of broadband to attract
- Lack of planning
 - Workforce to support older
 - Balance workforce management
- Shoreline – well-off and trailer parks
 - Focus on getting people together to understand each other and helping
- School lunch – many disenfranchised with school system
- Need to be more inclusive
- Difference in finances but same basic needs
- Non-residents cannot vote on issues affecting them – disenfranchised
- Resources for growing aging population
- Changing population – lack of skill polarization
 - Having people work together for common ground
- Are we attracting the “different” population
 - Motorcycle weekend to week/10 days
 - Is it the right population?
- Lack of high paying jobs

Focus 2

- Community gardens
 - Growing your own food

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- Concern with pesticides
- Concern with clear cuts – keep the forest
- Good land conservation
- Conservation easements take away the rights of the people
 - The easements have more control over the property and the owners lose rights
 - Given \$ and taken away rights (i.e. wind turbines)
 - Put in dam w/ stream
 - Read the fine print
- Selling the easement rights to the government – strings attached
- Really do not have a master plan for land and water
 - Need to be respected
 - Alignment between what people want and the zones
- Coherency b/w what we want and how we execute it
- Planning to help people get to school/resources/services/housing
 - Can access without owning a car

Ex. Not putting housing 4 miles out of town and not provide transportation

- Easily accessible – choice not forced
- We have learned in land use planning that we don't pay attention to center (fragmented)
- Counter to preservation of land
- Working forests and farms
- People donate land to conservation easements for specific reasons knowingly
- Tension b/w rights v. community rights
 - The polarization of the two
- Zoning larger lots disrupts the land
- How to preserve open space
 - Smaller lots to preserve more land

Focus 3

- Concern about some public transportation
 - Difficult for those without it
- Well communities – feeling was how we get there
 - Affordability
 - How can we make things happen?
 - Access \$
- Concern that Laconia is the “hub”

i.e. Meredith could “ship” someone to Laconia because they lack resources to take care of own

- Tilton – have laws that say you take care of your own
 - Affordable housing puts strains on communities
- Bus not cost effective despite efforts to use them
- Laconia does take everyone – those who need help
- All the communities are different

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- Transportation will always be a problem until people take responsibility for using most cost-effective way
- More businesses encouraging use
- Schedule does not match the need
- Hard to use bikes
- Connect all forms of transportation
- Rail as alternative
- Challenge of transportation is based on living situations – will be a challenge
- Aging population will be a challenge
- Ferry – the lakes hinder cost-effectiveness
- Workforce housing has become section 8 – not the intended use

Focus 4

- Maintain the water quality
 - Need infrastructure upgrades
 - If we don't take care of it we will lose its vitality
 - Weeds, septic, water for drinking, too many ducks
- Small number of sewer systems
 - Septic systems affect water
- Need more sewer systems that work
- Laconia has old sewer systems that have backed up into homes, businesses, etc.
- Need to maintain our septic system
- People polluting lake
 - recreation (gas and urine)
- Forests help with water resource quality
 - Will need more to help as population grows
- Environment and people
 - Holistic approach
- Pollution from middle of the country
- Educate and re-educate on climate effect on forests (i.e. 1 degree change in temp affects maples/ pesticides etc. on lawns into lake)
- Fossil fuels – public transportation on alternative fuels
- Places to plug in electric cars
- Less costly cars
- Heating and electric – need more solar/green buildings
- Air quality – seeing regular days being hazardous to health
 - Bow is polluting as well as cars and Midwest
- Unique in our dependence on oil
 - Need to be diverse in our use
- European system – heat is provided (communities work together)

Focus 5

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- Focus on economic development
- People leave cost of education and lack of jobs/can't afford healthcare
- No training for vocational arts
- What happens to self-esteem going
 - Low-paying job to job
- Dream – education relying on hands-on internships, apprenticeships
- Buy local – support our own/strong communities
- Educate – we do have some excellent school including 2 yr. C.C.S.
- UNH put annex on old prison property
- Laconia does have vocational education (need to promote this more)
- We will always have an economically challenged population
- Education and broadband
- Regulating internet
- Some rural do not have access to internet
- Affordable access to broadband and cable TV to get internet
 - Will bring econ dev.
- We are educating young people well and they are living
- Costing more and more to educate, restore buildings
- More affordable education and jobs
- Need more education for immigrants
 - more than basic English
- Drugs, alcohol and crime
- Every \$1 we spend on educating inmates we save \$5 down the road
- Never locked doors – now you can't
- We need community development. Economic
 - Need businesses to come to vital communities
- Programs that don't have tax \$ can thrive
 - People pay for the service i.e. people pay for their drug program

Themes:

- Need to spend lots of money to pay for it, but are other ways
- Biggest theme → community development
 - Invest in planning
 - Prioritize decisions
- Need education
- Connect each of the surrounding communities to work together for the region
- Connect the dots to better communicate across communities (all issues)
- Transportation cannot be singled out of community development
- Holistic community development
- Communities of community development
- Accepting status quo is irresponsible

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- No political boundaries to issues
- Does not have to cost a lot of \$
 - Find ways to do it from the bottom up
 - Communities working locally to move us forward
- Grants from private or public
 - There can be strings attached
- All the issues are related

Challenges

- Need to change the way we think
- Putting it all together and work on them together

Problems

- Workforce housing has taken on section 8
 - subsidized housing (now we have empty units)
- Respectful to maintain affordable housing

- Good transportation infrastructure
- High-end housing/affordable workforce
 - need a mix of housing
- Need natural resources to be preserved
- Will always be people in need
- Some abuse will happen but not all
- Learn from each community
- Education
- Frame the issues with strategic values and questions
- Strategic planning

Top 2 Themes

1. Sustains the quality of life we all want and is important to individuals
2. Communities of community development

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Granite State Future

Laconia

Group B

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Group B Brainstorm

Focus 1: Who lives in NH and how we are changing?

- Schools – drug problems
- Elderly – influx
 - Beneficial tax structure
- Losing college graduates to other states
- Need things (employment, recreation) to keep young people here
- Older population
- Fewer school age children
- Schools closing due to population decline
- Regional school issues
 - Fastest increase of drug abuse
- Attractions
 - Lakes, mountains, second homes
- Lack of diversity
- Professional jobs, economic opportunities
- Business regulations – state mandates

Focus 2: How we use land and the impact of our choices

- Redevelopment – property values
- Property taxes
- Increased assessments
- Regulations for property owners
 - Septic systems
 - Clean water
- Local issues/regulations by elected representatives
- Commercial extraction of water
- Local control
- Joint management of resources needs to be balanced
 - Local/regional/state
- Storm water – regional

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- Fireworks – impact on lakes, environment
- Agriculture – regional support for local food systems

Focus 3: Where we live and how we move around

- Transportation – lack of accessibility
- Housing – lack of low/moderate income housing
- Lack of affordable housing
- Options to access community services

Focus 4: Natural environment, climate impacts, energy efficiency

- Energy resource impacts on local towns
- Wind power – lack of regional/local input
- Tourism economy
- Impact of large companies on local resources
- Knowledge of energy resources
- Question past legislation that drives renewable energy
- Revisit lessons learned
- Rethink legislation
- Northern pass, wind energy, biomass
- Renewable energy needs to be managed to keep it renewable
- Difficulty finding wood for heat resource
- Use energy in conservative way
- Water quality
- Invasive species control and management

Focus 5: Community and economic vitality

- Tech center
- Agriculture
- College/technical education opportunities
- Running start – high school/college prep
- Regional image – e.g. motorcycle week
 - Improve image from “party” to recreation
 - Boating awareness
 - Promote common sense, common courtesy, responsibility
- Stronger downtown
 - Regional center for socializing
- Community identity
- Cultural image – improve tourism
- High college tuitions
- Promote farmers markets, local agriculture

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- Community gardens
- Involve people to take interest in community activities
- Shore-up greater lakes region

Most important topics/issues

- Protect natural & historic resources through conservation
 - Scenic values core to economy
 - Water, mountains, views
 - Educate children about environment
- Rethink legislative process at state and local level
- Science based research on wants and needs
- Anticipate long-term needs and consequences of policy decisions
- More robust economy based on our healthy natural resource attractions and dynamic local economies
 - Including long-term perspective
- Reduce restrictions & regulations on business practices
- Community importance, people as resources
 - Community identity to attract involved and caring people
 - Get back to community living
 - Take care of people
- Robust energy policy
 - Based on public engagement and process/best practices to serve future generations/long term thinking
- Shoring up the greater lakes region through local economic diversity while protecting natural, cultural, and people resources

Considerations:

- Legislation
- Regulation
- Property rights
- Responsibilities in property rights
- Individual rights

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Granite State Future

Laconia

Group C

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Group C Brainstorm

Focus 1

- 1940's stable pop. – low poverty/upper-middle class
- Today – population change
 - o People move out – higher incomes
 - o Not many people return to live here
- Aging population – need young professionals
- More diverse population/immigrants/refugees
 - o Increased population living in poverty
 - o No relationship or correlation
 - o Used to leave area to find diversity
- Agriculture – decline in population
 - o More likely to live in poverty
- Amount of regulations has increased
- Some areas now commercial – now bedroom communities
- Costs of living increase
- Some families can no longer afford to live in homes
- Lands need to be subdivided
- Professional people practice in area but live outside of area
- Some areas have young people → no work for them
- Crime rate has gone up in past 30 yrs.
- We need different kinds of industries to attract and retain intellect

Focus 2

- Lot less use of land for productive use
- Ultimate use – subdivided into house lots
- More effort for locals to use locally produced ag products
 - o Have to rely on products from around the world that are produce cheaper
- Rural communities - not want towns in towns
 - o European, like N.E. atmosphere
 - o Maintain rural character
- Laconia – try to revitalize downtown area

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension



- Not always affordable transportation
 - o Provide transportation to center of Laconia/Meredith
- Make a decision where you want to live
- Attracted to independence and support
- Some towns minimum lot size
- Housing prices drive people away
- You have to live where you can afford it
- Rural home in NH – overpriced compared to other states
- Gov. problem not handle population

Focus 3

- Housing prices drive people away
- Lack of affordable housing
- Transportation – big issue
- What about using school buses
- NH – 1 mode of transportation (automobile)
 - o Limited possibilities if you can't afford a car
- House prices down?
- Gov't, problems housing
- What are other options?
- Used to be train service
- Free enterprise – transportation (relies on gov't subsidies)
 - o Free enterprise doesn't always work

Focus 4

- Attracted to natural environment
 - o Need to keep environment clean – attract tourists
 - o Tourism economy depends on it
- Come to area for rural atmosphere
- Ski-industry now dependent on snow-making
- Climate change impacts
- Are we expecting to have increased population with no change
- High energy costs- gov't won't let up tap
- Global warming
- Organisms learn to adapt to the earth to make habitat last longer
- Best soil to use forests in world
- Credits to build energy efficient homes
- Now house taxed on efficiencies
- Use solar and wind energy
- Energy Achilles head of NH economy
 - o Deterrent to attracting outside industry

Focus 5

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension

- Excellent ed. Facilities and higher ed
- Low unemployment – in the country
- NH – right to work state
 - o Discourage companies to come to state
- People on welfare – deterrent if losing benefits
- Not enough employers to handle population
- Cost of education – problem
 - o Undergrad and grad schools
- Cost of repaying educational loans
- Middle class America living paycheck to paycheck
- Statistically higher poverty rate than 1965 (great society)
- Small population on welfare – using the system
- Culture of poverty – it’s us not them
- Need benefit reform
 - o Lower incentive to get off welfare
 - o 1/5 children food insecure
- Disconnect b/w what manufacturers need and workers skills
 - o i.e. upgrade hot tech centers
- benefits can help people through tough times

Developing the local economy

- peoples basic needs not being met
- NH guilty of feeding on “low hanging fruit”
- MA needs to stop driving NH economy
- Attract small businesses to drive the economy
 - o More diversity of small businesses
 - o What could be brought into area to stimulate thriving economy
- Lot of drug problems in the community
 - o Try to establish drug court – not much support
- Bring manufacturing back – i.e. apparel industry
 - o Our clothes made out of the country
 - o We can buy goods made in USA but tough to find
- Broadband connectivity can help support small local businesses
- People need robust economy
 - o Affordable housing
 - o Reliable transportation
 - o Enough food
 - o Housing \$941 worth \$231k
- Wages not stepped up with price of products we buy today
- NH strong history of self-reliance rather than relying on gov’t
 - o The community came together
 - o There was a time when we turned to churches

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension

- Dichotomy of haves & have-nots
 - o Small middle class
 - o Group support through “hand across the table”
- Larger group of people in lower class
- Needs to be self-reliant
- Need more communities to support each other
- Consider the disabled population
 - o NH resources for the population scarce
- People need to learn to help themselves
- 60% land in Sanborn in current use
- Working together as a community to make things the way we want them to be
- Better understand culture of poverty (culture of dependency)
- Important to talk to each other and increase understanding
- We need to be smart stewards of our natural environment
 - o Take care of our environment in order to pass it on
- We want each other to have enough
 - o Must define what “enough” is
- 2 solutions: gov’t/(perceived) socialism

Dependence on self

- Federal gov’t can’t do anything right
- Improve the quality of education
- Gov’t unique: build highway system; mobilizes to defend itself

Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*





Granite State Future

Laconia

Group D

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Group D Brainstorm

Who you are?

Where from?

Roles in community?

Why you are here?

- Differences in water quality from town to town
 - how can we protect it?
- Aging pop/veterans and other populations deserving of care
- Focus on sustaining health for them
- Cost of housing has gone up
- Makes it hard for young families (focus is on older pop)
- Challenge for families to have a living wage
 - Skews the demographics
- Cost of higher ed – higher than other places (we lose students)
 - Enormous debt burdens for education
 - Drives life decisions
- State support for higher ed lowest in nation
- There are resources to support education
- Debt can drive housing decisions
 - Young people cannot afford to buy homes
 - We are not capturing the benefits of intellectual capital
- taxes are relative – live free or die
- water clarity and quality has declined
- population increase and loss of open space
- keep urban areas urban/rural areas rural
 - reuse buildings
- climate change
- no state planning
- lack of good farm land and locally grown food

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension



- NH behind ME & VT in food production
- Over 50% rely on expensive fuel sources
 - Cold families
 - Cold kids
- Poor public transportation
 - Impacts jobs, families, and economy
- Land conservation issues:
 - Some public lands
 - Some in tree farms
 - Good for economy
 - 50% in private conservation
- prison population increases
 - especially youth (50% faster than population)
- poverty in area has significantly grown
- youth – high school grad job opportunities much worse
 - youth incarceration mostly poor
- Belknap county lags in services to youth and poor people
 - lack of motivation to change in poor people
 - economic discrimination of poor people
- NH has fewer supports for youth
- Non-college-educated have a harder time getting ahead
- Is focusing development on urban areas the right thing?
 - Recognizes the assets of rural areas

How to make NH the best place to work and live?

- Affordable education
- Need jobs that work in NH
- Eliminate barriers to poor people
 - Such as poor jobs, transportation
- Need more human services for elderly, such as meals on wheels
- Tax policy – is it regressive?
- Environmental quality
- We need more tourism
 - Requires environmental quality
- Do jobs require trade-off with the environment?
- Diversification of the economy
 - Need better full-time jobs
- Businesses and industry jobs are not being filled because of educational skills
- Healthcare problems not solved

Final Priorities

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1. *Education:*

- Needs to be affordable
- Need new ideas to deliver quality, affordable education
- Good parenting incentivizes children to learn
- How do we inspire our children to learn/innovate?
- Does our education system work/how can we improve it?
- Society does not value our education system
- Good education begins at home
- Blaming does not solve this
 - Problems w/ the government
- High school grads have no hope of a better life, better jobs
- Linking education to workforce and type of jobs we want/have

2. *Jobs:*

- Linkage between quality of environment and education
- Environment brings people back to work in NH
- Good jobs sans having citizens who can afford gov't
- Highly educated can solve problems and create more jobs
- Too much stereotyping in career paths
- More innovate/education models
- More support for early education
- Improving and disseminating knowledge of science

Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*



Granite State Future

Laconia

Group E

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Berlin Claremont Dover Greenland Keene Kingston
 Laconia Littleton Manchester Nashua New London
 Pembroke Plymouth

Other: _____

Small Group Facilitator Name: _____ Molly M _____

Group Letter: ___ Group EEE _____

Number of people in your small group: ___ 12 _____

Brainstorm notes:

Focus 1

- Increase in Immigration from E Africa, Sudan, etc.
 - Don't see stats in guide about immigrants
 - Past 10 years in particular
 - Need to understand special needs of immigrants from other countries
- "Collaborators from southwest Asia coming in"
 - Increase in population here in years to come
- Rental costs increasing
 - "Alarming for families that have to work 2-3 jobs to have roof over their head."
 - Loss of income because of car repairs, lose job, no money for housing.
- Homeless population increasing "astronomically" 5-6 new referrals a day or week at resource center
 - Tent communities throughout Lakes Region
 - Teams that go into woods
- Risks associated with homelessness – especially for children
- Migration out and reasons for this
- Causes of problem – not enough jobs, not enough investment in area
 - No viable transportation
 - Small businesses throughout the country

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension



- Population getting older, younger people leaving
- Lots of people here with wealth of experience and knowledge who are looking for something to do
 - Tap that resource, they are willing to use that resource – knowledge of older folks
 - Bring in industry
 - Entrepreneurial types that can bring in small businesses
 - Economic stimulation
 - No reason why business somewhere else in US can't come here to NH
 - Use local schools to partner with incubators to create some industries in the area
 - 1989 real estate recession was start of problem → tax laws changed
- Losing a lot of our working age younger group of people
 - We need to have training available for people so they can work in some of these industries (read blueprints, etc).
- Small businesses want to hire more people but they won't because taxes for businesses going up
 - Taxes are really high
 - Obamacare is a problem
 - Unwilling to hire until understand all the regs
 - Taking taxes away from private sector
 - We pay salaries, pensions
 - Moved from out of state
 - Left because tax structure raised gas tax (came here because of low state tax)
 - Taxes for small businesses are really hard
 - Stifling creativity with taxes
 - Holding back economic progress in state
- Low tax state is draw for people but now they are trying to change that
 - Need to look at lowering taxes
 - Concern with gas tax, expensive to commute to work
 - Obamacare has raised premiums for some workers
- Income tax is the fairest tax said one person (retired teacher) but others wondered who it was fair to?
 - Concerns about retirees
 - Concerns people will move out of the state if there is an income tax
 - The more you work the more you pay?
 - Concern people will leave state if income tax is raised

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- Need to get people to pay income tax
- Ideal state for young family with 2 children who don't buy home
 - But real estate and business taxes are not good

Focus 2

- NH used to be 80% small farms
 - Now only 20%
 - Cooperative farms to feed the hungry – pilot project in area
 - NH is great state for farming
 - Great resource
- 50% of your income for housing and transportation
- If own home big taxes
- 53% of taxes came from folks on lake
- Belknap and CC high values
- Real estate taxes are a problem for our area compared to other areas in country
- People have choice to own property especially on lakes and many not from here
 - Some saw taxes as more of a problem for areas like Lakes region
- Protecting water is important
 - Won't have tourism without it
 - Protect water or we won't have people living on lakes and paying our taxes
- GSF is against private property rights and this is concern

Focus 3

- Affordability of houses part of the document is out of date because of low interest rates
- Are the statistics out of date? Concern with data
 - Home ownership is more affordable now
 - Lots of homes for sale
- Disagreement with growth in guide
 - Feels there is growth in housing market
 - A second concern about GSF not wanting people to own their own homes and taxing people out of their home
 - Concerns about towns with low population and very high property taxes
- Concerns about driving retirees out of the state because of taxes
- High taxes than town that is more affluent & more industry

Focus 4

- To be fair evidence of climate change should be updated
 - One person felt that over past 10 years has stabilized or gotten cooler

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- Concern about selection of 2000.
- Planting tomatoes a lot earlier
- Franconia Notch – how much climate change does it take to create icebergs & then melt them
- Where are we now?
 - World stats in first two years
 - America warmer and world colder
- 15,000 years ago this area was under ice
 - Concerns that mother nature does more climate change than man made change
 - Disputes the information in the guide
 - ***Several people concerned that information in guide wasn't accurate
 - Others said world has gotten cooler while North America warmer
- Concerns about trash – cigarette butts
 - Problem for gardening
 - People throwing stuff out the windows
 - Problem of trash
 - Trash from cars driving by and smoking outside buildings
 - Solutions? People don't care – drivers, neighbors who rent
- What are opportunities to lower state oil dependency?
 - NH depends on foreign oil
 - Geothermal is generally lowest cost option
 - renewable energy but they are very controversial
 - People want alternate energy but not in their backyard
 - People have tried but it didn't produce enough energy and unintended consequences
 - Canada does double on grid
 - Northern pass – controversial
- Greater opportunity will effect whole community
 - need to provide opportunities to all
 - not everyone can afford to put solar on their house
 - Need to think about whole community and make opportunities for “average Joe who is just seeking by month to month.”
 - Why 8th lowest per capita?
 - Would be good to have better opportunities for heating
 - People using blankets to conserve energy
 - Also use of wood - what a lot of people are doing
 - Pellet stoves – 1 bag to 2 ½ gallons of oil, but people need money to get the stove

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- “Need to find a way to help renters in older housing get energy efficient housing.”
 - Landlord rental issue
 - These are people least able to afford
- Problem of people who are young who could work if the jobs were available
- Government not sensitive to regional needs
 - Should be formula that takes needs into consideration with charging and taxing oil
 - Northeast more dependent and that should be considered

Focus 5

- Educational opportunity in NH
 - Getting so expensive to go even with community colleges
 - So expensive that people can’t afford it
 - So that is why lots of young people leaving the state
 - Leaving for jobs and affordable education
- “Education as we know it will be gone soon.”
 - Need better/new system
 - Internet or abroad
 - Not enough benefits for professors to be hired full time
 - Lots of people in education system not getting retirement or other benefits
 - If they are new they can’t pay off their school debts
- When individual applies to study in a field they should be told availability of jobs in that area
 - Now just sign people up but when they graduate there is no place for them to go
 - Students should know going in where the jobs that are available are
- Need basics of early childhood enrichment
 - Children born into poverty and parents are from poverty
 - Asking educators to do too much
 - “Kids are not up to speed when they start Kindergarten.”
 - Lots of enrichment going on in schools
- Teachers have investment in every child
 - Teachers are doing an amazing job
 - Educators are dedicated
- Region based on tourism with a lot of low paying jobs not always year round
- Single parents
 - Very difficult
 - Kids not getting enrichment that they should

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension

- NH Lakes region has external money that comes in that is key to development and growth
 - Some communities don't have that – trying to be self-sufficient but doesn't often work
 - Need more external revenue for this beautiful area

Patterns and biggest challenges:

- “Can't live, learn, work, and play unless we have jobs. We need everyone to be employed and able to sustain themselves and support their families.”
- Education is an important component for everything
 - Educating children, educating everyone about climate change, energy, recycling
 - Being aware that everything we do effects everyone →Respect for everyone
- Development of hiking and biking trails so everyone gets a chance to get out in nature
 - Getting acquainted with regional areas, History of it (Not through the computer)
 - It is a sensory experience, Moving is a sense
- “Industry. If you have jobs for everyone then it solves problems.”
- There is a lot here already
 - Nice environment, interesting people, ordinances and regulations
 - So we don't need to do more of certain things
 - Focus is industry, economic growth and development
 - A lot of residual benefits come from that
 - Identify industries →Very simple – go to national agencies
 - Bring businesses into this area/Bring in something that can be supported in the area
- “Get the federal government out of our minds.”
 - Concerns about GSF and what HUD will do
 - “Stop accepting grant money because all the grant money from federal government has strings attached.” [some in group felt some grants were good. Some discussion of this]
- “Federal money comes from our taxes and then they give it back to us but tell us what to do with this money.” “We need to be able to decide what to do with our money.” “If we got to keep more of our money we could use it to make our state better.”
- “What is in brochure [guide] is very contrived.” “We borrowed from future prosperity to support what we did until the crash.” “How are we growing compared to other New England states” “We are bedroom communities in this area.” “Real estate prices driven by people out of state for vacation homes.”

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- “Local level as citizen who has tried to instigate programs. City of Laconia should be small town government that is not opposed to people who are trying to develop new projects. Main street looks like a yard sale.” “Abolish current form of city government.”
 - Wrong form of government.
 - We would do better with small town government – more cooperative
 - “Idea of city doesn’t fit.”
- “Maintain our relatively low tax rate in NH. We have a relatively efficient government compared to other states. Consolidate some of our resources with towns. Schools as good example. School aged population declining and yet needs going up. Bring schools together, use internet.”
 - Some towns are doing this like Hewitt Tech
- “Ditto.” Small town economy based on waterfront.
 - We are missing most of our population in summer.
 - When return from Florida population grows.
 - People are very friendly, everyone talks to each other.
 - “Meet greatest people”
- “Sustainable jobs, affordable housing, protecting and enjoying the environment, and nurturing and educating our children.”
- Increase prosperity – we are not going to get back to the good old days
- Driving – commutes (bedroom communities)

Values and Actions:

- Financial institutions partner with individuals in community with clearly stated goals and objectives to advance the area
- Banks in area, should be understood that their level of participation
 - right now not participating
 - If they are part of development process that would be helpful
 - They are key in development process
 - They should be thinking about local area → Give back to community
 - Not just cash but financing projects. Ex. Town in MA where banks rehabilitated homes in center of community (Took the risk for local people)
- Federal government has big impact/opportunity in improving regional area
 - Need to get them on board
 - Need outside stimulation.
- Needs to benefit more than one entity – how does it relate to community

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- Banking situation should service the community
- NH should have its own public bank
 - North Dakota has done this
 - All of the profits of the bank stays with the citizens of NH
 - This bank has to deal with risk
- Problem with the government printing money to create “phoney wealth effect.”
 - Banks won’t give mortgage unless they can sell it back
 - They don’t loan money from own reserves
- “Needs to be some venue for more cooperative activities locally. Between local governments, groups, faith communities. Lots of individual things but need means of coming together for the community.” → Better Together in Laconia
- “Jobs, schools, community etc. We all want those things but this is based on GSF and region planning. Fear having federal government in control of what we do. Money comes with strings. Always top down. Don’t know that we need the federal government to do this. We are smart people and can do this for ourselves.” “We don’t need federal communities to help us plan our communities.” “If you don’t do it their way then what happens. Or you commit to something and then don’t have the money.”
- Homeless support – already giving services without federal money
- Urban renewal is what closed up the downtown
- “Get the federal government out of our business.”
- “We have to be open-minded and not judgmental. What said needs to be fine-tuned. We need order in universe, not chaos. We need the federal government for certain things.”
 - “As a widow, I got benefits from federal government to support me as a single mom.”
 - Need programs like social security but problems with welfare
- NH just pitch in and pay for ourselves
 - “If it is good enough for NH we should all put our shoulders to the wheel and make it happen.”
 - But there is great disparity between those who give and those who receive with idea above

Final Priorities:

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

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1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.

- Availability of jobs and economic development for everyone
 - Everyone needs a job
 - We discussed a lot of different facets of this and ways to do this
- Concern about taxes that keep businesses from hiring people
- GSF see personal property rights as a barrier - This is a concern
- Can't create jobs when can't get things in and out
 - access is an issue because of traffic patterns in some towns like Laconia
 - Building things like industrial complexes that community doesn't want
 - Infrastructure to support industry doesn't exist here
 - Tourist based economy
- High tech computer industry like Seattle could be her
 - Not enough high tech infrastructure, but there is potential
- Rents

2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

GROUP HAD MANY DIFFERENT IDEAS THAT ARE NOTED IN DETAILED NOTES ABOVE.

3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.

SEE DIVERSE RANGE OF COMMENTS ABOVE

4. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?

- Jobs and economic development and varied perspectives about how to address this
- Varying perspectives about climate change and its causes
 - Climate change is not man made
 - Geologic proof that nature creates climate change
 - We can influence climate change – accelerated changes
 - Insurance or contingency – it may be a big deal, it might not be

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but might as well address lower cost stuff because potential for something really bad is there

- If there is something we can do and doesn't cost too much it is a good idea
- Different viewpoints about how serious it is
- People - the turnout here shows our greatest asset
 - We are the solution if we can find a way to pull it together
 - Will take people helping people
 - Listening to each other like we are, being open
 - These meetings are encouraging and important to our community
- We all care about our state
- This is a great idea, which is why we are all here

5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

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Granite State Future

Laconia

Group F

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Group F Brainstorm:

Focus 1

- Aging population out of balance (who will care for elderly?)
 - Impacts on the workforce
- Out-migration of young people
 - Leaving for school/job and not returning
- Increased homelessness
- Declining birthrates and school enrollments
- Diversity in pockets (urban/refugee populations)
 - Not diverse overall
- Culture of silence and pride (limits youth)

Focus 2

- Too much reliance on land for taxes
- Loss of open space
- Rural poverty
- Land conservation good
 - Balance re: tax roles
- Workforce housing so people who work here can live here
- Public/private partnerships to conserve land
- Land choice for community development – not “anything goes”
- Open space less of an issue but parks, school, expansion space
- Some conservation easements exclude agricultural land
- Input on what happens on public space

Focus 3

- More and nicer sidewalks
- Too much authority in planning boards
- Lack of workforce housing (police/teachers, for example)
 - Hard to afford to live here
- Need more bike lanes
- More public transit between towns and cities (bus/train)

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- Poverty in this county due to no transportation
- Current routes get discontinued
- Rents are high
- Rural nature draws people here and public transportation would urbanize
 - Local control of these issues
- What people are paid v. pay is an issue

Focus 4

- Gasoline in the future (transportation)
- NH is rich in natural resources and we need to take care of it
- We are very dependent on fuel oil for heating
- How will we heat in the future?
- We are exporting \$ for energy
- Nuclear = dangerous
- How to balance give and take?
- Solar
 - Windmills (ugly?)
- Oil from the US (deregulation) coming in
- Need more alternatives to oil

Focus 5

- Community – help for smaller children is decreasing
- Education (connected to poverty)
 - State issue/tax policy
- NH library system
 - More closings, access reduced
- Increase in free and reduced lunch
- Varying access to internet
- Education budget to salary and healthcare
- Schools could combine
- Individualism/divide community
- Access to healthcare/attached to jobs
 - Benefits, kept below full-time, increase in healthcare costs
- How do we create opportunity?

Biggest challenges:

- Humility
- More jobs – and more of the right jobs (\$)
- Educate for today's jobs and vocational training
- Economic opportunity and friendly business environment
- People with disabilities, veterans, jobs for a range of abilities

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- More educational opportunities beyond school day (affordable/summer)
- Haves and have-nots
- Put own money to own values
- Education v. training
 - Trained people not the same as educated people
- What is our big picture? (Think in systems)
- Bringing people in from the outside is not necessarily positive
 - We have to be locally entrepreneurial
- Ease government regulation/increase free market economy/jobs
- High dept for higher ed
- Very connected (ex. Workforce wants good schools)
 - take care with too much bottom line deregulation
- Provide reasonable opportunity (rising tide lifts all boats)
- Increased opportunity to volunteer/care community
- Ask businesses what they want
- Income disparity is a big problem – hurts purchasing power
- Energy
- Poverty (image, skills, identity complex)
 - $\$7.25 \times 40 \times 52 = \$15,080/\text{yr}$
- More respect for education and teachers (curriculum changes slowly)
- Education v. training
 - Trained people not the same as educated people
- What is our big picture – this in systems
- Bringing people in from the outside is not necessarily positive
- We have to be entrepreneurial, local
- Ease government regulation/increase free market economy/jobs
- High department for higher ed
 - Ex. Workforce wants good schools
- Very connected, take care w/ too much bottom line deregulation
- Increased pay for service industry
- Take care with language

Final Thoughts:

- We care about NH and our communities
- Real differences about the role of government
 - we are very polarized and so need to think critically together
 - Not a monologue but a dialogue
- Solutions are hard to agree upon because we prioritize differently
- Where is the compromise?

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Granite State Future

Laconia

Group G

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Group G Brainstorm:

- Increased refugee population
- Crime rates not captured
- Impacts of subsidized housing
- Manufacturing (we lost it and it was never re-gained)
- Loss of jobs for young people
- Need to attract manufacturing
- Outreach to everyone
- State initiatives to attract business
- State rank low compared to others in regards to infrastructure
- Improve conditions of low-income and elderly housing
 - to facilitate greater community involvement & integration (walkability)
- Utilize grants to train employees
- Need for improved retirement planning/savings
- Impact of large influx of retirees (e.g. property tax)
- Currently, high dependence on automobile v. other modes
- Energy costs
- Poor rail system
- Secondary road quality
- Workforce opportunity
- Impact of increased population on local infrastructure
- Some towns have more starts than others
- Unfamiliarity with new modes of transportation
- Sprawl is costly
- Conservation
- Deteriorating road system
- Impact of exit 20: pros and cons
- Impacts of wind power
- Local decision-making control re:renewables
- Not home rule

Major issues/themes

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- Ad hoc state planning (esp. energy)
- Reactive decision making (e.g. gambling)
- Use of subsidies to benefit outside corporations instead of home
- Housing
- Tax rates
- Crime rates
- Substance abuse
- Infrastructure transportation
- Manufacturing/jobs

Challenges:

- Tax system (overdependence on property tax)
- Health care
- Crime
- Substance abuse
- Energy costs
- Exporting/conduit for other state's benefit
- Lack of transportation options
- Property costs
- Clean water
- Better roads
- Increased local control (pros and cons)
- Consideration of impacts on climate
 - NH economy depends on 4 seasons

Values and actions:

- Infrastructure
- Jobs
- Energy
- Poverty
- Role of police
 - Proactive
 - Problem oriented
 - Outreach
 - Involvement
 - Education/awareness
- Cooperation b/w government and businesses
(e.g. planning board works with developers)
 - Mentoring of young people

Opportunities:

Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*

- Spend some \$ on infrastructure
- Develop skills w/out going broke
- Develop native industries

25-yr action plan:

- Smaller gov't
- Id proper role of gov't
- Equity, environmental protection, infrastructure
- Involvement must increase
- Infrastructure and jobs base must be developed
- Collaboration (community and government)
- Intergenerational mentoring/idea exchange

Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*





Granite State Future

Laconia

Group H

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Group H Brainstorm:

Focus 1

- Different communities have different sizes and populations
- Think about the long term when addressing energy needs
- Ensure that there are services and careers for the aging population
- The younger population is a more diverse group
- Crisis around workforce development
- Keeping young people here is a 30-yr problem
- Need to broaden the base economy
- Need specialized skills
- Aging of the region is accelerating
- Decline in school enrollment
- Will have a difficult time getting services
- Not getting internships in NH
- Family life and infrastructure of all sorts is essential to success

Focus 2

- Community centers are vital to the growth of communities (bring people together)
 - Example dialogue on how to use state prop. In Laconia
- Disconnect at local level (extremes in ideas are not productive)
- Process seems angry – young people do not want to be involved in that
- Set the stage so that it is respectful and people feel included
- Family values – intergenerational are important
- When ½ your income goes to housing & transportation it is difficult
- Many folks don't have a college education which can make it hard
- Need to own all parts of your population
- Need to go to folks in places where they live
- Make good use of retirees
- Clean water and clean forests
- Value forests and resources
- Other states are making land available to businesses – should we?

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension



- Many competing interests

Focus 3

- NH and the region has a declining transportation infrastructure
- Concern about excluding some types of housing
- Walkability (young people and elderly) – enhance downtowns
- Differences between northern and southern parts of state
 - Rural v. urban
 - Long-time residents v. newcomers
- Transportation
 - Automobile v. buses
- How do we make plans/coexist with such different needs/ideas?
- Need to go to all parts of the population to get their input (community)
- Diverse regions and needs
- Find industries that we can support

Focus 4

- Tourism and clean environment are necessary
- Need to preserve our historic and cultural resources
- Incentives for youth and management
- Institutional planning around energy needs
- How to preserve land and meet tourism needs?
- Property values
- Individual v. collective
- Consider what is good for whole state
- Need smart planning

Focus 5

- Weatherproof economic drives
- Early education supporting the economy
- Show one another what their values are
- Mental health needs
- High substance abuse rates
- Times are changing
- Current lack of interest
- Regionalization of energy
- Internet levels the playing field

Patterns and Challenges - Most important to you:

- We need to share our resources and understand one another

Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*

- Economic development to keep young population on hand
- Economic development & diversity
 - not just service-based
- Need to get people off welfare
 - change the unemployment system
- The voices that are not here tonight
 - Be proactive, not reactive – do your research (esp. education)
- Attract hi-tech jobs/internet and education
- Focus on lakes region economic development rather than NH
- Less planning, less discussion among the same people
- Promote entrepreneurship, be creative, think outside the box
- We need to take care of the basics of life first
- Educated work force, , tax incentives, foster competition
- Education, more trade schools, regional vs. state planning

Final priorities:

- Protect environment
- Education
- Focused economic development
- Internet
- Better infrastructure
- Connect education opportunities with job opportunities
- Protect property and water rights for the common good & development of the region
- Including everyone in the discussion

Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*





Granite State Future

Kingston

Group A

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report

Location: (circle one)

Berlin Claremont Dover Greenland Keene **Kingston**
 Laconia Littleton Manchester Nashua New London
 Pembroke Plymouth

Other: _____

Granite State Future

Small Group Facilitator Name: __Molly Messenger__

Group Letter: __AAA_____

Number of people in your small group: _____12 and 1 observer from RPC

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

6. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.

Focus Area 1

- Aging population
- Migration of youth to Boston and other areas
- With population growing
 - need to think services that whole state provides
 - may need more services for the elderly, less family services
- Nothing for youth here
- Hard for elderly to get around
- Zoning, things too spread out.
- Transportation for elderly to doctor's appointments
 - Systems in place to help aging populations
- Jobs – Boston area is a draw

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension



- Need more jobs
- Not as many for young people (makes them leave) → Population decrease
- Rethink state services (i.e. elderly not as much family)
- Affordable education in addition to jobs (to keep young people)
- Young population need places to do something
- Need some way to get there
- Communities built to be closer to neighbors
 - Have more volunteer capital
- Ride/walk services and not just cars
 - Met needs before but not met now
- Transportation
- Now it is too spread out

Focus Area 2

- Barriers of rules and regulations, lack of flexibility
- Misconceptions and lack of common language
- Environmental impact – responsible development
- Businesses not close enough to residences
- Guidelines make ideas locked in stone
 - Too many locked in for too long
 - Desire for change also needs to be there
- Zoning limits flexibility and “common sense” rule
 - No opportunities to think outside the box
 - Sometimes rules do not change fast enough for development
- Used to be farming community
 - Now new neighbors want i.e. “horse gene”
- Concern changing to satisfy highway or grocery store
- Misconceptions on mixed use development
 - People think houses next to strip mall
- There has been an increase in impervious surfaces
 - How do we limit drainage of roads, roofs, etc.
- High number of private wells – just shocked
- All other industries changing
 - i.e. less come to see mom and pop stores
- industry and commercial use don’t necessarily want to see the changes that people want
- There is a lot of distrust of government – challenge
 - Need to work together towards change
 - Apply creative solutions to solve problems & work together
- We need to find a common language(i.e. affordable housing doesn’t mean subsidized housing)

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension

- We can combine w/out effecting property values
 - Understanding mixed-use land
 - Plan for ways that are compatible
 - Need to look outside the box
- Keep youth occupied → transportation
 - How to get around if you can't drive/age factor
- Decent jobs, housing, protection of natural resources
 - While encouraging business to come and provide jobs
 - “not in my backyard” is a challenge
- Maintain property rights, values and use
- Loss of high value jobs that contribute to production
- Challenge is to keep gov't in check
- Complicated issues – how to get more people involved?
- Protect environment, jobs
- Affordable housing and transportation to jobs – all network
- NH doesn't want to break trends
 - Boards are aging just as population is
 - Older and like it how it is
- Tax base is forcing people out
- Transportation
 - Sick, elderly, low-income people who cannot drive (limited transportation)
 - Biggest challenge is \$ - where does it come from?
 - A pattern across all areas
- Communities need to strike a balance (all issues discussed)
- Every town can't be the best for everyone
 - Town flexibility adapted to their needs
- NH must become business friendly
- Challenge – transparency in planning
 - A sense of forced development
 - Challenge to not become homogenized
- Towns used to be “I want more”; now it's “I want this house”
- Protecting the personality of towns
- Concern planning commission takes away from boards
 - To not hand over our sovereignty
- Transportation
 - Put in lots of highways
 - Brought people in but industry needs public transport
 - i.e. Boston
 - How to people get to hospitals, deficit of volunteers

Actions and Future:

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- Decline in population – what can we do to prepare?
- People coming here to play, buy cigarettes and beer?
- Protect the natural environment
- Jobs, housing, transportation and maintaining the quality of life
- We need to remember our natural resources
 - Used to promote businesses/protect them
- Gas prices going up but no public transportation
 - It's a challenge for people to come here
- Individual, personal responsibility to be informed
- People have to participate in planning boards
 - People only come if negative
- How to get people to participate?
 - They have many other priorities
 - Apathetic – don't show up because they don't believe they can affect change
- Evaluate high school students w/real life situations
- Go to faith communities
- Go to the people, engage higher ed students
- If they become engaged they may stay
- Son commutes to MA
- Important to preserve green space
 - Especially if we "pride" ourselves on it.

Focus Area 3

- need for affordable housing
- what is affordable housing
- How should we develop land?
- NH does not have a variety of housing choices for all incomes but should
- Some towns do have a variety
 - But not easy to commute, expensive, goes back to jobs
- Small communities do not have many apartments
 - Not enough smaller affordable housing
 - No just SS
 - Make available for younger people
- Want a variety of jobs
- Don't want forced development for every town
- Exeter is unique town
 - 18th largest and third highest rate of manufacturing
- If you live in a community – challenge to buy a home
 - I don't want to see housing
 - Housing can mean an apartment, none
- Do we have enough land for building housing or other buildings?

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- Is there land left in our town?
- How to increase home sales?

Focus 4

- Increase in storms – what are the causes?
- Flooding
- Impervious surfaces and water – porous pavement and cost
- Heating and trees
- Chart shows that a large amount of energy we use is for transportation...
- Don't want government dictating what kind of light bulb use, hybrid car, environmental use – too invasive
- If foreign means out of US or NH concern? Concern over this statement
- NH going to increase in storms – this is normal
- Other viewpoint: there are more and closer & closer
- ER management boards show increase in flooding in some areas
- No longer 10 – 50 – 100 year floods (more frequent)
- Back to impervious surfaces
- If less pavement, water would soak into grounds
- Cost prohibited (impervious pavement)
- Supplement heating oil with wood (lots around)
- Wood is a crop – a renewable resource
- 38% of energy use is through transportation (cars and trucks)

Focus 5

- Many of the jobs are in MA – jobs are in Massachusetts
- Lots of jobs in this area but can't buy a house – MA is taking quality jobs
- The businesses aren't going to MA, they're going overseas
- Migration of certain immigrant populations over seas – refugee population
- No space in NH
- Property tax is too high
- NH taxes businesses if they don't make a profit –BET tax
- New businesses don't want septic and private wells, they want town system, so that is a disincentive
- Seabrook, Portsmouth & other towns have water so they have done well
 - those without a system like Raymond haven't done as well
- Not government dictating what I can have, have to have, etc.
- Jobs and unemployment
- More jobs in MA (gives more \$)
- Plaistow has one of highest unemployment rates
- OR lots of jobs and no affordable housing

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- What entices companies skill needs? More in Mass
- Takes quality workforce from NH
- Businesses are moving out of the US
- Refugee population wanted kids in schools - \$
- What tools do we have to attract businesses?
- Businesses in MA outgrew space
- No space in NH or 35 mi. to expand
- Property taxes keep them out
- Or tax businesses if they do not make a profit
- New businesses do not necessarily want private wells and septic
- A barrier to building
- Expanding, some towns have it while lots of rural areas do not
- Put in by community (town by town)

7. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

Better Communication, working together:

- We need to work together to eliminate distrust
 - people need to communicate better
- Need creative solutions to help solve problems
 - work hard to work together
- Need for common language
 - this will help communication
 - for instance, what is affordable housing Get common terms together
 - think outside box
- Keep youth occupied
- NH selfish and stubborn
 - don't want to make trends to make tough decisions

Balance

- Important for boards and communities to strike a balance
 - not everything that is a commercial development is good for town
 - balance between environmental concerns and other issues

Transportation:

- Transportation – elderly – what to do when can't drive?
- Affordable housing and affordable transportation

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- Need for better mass transit system
 - They have volunteers that don't cost anything
- Transportation, can't get to jobs, elderly can't get to healthcare
 - challenge is cost of services – where does that come from?

Jobs:

- Decent jobs, decent housing, protection of natural resources while encouraging business development
 - balance between rural and development
- Maintaining property rights and value
 - value isn't just dollar sign but use of property
- Loss of jobs – high value jobs – jobs that contribute to production
 - how do we protect environment, create jobs
- Tax base forces people out
- Fear of this process – taxpayer money
- Issue of cost

Planning

- Every town cannot be the best place for everyone
 - somehow towns need to find a way to have more flexibility to adapt to what the town sees as their vision
 - Need for state to become business friendly
- Transparency in planning
 - Forced development – a challenge is for the communities not to become homogenized
 - should be a difference between the communities
 - Not enough town identity
- Protecting town's sovereignty
 - Another planning commission
 - handing over our sovereignty

Community Vision

- Not enough people involved and get that sense of community

8. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.

- Environment

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- people play in our environment and then leave
- come up to buy beer and cigarettes
- Jobs, housing, transportation, maintaining and protecting environment
 - how do you balance?
- Can protect natural resources and still take care of tax base
- Sandown can become destination
 - let's not let tourists go north
 - natural resources can be its own business
- Individuals personal responsibility to be informed
- Planning boards – people don't come
 - only people come are people who come to fight issue
 - positives don't show up, only negatives
- People are apathetic
 - trickles down to local government
 - people don't feel they can change the way things are and don't have the time
- Start educating high school seniors with real life situations
 - take planning issues to faith communities
 - engage colleges and university students
 - if they become engaged they might stay
- NH doesn't have trees and green spaces near commercial spaces

9. What are your group's specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?

- Job growth (to encourage young people)
- Transportation (how pay, to where, increased volunteerism)
- Housing (housing driven by private sector, define affordable housing, not want to give up private property rights, workforce close to jobs, issues with HUD definition)
- Environmental Natural Resources (can be used to attract tourism)
- Government Regulation (varying perspectives)
- Solutions have to be suitable for different communities

10. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

Final Priorities:

Encourage job growth to support young people to stay

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Housing

- Workforce close to jobs
- Driven by the private sector
- We don't want to give up private property rights
- Affordable housing

Transportation

- Public transport and how we will fund it
- Increase volunteerism

Environment and natural resources

- It's a business
- Attracts people and commercial growth/revenue generator

Gov't negotiation

- Varying perspectives, lots of discussion
- Solutions that are scalable to your community

Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*



**Granite State Future
Kingston
Group B**

Changing Demographics (patterns)

- Attracting young people's needs
- Job opportunities → affects land use and existing infrastructure
- Young people may carry the burden of paying for aging population's healthcare
- All this affects transportation and affordable living places
- Need mixed use development
- Restrict isolation of various age groups
- Downtown development (de-sprawl)
 - That helps with meeting people (community spirit)

Priorities:

- Changing demographics
- Tax structure – home ownership
 - State vs. local property taxes
 - Explore other than income tax?
- Education (all inclusive k-12, vocational, college)
- Land use food production transportation
- Job opportunities (industries, manufacturing, various scales, concentration)
- Healthcare/affordability/quality of life
- Aging state – jobs?
- Service vs. manufacturing jobs
- Middle age in (w/family) quality of life
- Young out (cost of education) - not much support
 - lower job opportunities in high tech, manufacturing
- Very low food production in NH - only 6%
- Infrastructure (ex. Water, roads)
- High transportation costs – flexibility
 - Not a good situation for start-ups
- Transportation alternatives
- Access to services from outlying communities
- Public transport not developed well
- Training farmers (late 50's now)

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension



- Traffic grows faster than population – driving longer and more
- Also less public transportation now
- Natural environment – huge asset
- Keep density vs. sprawl
 - That relates to services (cost)
- Growth can bring development and jobs for young people
- NH tax advantage – attracts in-migration of older population
- Willingness to debate the tax structure
- What are we willing to pay for
 - Education
 - Open space
 - Healthcare
 - Transportation
 - Broadly defined transportation
 - Business incentives (seed money incubators)
- Baby boomers impact patterns
- Lower birth rates
- Younger people set trends

Final priorities:

- Achieving balance/compromise
 - Open space vs. attracting business
- Open discussion about tax structure (equitable and trust)
- Alternative modes of transportation
- Education (broadly defined)
- Job opportunities
- Bring younger people to the debate

Natural resources/climate:

- De-sprawl → reuse and redevelop
- Industry needs - local resources (use water, etc.)
- Attract clean industry/manufacturing
- Preparedness, adaptation to changing climate (extreme weather)
- Identify local pollution sources (i.e. firewood)
- “Buy local” needs support/local government
- The development of new housing with the number of vacant and foreclosed properties?
- Accessibility to serve at state government level
 - Have open house with senate reps
 - Pay for service more
 - Increase diversity at chamber

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Planning and zoning –

- Get away from vs. Encourage restrictions
- How do you balance rural with developed
 - (big box locations: away vs. integrated)
- Collaboration among local/regional/state planning
- Aging population/younger population (need balance)
- Job mobility related to health insurance
- Gas \$ and mindset, funding, policy, land use
- Barriers to more public transportation
 - Convenience
- Lack of upkeep of local and state roads, bridges
 - this affects attracting manufacturing

The American dream?

- Extreme weather events have gone up
- This impacts how we plan – storm water
- Sprawl – property size – property tax
- Food production costs
- Role of tourism – income of the state
 - Explore financial/tax incentives

Climate change

Manufacturing → engine of growth

- Jobs in alternative energy
 - jobs and investment dependent on outside resources
- High tech manufacturing/precision manufacturing
- Jobs in trade professions
- Income disparity of professionals vs. vocational – educational practices

Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*



Granite State Future

Kingston

Group C

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Data Brainstorm

- People leaving the state – losing brains power
 - How do we keep them from leaving?
- Loss of young people (20-30yr olds) – moving back in their 30's
- Are we two states? Different migration N&S
- Lots of turnover at local level – Kingston
 - Register care, then move out
- High population over 65 – moving the cohort over time
 - In next 20 yrs. how do we plan for this change in cohort over time?
 - Don't lose track of what seniors can bring to the community
 - A lot of seniors aren't contributing – potential untapped
 - Ho to tap? How to motivate to participate?
- Leave due to medical reasons
 - New facilities being built in response to this need
- How to make living here affordable?
 - Manage growth to keep NH affordable for younger people
- Economy of north (recreation)v. economy of south(technology)
 - How to support growth for both
 - Is it out role in south to attend to/effect north?
- % of preserved land from private owners
 - Land falls off tax base – shifting burden to businesses, residents
- Large opportunity with small farms, community gardens
- Land re-classified – wetlands – has limitations in how we can use it
 - Low tax base, low property value

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- Often this land is in current use, or not big in tax base
 - If land preserves – avoid development
 - Increase population that can ass costs i.e. schools & other services
- Cycle – young homeowner w/children
 - Rest of the community helps pay, then age and return the favor

Now: HH churn sate w/ op – once children gone people move on

- Conservation easement removes potential for local job creation (construction, landscaping, etc.)
- New development is a driver of jobs in many towns
 - No manufacturing
 - Cost of taking land out of use
- Regulator policies – restricting landowners
- Politics – local – decisions, favors
- Lots of town area is wetland
 - Limits ability to attract bus
 - Lack water/sewer infrastructure
- Conservation of land (Exeter river) can mitigate the nitrogen re:GB watershed
- Trade off/balance e/ conservation and development
 - Easier to manage if land in private trust
- Transportation
 - If want to minimize pollution impact
 - Where should development occur?
- Land conservation re: scope/size
 - How much land to take out of use?
 - Need to balance the mix of needs/uses
 - Conservation/residential/commercial/manufacturing
- Kingston on aquifer – how to protect our water for community (from private water developers/profits)?
- How to pool resources – how to know what we all can bring/contribute (seniors, kids, families)
- Conserves land as pooled resource for the community

Focus – our communities and region

- Affordability of housing

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- Losing our young people
- Over time, may happen to correct itself on its own
- How to take advantage of proximity to Boston
 - To attract hi tech, good paying jobs
 - Economic development/housing costs
- Return/migrate back to raise family, retire
 - Quality of life in NH
 - How do we define it?
 - Advantage of conservation
 - Affordability – if too cheap concern of who it attracts
- Planning to serve needs (housing) of young and old
 - Walkable community – people
 - Transportation
 - Redefine/variation of affordability
- NH could lead in alternative tech – to bring in high paying jobs
- How to treat out natural assets – water
 - Can't live without it
 - Must conserve vs. waste it
 - Preservation of what we have
 - Sustainability, natural infrastructure
- Transportation – moving people without harming the environment

Focus:

- What's the minimum, baseline we need in our communities (water, electric, local food)/
- How to sustain our quality of life?
- What is this? The balance/ the trade off?
 - What contributes to the quality of life?
- Infrastructure: for people and businesses
 - We have a good road infrastructure
 - Future building – mixed use to encourage walkability
 - What new, different decisions could we make or consider?
- Local trails – recreation, enjoying nature

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- Property rights
- Lack of traffic congestion, lights
- Maintain total character vs. density (lots of balance and trade-offs)
 - People not on top of each other
 - Economic development is needed
- Protect public land in communities
- Consider needs of youth in trade off
- Protection of water quality, supply, access
- Need more education on quality of life
 - Environmental literacy - in order to sustain quality of life (vs. regulation)
- Land resources to grow food
- NH environmental literacy plan

Focus:

- Need for appropriate cost/benefit analysis
- Balance to protect resources
 - Planning and regulation OR
 - Planning and education
 - What about in the future?
- Community garden – as choice
 - Social, community
- Trade-offs
 - Not everything (i.e. wetlands) need to be protected
- Quality of life & quality of jobs
- New type of industry (i.e. energy)
 - What kinds of jobs are aligned with our quality of life?

Summary:

- Quality of life – different things to different people (approaches, priorities)
 - Would rank indicators differently
 - Require balance on many dimensions
 - Regulations

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- Local – do good job, listens to people
- State – limited input, limited \$ to do it
- Jobs (hq), natural resource protection, affordability of housing



Granite State Future

Kingston

Group F

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Group F Brainstorm

Focus 1

- What is important to you?
- Who lives in NH and how are we changing?
- Population aging
 - Migration in
 - Is this a problem?
 - Population changes
 - Optimal mix leaving

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- 31st state a problem?
- 5th highest median age (this is a problem)
- Impact on small businesses
- What are colleges/universities doing to retain youth?
- Regionally, we are doing better with youth flight than other areas
- Growth has been in inner city Manchester
- 7th wealthiest population
- Addressing the costs of education
- NH advantage – needs to be maintained
 - Education part of the problem
- Important to understand cost drivers
- Population shifts should be acknowledged but may not be a problem
 - Should understand implications of shifts and demographics
 - Small population means bigger implications
 - Businesses need to work with education
 - Importance of cost of living
 - Need to understand who is “we”
 - Who will implement solutions?

NH POV

NO SALES TAX

NO INCOME TAX

OTHER FEES LOWER

RATIO OF CIT/REP

- Concern that beaurocracy is looking for problems

Focus 2: how we use land and the impacts of our choices

- Well-intended regulations have had unintended consequences
 - Ex land sold
- Private property → should be individual focus
 - Regulations impact how individuals own their property
- Less gov't intervention is important
 - Land use RD's getting too restrictive
- Current use tax – good tool for land protection
- Certain amount of reasonable land regulation is needed
 - Should protect learning other's property
- More congestion has resulted in more focus
- Need to be respectful
- Are public water systems more vulnerable than private?
- Private water supplies are not tested as regularly as private water supplies

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- May need to make private water supplies more away of need to be tested
- Agricultural angle of land use needs to be a focus of consideration
- Households pay more than 50% of income for housing/transport
- Cost of everything is a driver to these
- Need to be better stewards of the land – individually and cooperatively
 - State reg's are sometimes one size fits all throughout state
 - This is a problem – reg's should be regionally focused
- Important → private owners preserving land (sale of development rights)
- Be careful about presuming what will occur in the future (50-100yrs)
- Looking to government to solve our problems
 - This is an issue
- What is the motivation of RPC?

Focus 3: where we live and how we move around

- Curious → transportation observations cited are not material
- Government getting too involved in day to day life
- More rail – more jobs, eases congestion, more commerce (maybe thru MHT?)
- Are public transportation solutions just a dream?
 - Relies on economy
 - How do we make the dream a reality?
 - Individuals feel entitled to current solutions
 - This is a different problem
 - Impacted by aging population
- Be aware of opportunity costs
 - Can resources devoted to public transportation be better used?
- Public transportation crowds out innovation
- Need to look after existing infrastructure
 - Maintenance is an issue – economic impacts
 - Public water/sewage/runoff
- Gov't should not be involved here – this is s/b market driven
 - Unless they built it
- What we already have in terms of public transportation is fine
- Don't need gov't to solve transportation issues
- Spend fed \$ that has been allocated but moved elsewhere (i.e. I system)
- Costs for housing/vehicle is not a problem
- Tools exist to fund economic growth (ex. 93 widening)
- NH gas tax has been misappropriated → some portion has been given to dept. of safety
- Tool roads are good but users (trucks) don't pay for their use appropriately

Focus 4:

- False premise re:climate change

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- Is climate change really an issue?
- Emotionally and politically charged issue
- If it is real and we don't address it we will have an issue
 - Consider and plan for climates
- Regardless of cause, consequences of climate change
 - (ex. Water rising) needs to be addressed
- Need to be educated about climate change and consequences
 - Should not be ignored
 - How will it affect all of our resources
- Not a lot we can do about global warming
- Climate change will have an effect on the NH economy
 - Maple sugaring, tourism
- The consequences are complex and need to be considered
- Conserve not preserve land
- Pay attention to public cost of energy
- Economic impact of subsidizing green energy – not cost beneficial

Biggest issues:

- Concern w/regulation
- One size regulation does not fit all
- Quality of life issues to NH's future



Granite State Future

Kingston

Group G

How Can We make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

Group G Brainstorm:

Focus 1

- Drastically aging population
 - Requires different services
 - People need housing
- Hard to know future
- This area more affluent
- Moving in → quality of life
- Young people – need to attract them
- Cost of housing keeping young families out

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension



- Open space

Focus 2

- Proximity to ocean/mtns
- Big lots bad for wetland protection
- Use of land up to individual
- Conservation takes land off tax roles
 - How does this happen?
- Seacoast properties – climate change (flooding)
- Regional and local uneven
- Balance tax base and preserve values
- Waste water across communities
- Solutions cross town boundaries

Focus 3

- Where we live/move around
- Fastest transportation is not needing any at all – zen!
- More than cement
- Strength+ our highway system/infrastructure
- Not motivated – public transport
- Cargo are big users
- No shoulders or sidewalks
 - Need a car in this area
 - Seniors retiring from driving
- Will public transportation be more important to younger people too?
- Fuel prices high – how to decrease?
- Vets and boomers – designed to drive
 - This needs to be redesigned
- Community centers
- Trucking industry – big part of transportation
- Large lot size/sprawl
- Obesity but no sidewalks/bike lanes
- Make better/more aggressive use of tolls so tourists pay more

Focus 4

- Need regional solutions (water)
- Fracking in NH?
- 100 year floods =10years (Exeter)
- Dramatic changes in river levels
- Too much pavement
- Storm water culverts are too small

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension

- Energy costs very high
- Seacoast communities/climate change
- Invasive species changes things
- Lyme disease and West Nile
- Solar underutilized and geothermal
- Future of nuclear? (Seabrook)
 - How do we feel?

Focus 5: Community/Economy

- Increased entitlement/reduced responsibility
 - Hand up not out
- Increase of folks on public assistance
- Incentives and motivation/independence
- Jobs – lack of well-paid jobs
 - Little incentive
 - Especially in rural areas
- People working full time still not making ends meet
- Business regulations/taxes keep businesses out of state
- Better alignment of education and job skills
 - Partnerships w/cc
- Public Universities/higher ed. Expensive
 - Put more on businesses

Future:

- Need to export value/goods/knowledge and bring in people & \$
- Need infrastructure to support new economy/technology
- Attract targeted industries
 - How and what?
- Keep high standards
 - Town services
 - Choice/incentives
 - Keeping taxes low
- Quality/Public services
- Individual choice v. community services
- More good paying jobs
 - (land use, business friendly, education, transportation)
- Problems in Washington
 - So we are considering a casino, etc
- Revenue in communities to maintain lifestyle and meet our needs (as we know)
- What is our vision? What needs to change? (to attract businesses)
- Local control – keep the unique character of each town

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension

- Competitively priced healthcare – esp. for seniors
 - Hard to compare
- Rights of minorities? No one size fits all
- Aging infrastructure – needs updating for today
- Building safe and healthy communities (walk, clean air and water)
- Education system that is consistent with the needs of the state
- So many services for kids, takes away from other kids (imbalance)
- Towns work together better
- Local town government and schools are very divided (unsustainable growth in budget trends)
- Washington problems/Concord problems → local autonomy
- Education systems (undervalue associates and trade degrees)
- State should make it possible to afford a house
- We have to solve our own problems and take responsibility
 - We need to retain young people
 - Annual struggle to balance development and services
 - Jobs
 - People love the quality of life but need jobs to support
 - Environment and tourism
 - Overall lifestyle
 - Make decisions at an effective and local level
 - We want to maintain the character of the state, enhance infrastructure, and attract jobs

Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension



Appendix F: Summary of Evaluation feedback

Over 450 people registered to attend the Granite State Future sessions and over 500 participants attended. Two hundred sixty seven (267) people filled out an evaluation form about their experience with the conversation.

Total # participants reporting: 267/528

Average age of participant: 60 years

Of 248 participants who reported gender:

Male: 48% (118)

Female: 52% (130)

Below represents all results that were marked a 4 or 5 (agree or strongly agree) on the participant survey.

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. The facilitator(s) were always prepared. | 92% (239/261) |
| 2. The facilitator(s) helped the group set ground rules and stick to them. | 90% (232/259) |
| 3. The facilitator(s) helped us talk about different points of view. | 85% (222/261) |
| 4. The facilitator(s) made sure everyone took part in the dialogue. | 89% (233/262) |
| 5. The facilitator(s) helped the group work out disagreements. | 71% (169/239) |
| 6. The facilitator(s) helped us come up with our own ideas for action and change. | 77% (199/257) |
| 7. The facilitator(s) explained how our input fits into future decisions | 58% (146/251) |
| 8. The participant guide was easy to understand. | 75% (193/259) |
| 9. The information was helpful for our conversations. | 78% (200/257) |
| 10. Our group talked about the most important issues. | 81% (212/262) |
| 11. It seemed as though everyone had an equal chance to express their views. | 89% (234/263) |
| 12. Our group identified the most important steps that should be taken. | 56% (144/259) |
| 13. I learned new things from other members of my group. | 79% (208/262) |
| 14. The conversation helped me to become better informed about the issues. | 69% (179/258) |
| 15. Because of this conversation, I had a better understanding of people who I disagree with and their opinions. | 55% (136/247) |
| 16. The amount of sessions were: <i>Just the Right Amount of Time</i> | 73% (176/241) |
| 17. I am glad I participated in these community conversations. | 89% (232/261) |
| 18. I would attend another community conversation on this or a different topic. | 84% (219/260) |
| 20. Would you be willing to be contacted for a future one-on-one or phone interview? Yes | 65% (141/217) |