

Table of Contents

CHAPTER

1. Introduction	1
2. People and the Economy	11
3. Public Roads	18
4. Housing	23
5. Community Facilities, Services, and Resources	27
6. Land Use	31
7. Master Plan 1992-2010	43
8. Adoption of Master Plan	49

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Map 1, Langdon Physical Characteristics	3
2. Chart 1, Population history	11
3. Chart 2, Population projections	15
4. Map 2, Langdon Road Systems	19
5. Map 3, Langdon Housing	24
6. Chart 3, Recreation	29
7. Map 4, Floodplains and Wetlands	33
8. Map 5, Aquifers	34
9. Map 6, Slopes	37
10. Map 7, Important farmlands	39

Chapter 1

Introduction

The State of New Hampshire requires that town planning boards "prepare and amend from time to time a master plan to guide the development of the municipality"(1). The law states that the "sole purpose and effect" of the master plan is to "aid the planning board in the performance of its duties". These duties include making recommendations relative anything that could affect the future development of the community, including zoning and boundary changes, public buildings, land improvements, etc. The purpose of a master plan is to organize the planning board's recommendations for the future development of the community into one document which will serve as the basis for future planning board recommendations.

Because of the importance of a master plan, its development is a lengthy, time consuming process. Its comprehensive nature and its effect on future community development require that much information on the desires of the residents regarding land use and development be gathered. This information must then be turned into recommendations for the master plan. These recommendations must reflect the desires of the community, while recognizing the rights of those who might not agree with the majority. In order to determine the desires of the residents, a Community Attitude Survey questionnaire was developed and distributed. The results of that survey are reflected in this master plan.

A plan for the future is not complete without a look at the past. The history of an area shows the trends followed by previous residents to establish patterns for change. In this chapter we shall include both the past and the Community Attitude Survey of current residents showing their expressed desires for the future of the town.

HISTORY AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The town of Langdon was incorporated 11 January, 1787. A monument commemorating its founding was installed on the town green, across from the town hall at the bicentennial celebration three years ago (25 July, 1987).

Langdon contains 10,163 acres, including the water in the river, brooks, and ponds. This land is contained in two parallelograms because of the way the town was formed. The

more northerly parallelogram, containing roughly 7,000 acres, was divided from Charlestown and the southerly section of 3,000 acres offset about 1.4 miles to the west, was divided from Walpole. The resulting 16.4 square miles makes Langdon the smallest town in Sullivan County.

Langdon lies in the southwest corner of Sullivan County. Its western border, running along the top of Fall Mountain, lies less than 3/4 of a mile from the Connecticut River. The terrain is generally hilly. The altitude ranges from 300 feet at the point where Cold River finally enters the town of Walpole to 1,340 feet at the top of Holden Hill, in the northeast section of town.

Cold River enters and leaves Langdon three times. It first enters from Acworth on the eastern border and runs westerly approximately one and a half miles before turning southerly and running another mile before leaving Langdon just above its entrance into Vilas Pool. After crossing a corner of Alstead, it again enters Langdon running along the southern border for approximately one mile before entering Walpole. Another half mile downstream it enters Langdon for the last time, forming a loop of about a half mile before entering Walpole.

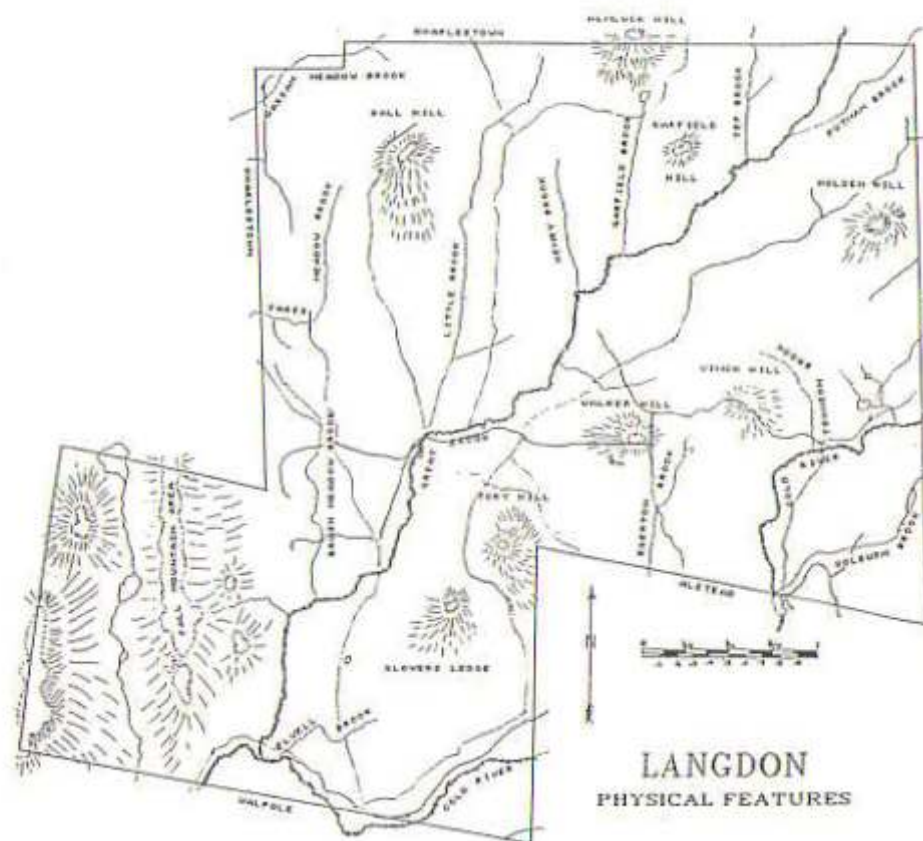
In the middle of the last loop of Cold River in Langdon, it is joined by Great Brook. Great Brook crosses Langdon from the northeast corner to the southwest. Neither of these streams is of sufficient size to generate major amounts of power although both were used in the nineteenth century to furnish power for small grist and sawmills, a carding mill, and a cider mill, some of which lasted into the 20th century. There are numerous small brooks.

There are no lakes in Langdon, although there are a number of ponds and catchments. None of these is of sufficient size to enumerate.

These two physical features of Langdon - its hilly terrain and the availability of water - led to the purposes for which the land was used in the early days of the town.

Even before the town was incorporated, settlers were moving into the area and picking out the land that was most suitable for their purposes. Since the primary occupation of most of the people in the United States at that time was farming, most of the land chosen was for that purpose.

Down through the years, the same pattern remained. Farming was the major occupation of the residents of Langdon, with a few working in subsidiary and support occupations. In the past quarter century, and most notably in the past ten



MAP 1. The physical features of Langdon consist mainly of its hills and streams. The entire southwest corner of the town is taken up by Fall Mountain. Most of the town is hilly, with several of the hills being identified by name. Two major streams, Cold River and Great Brook, run through the town and both are fed by brooks of smaller size.

years, this pattern has begun to change. Fewer people are working in agriculture and more are finding work in other endeavours, with many commuting to other cities or even other states for their jobs. This phenomenon and its consequences will be covered in some detail in subsequent chapters.

One of the consequences of the economic shift away from agriculture was the subdivision and attempted subdivision of some parcels of property within the town and in nearby communities. A warrant item was placed before the town meeting calling for the planning board to investigate the possibility of a town master plan to regulate uncontrolled growth. As a result of the overwhelming vote in favor of this item (Town Meeting, 14 March, 1987, Article 15) the planning board prepared a questionnaire for the residents of Langdon which could be used as a guide in making plans for the future.

COMMUNITY ATTITUDE SURVEY

The Community Attitude Survey questionnaire with total responses is appended below. The questionnaire was returned by 237 full time residents, 17 seasonal residents, 14 non-residents, and 8 who did not answer the residence question. Many of the responses were conditional and this will be discussed in detail in the appropriate sections.

The population of Langdon has two distinct age levels—the natives, who tend to be older, and the newcomers, who are usually younger. The resident profile, compiled from the data sheet included with the questionnaire, reveals that more than half of the residents had lived in Langdon eleven years or more, many of them all of their lives.(2) Since names were not required on the questionnaires, it is not possible to determine the exact age or any other specific information about the individual respondents.(3)

1. What type of town would you like Langdon to be in the future? (Choose one)

rural residential town	239
agricultural town	65

2. 276 people responded to the questionnaire. Many of them only completed parts of it, usually the numbered questions. The numbers given here reflect only those that answered that question.
3. The returned questionnaires were separated into page groups, eliminating the possibility of identifying most of the respondents, but insuring a statistically correct sampling.

industrial town	7
retirement town	9
seasonal residential town	3

Despite the instruction to choose only one, many respondents chose more than one response to this question, with most of those choosing both rural residential and agricultural

2. In the next fifteen years, I want Langdon to: (Choose one)

grow rapidly	0
grow as little as possible	99
encourage controlled growth	152
discourage growth	24

Many of the people who marked the majority response struck out the word "encourage."

3. What type of residential development would you like to see more of in Langdon? (Choose as many as you like)

Single-family units	225
Multi-family units	18
Mobile homes	28
Condominiums or cluster housing	11
elderly housing	41
low cost housing	39
none of the above	47

4. Should an effort be made to preserve agricultural land in Langdon?

yes	234
no	17
uncertain	19

5. Which of the following types of development do you think would be desirable in Langdon? (Choose as many as you like)

small, home-based business	209
motels and inns	21
restaurants	47
retail stores	27
light industry	122
commercial recreational facilities	28
professional offices	40
apartment buildings	5
specialty stores	24

service business	87
day care center	89

6. Do you favor control of land development in the following areas? (Choose as many as you like)

important agricultural land	206
shoreslines of rivers, brooks and ponds	179
flood plains	143
wetlands	130
steep sloping areas	128
none of the above	21

7. Are there any buildings or places in Langdon which should be preserved for historic or scenic value?

yes	259
no	3

If so, what and where?

Universal Church - Town Hall	229
Congregational Church	156
McDermott Covered Bridge-Cold River	223
Prentiss Covered Bridge-Great Brook	228
Bates Mill	61
Langdon Rock	146
Deep Hole	105
Any others (not specified)	7
Summer theatre	1
Center of town	1
Town common	1
Fancy Farm	1
Great Brook Banks	1
Walker Fields	11
Cemetery	2
Pound	1
Little School	2
Private homes	1

8. Do you feel that certain areas of the town should be set aside for the recreational enjoyment of the town's people?

yes	154
no	32

If so, what and where?

Deep hole	113
Town common	136
streams, ponds, water	126

a park	93
trails	112
individual sites	38
others	3
summer theatre	1
Newcomb Pond	1
sports field	2
skating rink	2

9. Do you favor zoning regulations for Langdon to provide for orderly development?

yes	201
no	31
uncertain	56

10. Langdon should provide for:

More	Same	Less	Uncertain	
50	72	79	19	commercial/business sites
19	69	96	24	industrial sites
39	100	50	16	home building lots
104	64	5	20	open space
7	0	1	4	other (specify)

11. Should a subdivision be disapproved because it may require increased town expenses for roads, schools, fire and police protection?

yes	134
no	87
uncertain	55

12. What makes Langdon a good place to live now?

private, quiet, rural	257
nice, friendly people	190
clean environment	215
low population numbers/density	181
low taxes	36
close to population centers	118
school	66
minimal government regulation	81
nothing	1
various individual items	24
any others	8

13. What makes Langdon a bad place to live now?

high taxes	111
------------	-----

road conditions/maintenance	55
public administration (town government)	17
school facilities/teaching	42
lack of community spirit	19
population growth	43
lack of planning	56
individual complaints	14
any others	25

14. What are your worries about Langdon's future?

tax increases (mostly school costs)	206
overpopulation/high growth rates	175
public administration (town government)	26
change of any kind/"citification"	90
governmental regulations	44
lack of planning	87
cheap housing/trailers	152
school facilities/teachers	53
industrial/commercial growth	90
roads	51
individual worries	7
any others	17

A separate sheet was added to the questionnaire to determine more specific concerns of the citizens. They were asked to rank the five biggest growth issues in order of importance and then asked three specific questions concerning the planning board. These issues are listed with their rank according to the position they were placed in by the respondents. The number after each is the number of people who included it on their list.

1. Schools	120
2. Land usage	139
3. Fire protection	118
4. Refuse disposal	128
5. Law enforcement	79
6. Highway maintenance	122
7. Enforcing town ordinances	69
8. Sewage disposal	37
9. Town management	74

The apparent discrepancy between the ranking and the numbers who included the item in their vote is explained by the fact that most of those interested in schools and land usage had them at the top of their list while highway maintenance and refuse disposal was at the bottom. The items receiving votes were assigned numbers in inverse order; e.g. the item listed as most important by the respondent was assigned the largest number, and the total of these numbers determined the rank in importance.

The planning board question read:

Should the planning board and the town consider the following:

	Yes	No
1. Require larger lot sizes in house lot developments	139	103
in commercial developments	129	67
2. Should we consider requiring more ground floor square footage in new construction?	92	149
3. Do we need an historical board set up for preservation of certain areas?	100	108

A glance at the questionnaire responses is enough to indicate to anyone that the vast majority of the residents of Langdon are in favor of some form of control over the growth of their town. They want to retain the community substantially as it is, but would allow for orderly, controlled growth in environmentally "clean" business and light industry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As can be seen from the responses to the questionnaire, there is some divergence of opinion of issues within the town but little difference on the issue of growth and preservation. Based on the responses shown above, the following items are recommended for inclusion in the master plan:

1. Langdon should remain a rural residential town.
2. Development of important agricultural land should be controlled or limited to maintain the rural residential feeling of the town.
3. The building of single family residences should be encouraged; but provisions should be made for the possibility of multi-family residences should be made in case the need for them arises.
4. The growth of small home based businesses should be encouraged, with other businesses considered if they are

compatible with maintaining the clean, quiet, rural character of the town.

5. An effort should be made to preserve the historical places in town - the Town Hall and the two covered bridges.

6. Since the major worry of the respondents was the tax question, each decision made should consider the effect of the change on the tax rate.

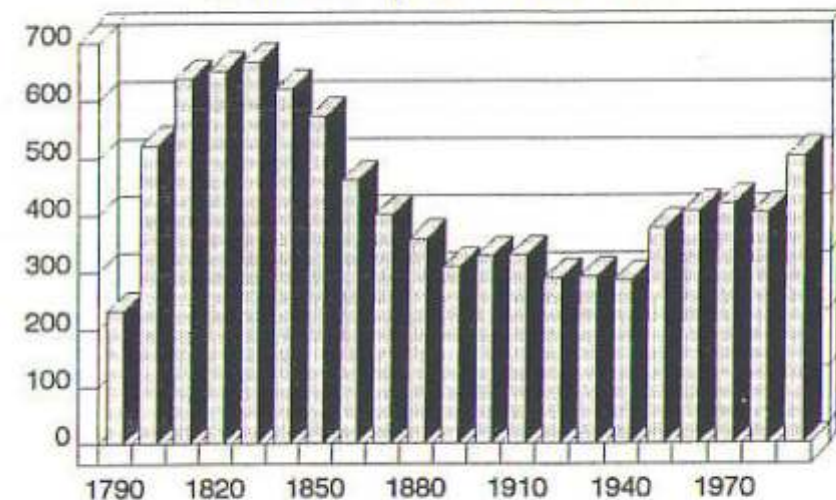
People and the Economy

The population of Langdon has never been large. At the peak of population in 1830, the population could be measured in acres per person (15.1). This translates into the standard measurement of 42.4 people per square mile, which is considered a sparsely populated area. By 1990, the population density of Langdon had recovered to 35.3 people per square mile. By comparison, the regional density was 80 people per square mile.⁽⁴⁾ Since density is a function of both the population and the area of a town, the density of a town with a small area will be higher than another of the same population but a larger area.

The people of the United States have been counted every ten years since 1790. As can be seen from the chart, the population of Langdon rose for its first fifty years and then began a rapid and equally steady decline.

Langdon Population

Census Reports 1790-1990



4. Upper Valley lake Sunapee Council, First 1990 US Census Information, 2/1/91.

There were several reasons for this. The agricultural land in New England, especially in the hilly country of New Hampshire, is very limited. As the population grew, and more and more of the boys grew to adulthood, they needed additional land to start their own farms. Since most of the suitable land had been settled by their fathers, grandfathers, or great-grandfathers, they were forced to leave the region in order to find land to purchase. In many cases this meant that they had to move far away, to the newly opened territories in the midwest, as they did not have enough money to purchase the more expensive land closer to home.

Other factors contributed to the out-migration of farmers, both old and young, from New Hampshire. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, many railroads and canals were built, allowing easier access to the newly opened, more productive, land of the mid- and far- west. These same transportation advances also allowed the settlers of the new land to ship their products back to the large eastern markets. The industrial revolution, with its massive increase in factories which required large numbers of workers to operate the machines drew many farmers to the urban areas to find work.

This out-migration of the younger farm people had two major effects. With the younger, possibly more innovative, people gone, the average age of those who remained rose dramatically, and with the greater age, tended to become very conservative.

Of the two major factors of population growth, natural and migratory, the latter has the greater effect on an aging population. Natural population growth or decline is determined by subtracting deaths from births. After the average age of a population passes the child bearing years a population will decline because there are more deaths than births. This factor is clearly reflected in Langdon in the past decade where there have been nearly the same number of deaths as births in the community, resulting in a net gain in population as a result of natural increase of only 5 people, while the increase due to migratory factors was nearly 150 people.

The second factor, migration, tends to change with many factors other than age so the net effect is greater at some times than others. Since World War II, the phenomenon of the second or vacation home and retirement to those second homes has produced a net in-migration to many farm areas like Langdon, where the land tends to be cheaper than around the cities. The phenomenon has also affected the population count. The figures of the census are skewed somewhat by the timing of the census, which is conducted during the summer months when most of the seasonal residents are using their Langdon

property. Many of the seasonal residents have large families and/or guests and the census reports show a considerably larger population than normally lives in Langdon.

The population of Langdon has two distinct age levels--the natives, who tend to be older, and the newcomers, who are usually younger. The resident profile, compiled from the data sheet included with the Community Attitude Survey, reveals that more than half of the residents had lived in Langdon eleven years or more, many of them all of their lives.(5) Since names were not required on the questionnaires, it is not possible to determine the exact age or any other specific information about the individual respondents(6), but the conclusions have been verified by several other means, including tax and other town records and the town history.(7)

The questionnaire was returned by 237 full time residents, 17 seasonal residents, 14 non-residents, and 8 who did not complete this section. The full time residents were further divided into groups according to length of residence:

less than one year	16
1 to 5 years	56
6 to 10 years	40
11 to 25 years	68
26 years or more	57

A number of seasonal and non-residents indicated the number of years they had owned property in Langdon, with those owning property over eleven years being the largest group.

Some indication of the age of the residents can be gained from the responses regarding children. Nearly half of the respondents had children beyond school age.

No children	42
Too young to attend school	29
Children in elementary school	52
Children in junior high school	18
Children in high school	32

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6. The returned questionnaires were separated into page groups, eliminating the possibility of identifying most of the respondents, but insuring a statistically correct sampling.
7. Frank Sellers, History of the Town of Langdon New Hampshire, 1987, passim.

Children in college	15
Children beyond school age	132

The numbers are larger than the number of respondents, as many people had children in more than one group. The large numbers of children of younger age probably accounts for the concern of the large number of respondents concerning the school situation in Langdon.

The figures given by the respondents to the Community Attitudes Survey can be verified independently. The 1980 U.S. Census showed that the age distribution of the people living in Langdon was:

ages 0-4	23
ages 5-9	31
ages 10-14	50
ages 15-19	38
ages 20-24	31
ages 25-29	33
ages 30-34	44
ages 35-44	48
ages 45-54	36
ages 55-64	50
ages 65-74	34
over 75	19

These tables verify the conclusion earlier in this chapter, viz: the population of Langdon can be divided in two general groups and those groups can be identified by their place of origin. The older group consists of the people who were born in Langdon or the near vicinity, often on the property that had been in their family for generations. The younger group is made up mostly of people who have moved into the area recently. There are, of course, younger people in the native families and older people who moved to Langdon after their retirement, but the conclusions are accurate.

Langdon is not growing as fast as areas of New Hampshire closer to the population centers of Massachusetts. The Upper Valley - Lake Sunapee region, of which Langdon is the far south-west corner, was growing at a rate of about 2 percent per year in the mid-1980s.⁽⁸⁾ While that rate accelerated in the late 1980s, the economy has slowed down considerably in the past two years and the rate of population growth has returned to the earlier level. Both of the projections in Chart 2 show an annual growth of between 2.5 and 3.0 percent per year. If the economy were to turn up, an increase in the population growth rate could be expected. It is best to plan

8. Upper Valley - Lake Sunapee Council, 1987.

for that growth, even if it is not known when, if ever, it will take place.

Population Projections

Langdon, New Hampshire 1980-2010

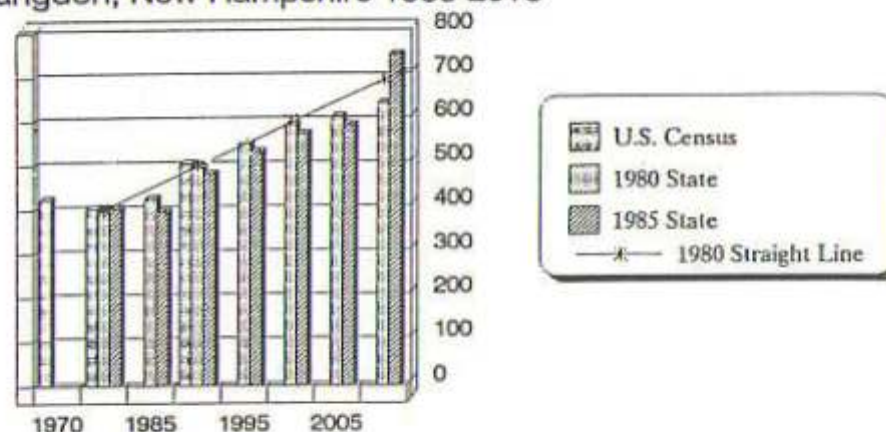


CHART 2. This chart shows three different population projections for Langdon. One is projection made by the Office of State Planning in 1980, another is a projection made by them in 1985, and the third is a projection made in 1987, based on straight line increase. These are compared to population figures based on the U.S. Census and other actual counts, and show that none of the projections were particularly accurate.

Langdon is the smallest town in Sullivan County, both in terms of population and in area. It has experienced a large spurt in population, growing over 32% in the last decade.⁽⁹⁾ Virtually all of this growth was in the final two years of the decade, far outstripping the projections made in 1987. Almost 90% of the construction begun in those boom years has been completed, and the resulting population growth already

9. Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Council, First 1990 US Census Information, 2/1/91.

felt. The current Regional Profile projects a growth for Langdon of 2% over the next twenty years, slightly larger than the growth for the region as a whole.(10) This projected growth rate could be accommodated in Langdon and still follow the expressed desires of the Survey respondents.

Projections of future population growth are guesswork at best. There are too many unknowns among the many variables to construct a reliable projection. Straight line projections based on either recent or more long term population movements must assume that all other conditions - economic, political, religious, etc. - will remain the same. Since the changes in such conditions are primary reasons for population changes, this could be a wrong assumption. Computer projections can vary tremendously, depending on what factors are entered into the equations.

ECONOMY

The economy of Langdon is almost entirely based on income from other areas. 24 percent of the respondents to the Community Attitude Survey listed themselves as retired. Only 17 percent earned their living in Langdon, while 22 percent earn their living in other states. The balance work at other places in New Hampshire. In both per capita and median household income, Langdon ranks near the bottom among the towns in Sullivan County. In 1980, the last year for which reliable figures are available, the per capita income in Langdon was only \$5,865 per person, and the median income was \$14,044 per household. 27 people were listed as living below the poverty level.(11) Only Lemster and Unity had lower figures. The Office of State Planning estimated that in 1985, the per capita income in Langdon had risen to \$8,885, again near the bottom in Sullivan County, and again with only Lemster and Unity being lower.(12)

Except for agricultural pursuits, there is little industry in Langdon. There are three sawmills, an undercoating shop, a machine shop and horticultural supply business, a plumbing contractor, a bank, two construction companies, a fuel oil company, and number of small home-based businesses. The respondents to the questionnaire listed a dozen types of business that they thought it would be desirable to encourage in Langdon. Many of them - motels, restaurants, commercial

10. Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Council, Regional Profile, 1990, p. 12.
11. U.S. Census, Sullivan Co., N.H., 1980.
12. Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Council, Regional Profile, 1990, p. 93.

recreational facilities, post office, etc. - are businesses that Langdon does not have the population base to support. Others, such as the home-based businesses supported by most of the respondents, do not require any action by planning or other town boards so do not require any action in this document.

Some of the other mentioned businesses - shopping areas, retail stores, daycare centers, etc. - might be possible with sufficient population growth in the future, there does not appear to be sufficient support for any of them at this time. While there has not as yet been any expressed desire by other types of business to locate here, it would be best to have a comprehensive plan and regulations in place should the need arise, in order to give any such application the proper review.

Any plan for business growth should include a method of establishing the net impact of a new commercial or industrial development on Langdon. As many towns in the southern tier of counties in New Hampshire have discovered in the past decade, new business development often brings with it new costs for the town such as increased need for police and fire protection, increased costs of highway maintenance, etc. If the business development brings housing development, there will be still more demand for community services in these categories, as well as larger demand for school space. Given the current crowded conditions of the schools, this could require construction which is very expensive. Therefore, it is recommended that any request for a new business development be accompanied by a projection of the increased services required both by the business and by its employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a zoning ordinance which would preserve the rural residential character of the town, while allowing the controlled building of new residences and/or businesses.
2. Require each new business or residential development to furnish a projection of the impact of such business or development on the current services of the town or the need of increased services required to support the new business and its employees or the new residents of a residential development.

Public Roads

The primary transportation corridors through Langdon run along roads laid out, for the most part, in the eighteenth century. These roads were not designed for, nor were they intended to carry, a great deal of heavy truck traffic or high speed auto traffic. Indeed, they were laid out for ease of travel for animal traffic and follow the easiest, not necessarily the shortest, path for an animal to pull a load. Some have been improved somewhat to accommodate automobile traffic in the 20th century.

Map 2 shows the roads in Langdon. Route 12A is a state highway (Class II). Routes 123 and 123A are secondary state highways (Class III roads). All others are town roads (Class V roads). Cheshire Turnpike is used by the state as an emergency Class II road in times of flood and other emergencies. There are other roads in the town (Class VI), but since they are not maintained regularly and some are subject to gates and bars and usually cannot be traveled by regular passenger vehicles, they are not included here.

There are 2.6 miles of Class II roads, 5.77 miles of Class III roads, 23.45 miles of Class V roads, and 2.87 miles of Class VI roads in Langdon. Just over half of the Class V roads are paved. Many of these roads were built in sections as the town grew and more roads were needed to reach the outlying farms. The roads and the approximate date of their acceptance (the date of acceptance for the first section of the road is used in all cases) by the town are:

Acworth Road	1822	Kelley Road	1779
Ball Road	1780	Lamb Road	1789
Cheshire Turnpike	1780	Mason Road	1796
Cold River Road	1792	Meaney Road	1768
Crane Brook Road	1796	Mellish Road	1802
Currier Road	1791	Route 123	1802
Drewsville Road	1780	Russell Road	1782
Egerton Road	1782	Tory Hill Road	1788
Hemlock Road	1784	Village Road	1787
Holden Hill Road	1791	Walker Hill Road	1787
Jewett Road	1801	Winch Hill Road	1779

Paving of the roads in Langdon was begun in 1924, on state route 123. Paving was started on state route 12A the following year, but it was not completed until 1932. Very little paving was done during the depression and World War II. It was started again in 1950 and was completed, as far as it was going to be done, in 1960. Thus, most of the paving in town is 30 to 60 years old. Some of the roads have been



MAP 2. There are three state highways - Rt. 12A, Rt. 123, and Rt. 123A - running through Langdon. The other roads shown on the map are all town roads. Solid lines indicate paved roads and dashes indicate gravel roads. Class VI roads are not shown.

re-surfaced and all of them have been repaired from time to time. Except for the state highways, which are in the best condition, most of them cannot handle any additional traffic without major repairs to upgrade them to safe levels.

Langdon has already adopted the state access to highways regulation (RSA 236:13) and it is made part of the recommendations for the Master Plan.

Roads in subdivisions are required to meet the town's specifications under present regulations. Even if the new road or roads themselves meet the town specifications, the road(s) onto which the new road(s) feed might not be able to handle the increased traffic generated by the new subdivision. One example of this situation would be the feeding of new traffic from a subdivision into existing traffic at one of the blind corners on Rt. 12A. This might require moving or rebuilding existing intersections, installing traffic lights, or other measures to insure safety at that location. Another example of this would be a request for a new gravel pit (or subdivision construction which required that large amounts of earth be moved some distance on public roads). Even though the roads could handle the normal traffic, they could not handle the extreme overloads usually carried by gravel trucks. In this case the subdivision should be required to pay for, or post bond for the payment of, its proportional part of the cost to upgrade the offsite road(s) to handle the increased traffic generated by the subdivision.

This would insure that the benefits to the town and the needs of the subdivision would balance. A policy to determine this proportional share should be established. Among the factors that need to be included in the equation are:

1. The amount of new road frontage of the proposed subdivision.
2. The amount and type of new traffic generated on existing roads.
3. The amount of existing traffic already on those roads.
4. The standard to which the town currently maintains the road.
5. The amount(s) of service(s) required by the residents or occupants of the proposed subdivision.
6. The amount of revenue (property tax) generated by the proposed subdivision.

7. The cost of the improvements.

Other factors may be required to refine this policy but these should be considered a minimum.

Traffic has not yet become a problem in Langdon. Traffic counts made on the two major thoroughfares indicate that an average of 1287 cars per day use Route 12A, with peak traffic of 140 cars per hour during the morning rush hour, (13) while Route 123 averaged 736 cars per day, with peak traffic of 57 cars per hour at the same time. (14)

During the past five years, accidents occurred at the rate of about one per month in Langdon. Two-thirds of these, including the only fatal accident during this period, were single car accidents, involving running off the road. (15) The locations of these accidents was scattered, with accidents occurring on almost all roads in town and with no particular concentration of accidents except in the vicinity of the high school.

Another factor that needs to be considered in light of the survey respondent's expressed desire to maintain a rural residential and agricultural community is the possible designation of scenic roads.

State law (RSA 231:157,158) allows towns to designate, by town meeting vote, any road (except state highways) as a scenic road. The main purpose of this designation is to help protect the scenic value of that road. Once a road has received the scenic road designation, any repair, maintenance, reconstruction, or paving work shall not involve the cutting down of trees over 15 inch diameter, or the tearing down or destruction of stone walls, without the prior written consent of the Planning Board or any other official town body designated at the town meeting to implement the law, and after a public hearing has been held.

The scenic road law allows the road agent to cut trees, clear brush, shrubs and any other natural or manmade obstructions within three feet of the traveled way. It does not affect the eligibility of the town to receive state construction and repair aid, and most importantly, it does not affect the right of any landowner to work on his own property.

Speed limits should be posted and road identification signs installed.

13. NHDOT Automatic Traffic Counter, location 25151.
14. NHDOT Automatic Traffic Counter, location 25153.
15. NHDOT Accident Location Reports Data, 1986-1990.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Include New Hampshire access to highways regulation (RSA 236:13) in the master plan.
2. Develop regulations regarding the impact of and cost responsibility for the increased services, construction, or repair required to meet the needs of any proposed business or subdivision.
3. Road identification signs should be posted.
4. Speed limits should be posted.
5. Begin procedures to designate scenic roads.

Chapter 4

Housing

Housing is important to the community and to individuals. The location, quality, type, and availability of housing often determines the people who seek to live in a community. Housing is often the largest single expenditure that an individual makes during his lifetime. Nearly 1/4 of an individual's income is spent for housing and that housing accounts for about the same percentage of his wealth. In a residential community the housing forms the basis for town income, its tax base.

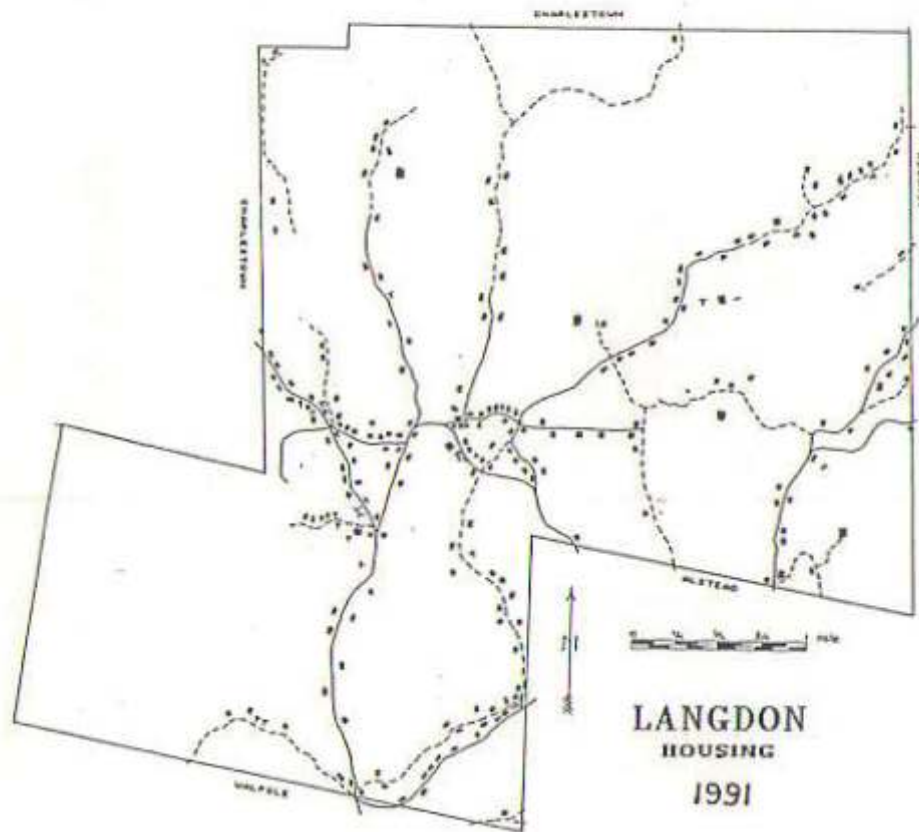
The residents and property owners of Langdon expressed their feelings about their community in the Community Attitudes Survey circulated by the Planning Board in 1987, the results of which are given in full in Chapter 1. Some discussion of those questions regarding housing is necessary.

Despite the instruction to choose only one, over forty of the respondents to the questionnaire chose more than one of the choices regarding the type of town they wanted Langdon to be in the future, most of them choosing both rural residential and agricultural. Taken as a group, only 2.5 percent wanted Langdon to be anything but a residential or agricultural town.

On the question of growth, no one wanted the town to grow rapidly. While a slight majority (55%) checked the "encourage controlled growth" category, many of them marked out encourage. Little growth (36%) and no growth at all (9%) totalled nearly as much and if the ones who marked out "encourage" are counted on the growth limiting side, the majority would change.

By a large majority (82%) most respondents to the survey preferred single family homes over all other types. The next largest group (17%) wanted no new housing of any type. Only 10 percent were in favor of mobile homes, 6.5 percent multi-family homes, and 4 percent wanted condominiums or cluster housing.

These attitudes reflect the existing housing conditions and patterns in Langdon. Langdon was formed as an agricultural community with single family detached residences and remained one for over a century and a half. It is only in recent years that the pattern, not of the housing, but in the lifestyles of the people that live in them, has changed. Virtually all of the houses in Langdon are still single family homes, but sometimes members of more than one family live in them.



MAP 3. There are 203 houses, 23 mobile homes, 17 business buildings, 3 town buildings, 2 schools, a church, and a lodge in Langdon. The location of the homes, whether mobile or fixed, are shown on this map. Mobile homes are indicated by the letter T. Other buildings, including ancillary structures like barns, sheds, and garages, are not shown. Some of the houses are still under construction.

In the past two hundred years, many of the original farm houses have disappeared, but there are still many old homes in town. In its bicentennial year nearly half (47.8%) of the houses in Langdon were more than fifty years old, some of them dating back to the Eighteenth Century. Only a few new homes were built in each decade from 1900 to 1970 (17 in the 1940s, 12 in the 1950s, 19 in the 1960s). In the 1970s the rate increased to three houses per year, a rate that continued through the 1980s. There has been no concentration of new homes in any particular area. Most of the more recent homes have been built on town roads rather than state highways, as most of the lots or building sites on the state highways already have houses on them. One new house was built on Rt. 123 to replace one that burned down.

Most of the homes in Langdon are occupied by their owners on a full time basis. Very few are rented on any long term basis, but nearly ten percent are used only part of the time - weekends, summers, vacations, etc.

There are only a few houses in Langdon large enough to be suitable for conversion to apartments, condominiums or multi-family dwellings. The problems normally associated with these conversions, except for sewage disposal, do not apply to any of the suitable houses. Structural changes, parking, and land use changes are already subject to approval by town boards or agents, but these should be formalized.

One type of housing that is new to Langdon is the mobile home. These are referred to as "manufactured homes" in RSA 674.24, but this can be misleading as there are several other types of "manufactured" or factory built houses that are not intended to be mobile at all. There are also "mobile" homes that are placed on permanent foundations and are not intended to be moved, although they may be. Examples of both types exist in Langdon now and more can be expected in the future. Since only ten percent of the residents of Langdon are in favor of allowing mobile homes at all, this is a controversial issue, and care should be taken in establishing regulations.

Another item that should be considered for the Master Plan is the matter of building codes. Langdon uses an amended form of the state codes, but they need to be updated to include such matters as conversions. These codes should be applied both to new construction and to remodeling of old structures, but care must be taken to avoid turning a minor remodeling job into a major one by requiring excessive code mandated upgrading. This could cause needed repairs and upgrading to be avoided.

The final item to be considered in this section is zoning. There has never been a zoning regulation in Langdon, but many people feel that there is a need for one now, and one is necessary to allow the Master Plan to work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Adopt a zoning regulation that is simple enough to be understood, but which will establish various zones in town to allow for the orderly growth of the town, while maintaining its rural character, in accordance with the expressed wishes of the residents. Items suggested for the zoning regulation include:

1. Establish zoning districts
2. Minimum lot requirements
3. Setbacks
4. Road frontage requirements
5. Maximum height restrictions
6. Off-street parking requirements
7. Mobile home regulations
8. Commercial and industrial development regulations.
9. Housing conversion Regulations
10. Cluster and multiple-family housing regulations.
11. Earth removal regulations
12. Sign regulations
13. Exceptions, variations, etc.
14. Detailed definitions

2. Update the town building codes to include such matters as conversions and other building variations.

3. Establish regulations regarding manufactured housing siting and mobile home parks.

Chapter 5

Community Facilities, Services and Resources

This chapter covers a number of diverse subjects, most of which are informational and do not, in themselves, generate items for the Master Plan. A town the size of Langdon cannot support the facilities and services that a larger town with more people and a larger tax base can. There are not enough people to justify such town facilities as water or sewer lines, power plants, or hospitals. Power is furnished by outside companies and residents must go to larger communities like Keene, Claremont, or Hanover for hospital service. Many of the services are performed on a volunteer basis. The town facilities are adequate for meetings and other town gatherings at the present time.

There are only a few town facilities, ranging in age from 187 years to 1 years old:

1. The Town Hall was built between 1801 and 1803. It was used by both the Universalist and Congregational Churches, as well as for the town hall, until 1842 when the Congregational Church was completed. The gallery was converted into a second floor for the use of the Universalist Church in 1851. They used it for the next 60 years, but the gallery has not been used, except for storage, in recent years.
2. The "Parish House" was built as a vestry for the Congregational Church in 1905. Since World War II it has been used by various town organizations for many purposes. For many years the Langdon Community Club has financed the upkeep and improvements of this building.
3. The fire department is all volunteer with a current roster of 12 firemen, 1 certified EMT, and 8 "first responders." The fire station was completed in 1960 and houses three pieces of equipment - a fire engine, purchased in 1982 at a cost of \$87,000, a jeep fire engine with accessory trailer and a combination fire and medical emergency vehicle. The fire department is a member of the Southwest New Hampshire Mutual Aid, a group that supports many of the volunteer departments in the area.
4. Langdon has six police officers, all part time. The town owns the police cruiser, purchased in 1989 at a cost of \$12,000.

5. The road department yard was purchased in 1989, leveled and graded in 1990. A garage was planned but was rejected by the Town Meeting in 1990 due to lack of actual plans and excessive costs. Equipment owned by the town includes two small trucks, a grader, and some small equipment.
6. Langdon has two cemeteries, both started in the Eighteenth Century. The upper cemetery, located next to the Town Hall in the center of town is, except for a few family owned plots, full and most burials take place in the lower cemetery. The lower cemetery, only five years younger than the upper, has been expanded once and another expansion is planned in the near future. The lower cemetery is located on Drewsville Road. The cemetery fund of \$17,000 is sufficient to maintain the cemeteries.
7. There are two schools in Langdon. The Sarah Porter Elementary School, across the road from the Town Hall, was built in 1938. The Fall Mountain Regional High School, near the west border of Langdon, off Rt. 12A, was built in 1966. Both are part of the state mandated Fall Mountain Regional School District. Langdon students in kindergarten and grades 5-8 attend school in Alstead. In 1991 there were 39 students in grades K-4, 33 in grades 5-8, and 12 in high school, from Langdon. The cost per pupil in that year was \$5,339.00.
8. The Shedd-Porter Memorial Library in Alstead was donated to that town by John Shedd in 1909 for the use of the residents of Alstead and Langdon. While small, it is adequate for the needs of most residents of Langdon.

The Community Attitudes Survey addressed several of these services. Lack of planning and poor road conditions closely followed high taxes on the list of things that made Langdon a bad place to live, with schools only a few points behind. When it came to worries about Langdon's future, taxes again led the list, but a high growth rate and mobile homes far outpaced schools and roads as things to worry about. The number one concern in both cases was taxes, so care will have to be taken in the future to limit the amount that any proposed increase in services will increase the amount of taxes.

The area recreation and open space is another issue that received considerable support on the Community Attitudes Survey, although some of the responses require some explanation. Half of the respondents thought that the town common should be set aside for recreational use. The town common barely accommodates a riding mower so it is unlikely that it could

handle all of the people wanting to use it for recreation. Most of the areas chosen to be set aside would involve the use or purchase of private land. Most of the areas mentioned were not specific; streams, ponds, water, trails, parks, etc. were mentioned. Only Deep Hole, the old swimming hole on Great Brook behind the Congregational Church, received a large number of votes by name.

Recreational facilities standards for the area have been developed by the Upper Valley - Lake Sunapee Council. These standards are only general guidelines, to be modified by each town to reflect actual conditions and capabilities. Many of the facilities in the "standards" are for towns larger than Langdon, but are included here for possible future reference.

<u>Recreational Facility</u>	<u>Suggested Standard</u>
Ball Fields	1 per 1000 population
Tennis Courts	1 per 1000 population
Playgrounds	1 per school 1 per 750 population
Beaches	1 per waterbody
Outdoor Skating Areas	1 per 1000 population
Gymnasiums	1 per 2000 population
Recreation Centers	1 per 2000 population
Parks and Picnic Areas	1 per village 10 acres per 1000 people
Town Forests	50 acres per municipality

CHART 3. Recommended recreational facility standards.

The last question from the Community Attitude Survey to be reviewed here is the one regarding historic preservation. 94% of the respondents thought that one or more places should be preserved for their historic or scenic value. The Town Hall and the two covered bridges all received 83% support, followed by the Congregational Church at 57%, Langdon Rock at 53%, and thirteen others received single digit votes. McDermot and Prentiss Bridges are already on the National Register of Historic Places.

A Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is one of the tools needed to implement the changes needed or desired by residents. A CIP is a long range method of planning for large expenditures, and are usually set up for a minimum of six years. A CIP:

1. classifies projects according to need and urgency;
2. provides a recommended time frame for implementation;
3. should contain estimated costs of the project(s) and probable operating and maintenance costs and revenues; and
4. may contain information regarding existing or projected sources of funds.

Since a CIP is necessary for planning purposes, it is recommended that one be established after the master plan is adopted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Protect existing fireponds and access thereto.
2. Establish a capital improvements program to implement the recommendations of the master plan.
3. Develop at least one recreational facility. Investigate possibilities of donation or matching funds for such facility.
4. Apply for National Register of Historic Places designation for the Town Hall and Congregational Church and consider the formation of an historic district for the village.
5. Establish a Capital Improvements Program.

Chapter 6

Land Use

In the minds of most residents of Langdon, this is probably the most important chapter of the master plan. Nine of the questions on the Community Attitudes Survey dealt with this land use in one way or another. A vast majority of the respondents to the questionnaire place the issue as either the first or second most important growth issue which the town must deal with in the upcoming years.

The growth issues on the questionnaire received overwhelming votes for slow or very controlled growth in Langdon. The raw figures, given completely in Chapter 1, are summarized here. The same question numbers are used here to avoid confusion; non-growth questions were skipped.

1. 78% of the respondents thought that Langdon should be a residential town, 20% an agricultural town, and 2% an industrial town.
2. 56% thought that controlled growth should be encouraged, while 36% thought it should grow as little as possible, and 8% thought growth should be discouraged completely.
3. Five times as many people chose single family housing than any other kind as the type of new housing they would like to see in Langdon.
4. 93% of those expressing an opinion thought that an effort should be made to preserve agricultural land.
5. Many types of business, mostly small, non-polluting ones, received support from Langdon residents. Non-residents were more likely to be in favor of larger projects.
6. 92% favored control of development on farm land and marginal areas.
9. 73% were in favor of zoning regulations to control development.
10. Open space was the only line in this question to receive a positive response.
11. In the closest question, 49% thought that a subdivision should be disapproved because it might increase town expenses, 32% thought that it shouldn't, and 19% expressed no opinion.

Before getting into recommendations for future land use, it is necessary to establish a more exact picture of the physical makeup of the land in Langdon. Map 1 in Chapter 1 shows the general lay of the land and the courses of the major and larger minor waterways. The information on that map is not sufficient to allow for a determination of land use policy. Several other factors need to be taken into consideration. The first, not necessarily the most important, of these is the "land capability" in Langdon.

LAND CAPABILITY

Land capability is the effect that natural features of the land have on its suitability for development. Among the features that affect capability are floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, and ledge or bedrock near the surface. All of these features are present in Langdon.

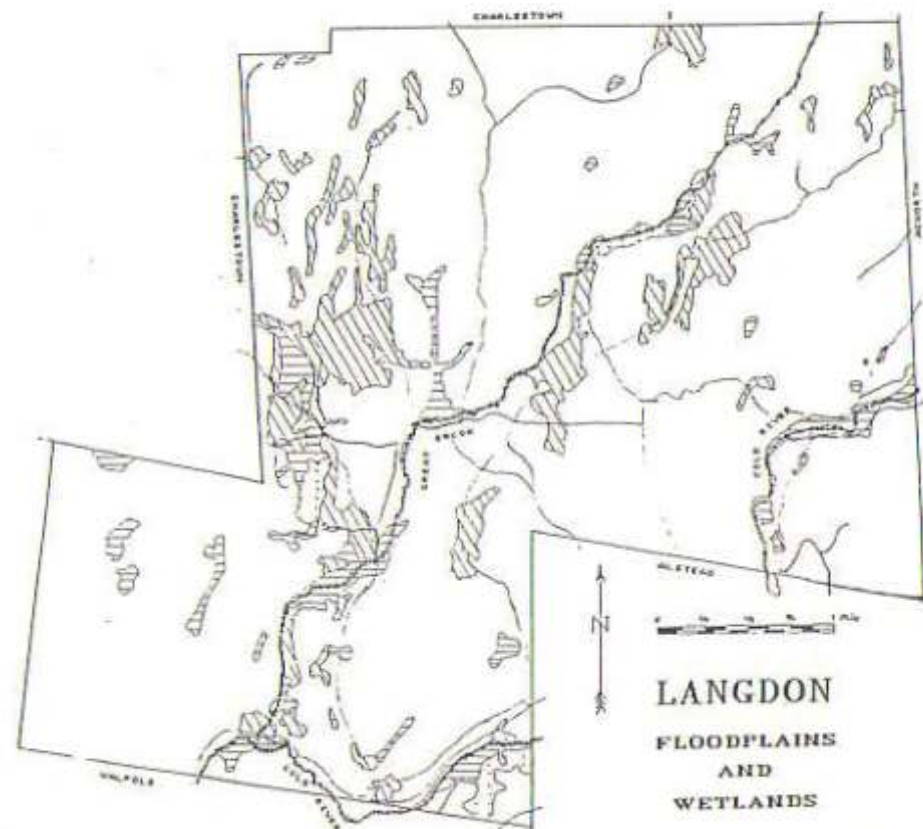
Map 4 shows the floodplains, wetlands, and other soil conditions throughout Langdon. The first two features are important in determining land capability and some of the other soil conditions can affect development.

FLOODPLAINS




A floodplain is defined as an area of land adjacent to a waterway that is covered with water occasionally, usually during periods of heavy rain or runoff. Wetlands are defined as those areas covered with or saturated by surface or groundwater often enough to support vegetation adapted to saturated soil conditions. Both conditions are important to the ecology of an area.

Floodplains provide storage areas for excess water during times of flooding. During drier times they provide travel corridors for wildlife. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has designated the streambed of Cold River as a "Special Flood Hazard Area." (16) Development of floodplains must be limited. Reasons for this are both practical and aesthetic. From a practical standpoint, development in flood-plains needs to be restricted to prevent damage to the proposed development in the times of flooding. Development could also reduce the water storage capacity of the floodplain or obstruct the natural flow of the water, thus causing greater downstream flooding. Removal of groundcover, trees, and other vegetation causes erosion and sedimentation. Since the floodplain is close to the waterway, downstream effects could be felt sooner, even in times of normal surface water runoff.

16. Federal Insurance Administration maps, No. H01-02.



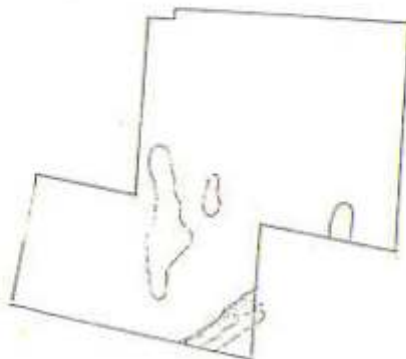
MAP 4. This map shows the floodplains, wetlands, and poorly drained areas of Langdon. Each is delineated above with separate symbols, identified below. Areas with no markings can be considered from fairly well drained to excessively drained, but each may be used for development if proper care is taken, and if other factors allow.

-  soils subject to flooding from streams
-  wetland soils that are poorly drained
-  seasonally wet soils that have water within two and one half feet of the surface during winter and spring months

WETLANDS

Wetlands include any area that water regularly stands on or saturates. The prime example of a wetland is a swamp. Others would include marshes, bogs, and most poorly drained land areas. The water table, or normal level of ground water, in wetlands is at or near the surface for several months out of a year with normal precipitation; often there will be standing water in such an area. Among the major functions of wetlands are the storage of excess runoff water during rains and floods, filtration and storage of nutrients and pollutants from groundwater, and supplying of water to streams during periods of low water flow.

Wetlands also provide water for community, private and business use, supplying water to the aquifers which feed the wells. Only one area in Langdon has been identified as having sufficient water to "meet or augment municipal and industrial requirements." This area is adjacent to Cold River where it re-enters Langdon from Alstead. (17) Additional areas were identified as having enough water "for small municipal and rural water districts and commercial and light industrial use." These areas lie along Cold River, Great Brook, and Brush Meadow Brook. Since these areas are all near streambeds, care must be taken in siting wells on them, as they can affect both the stream and the aquifer if not properly controlled.



MAP 5. Aquifers in Langdon. The solid area is the "industrial" aquifer and the circled areas the "rural water district" areas.

The filtration and storage function of a wetland can be a double-edged sword. Unless the area is properly managed and protected, the filtered out pollutants can be washed back into the mainstream waters. Wetlands are also prime providers of wildlife habitat.

17. John F. Cotton, Availability of Groundwater in the Lower Connecticut River Basin.

There are both ecological advantages and disadvantages to wetlands. As long as they remain uncontaminated, wetlands provide filtration of groundwater and the quality of the out-flow water is improved. If, however, as mentioned above, wetlands become contaminated, from whatever source, the lack of flow causes the area to remain contaminated. For this reason, development, which requires a septic system of some sort, cannot be allowed in wetland areas.

OTHER SOIL TYPES

There are also several categories of drier soils. These include:

1. Seasonally wet soils, usually near streams, where the water table rises to within one foot of the ground surface during wet seasons.
2. Hardpan glacial till soils, where the hardpan, at varying levels under the topsoil, prevents the drainage of water any deeper into the soil.
3. Non-hardpan glacial till soil, which is well drained soil with glacial fragments ranging in size up to boulders.
4. Sand and gravel soils which are generally well drained, sometimes excessively so.
5. Shallow to bedrock soils may have only a few inches of topsoil on top of the bedrock. Ledge outcroppings are common.

Seasonally wet soils and hardpan glacial till soils are generally unsuitable for development because the soil conditions will not allow a septic system to be used. Shallow to bedrock soils are unsuitable both from the septic system standpoint and that of construction difficulty. While it is technically possible to overcome both the septic and engineering problems of all these soils, it is doubtful if it is worth it from a financial standpoint.

The two remaining soil types - sand and gravel and non-hardpan glacial till - are both suitable for development, although sand and gravel makes a poor filter for septic systems. Non-hardpan glacial till is probably the best soil for development. Unfortunately, it is also the most suitable for agricultural purposes and the only one suitable for the growth of crops.

Except for ledge in the last category, none of these soil types occur in large enough areas to be significant on

maps of the scale used here. Since ledge occurs more often in the steeply sloped areas, that situation is covered under that category. Construction on each of the other categories would have to be examined on a case-to-case basis.

SLOPE

The second determinant of land capability is the slope of the land. Langdon is in generally hilly country. Map 6 shows the slope of the land using the three groups of slopes used by the State Land Board and was developed from data on the United States Geological Survey topographical map for Sullivan County. The three groups are:

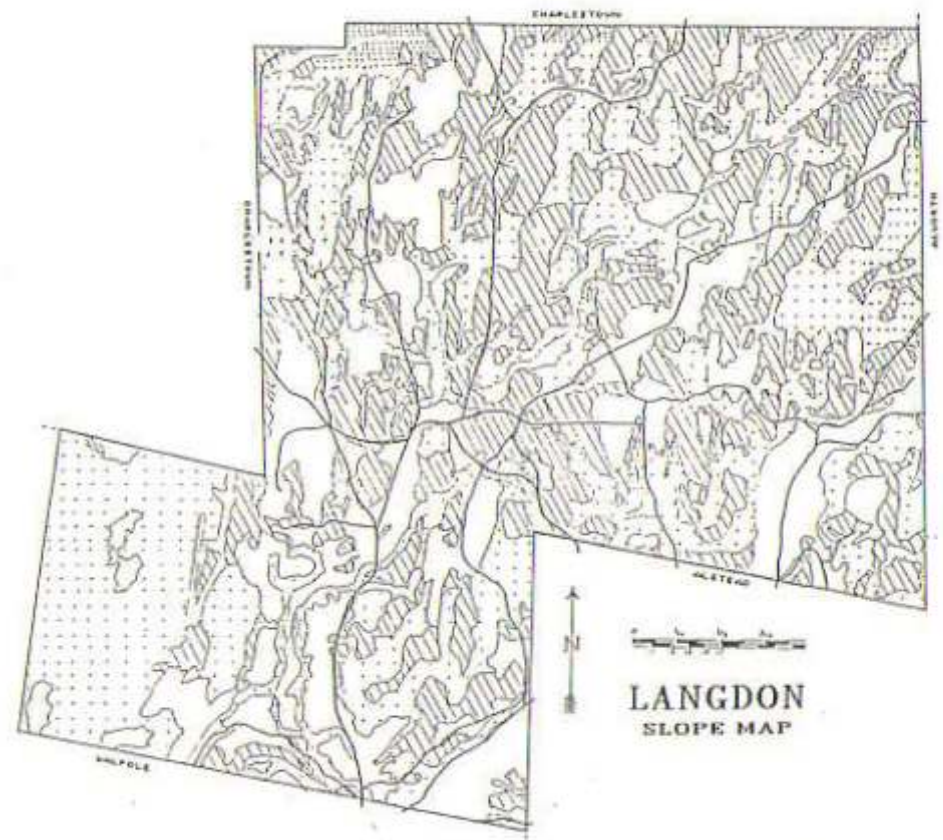
- Group 1 - slopes of 0 - 8%
- Group 2 - slopes of 8 - 15%
- Group 3 - slopes of 15 - 25%

Unless it is perfectly flat, group 1 land is very good for development. If it is perfectly flat, it could have drainage problems. Group 2 land is probably the best for development as it provides good drainage, good views, and the possibility of more privacy with smaller lot size. Land in group 3 should be studied more carefully before allowing development on it. The steeper slopes may require special conditions to be placed on building permits to insure that proper techniques are used in construction of buildings, sewage systems, access roads, erosion control, etc.

Much of the land in Langdon has slopes over 25 percent. While these have been included on the map in group 3 lands, they should not be considered for development due to the special problems associated with them. There may be small areas of lesser slope in group 3 areas, just as there might be steeper slopes in the areas designated as group 1 or 2. Contour maps of any proposed subdivision must be required in the future. It is possible to make a land capability matrix using the slope groups and soil categories, but all that it will show is that the best land for development is gently sloping, relatively dry land.

AGRICULTURAL SOILS

Special consideration must be given to the agricultural lands in Langdon. Ninety-three percent of the respondents to the Community Attitudes Survey felt that an effort should be made to preserve the agricultural land in the town. Due to the hilly nature of the town, there is little agricultural land to begin with. Map 7 shows the agricultural land in Langdon. These lands are divided into two types according to the standards of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. Their definitions are:



MAP 6. This map shows the relative slope of the land in Langdon. Areas with no markings have slopes of less than 8 percent.



Moderate slopes, 8 to 15 percent



Steep slopes, greater than 15 percent

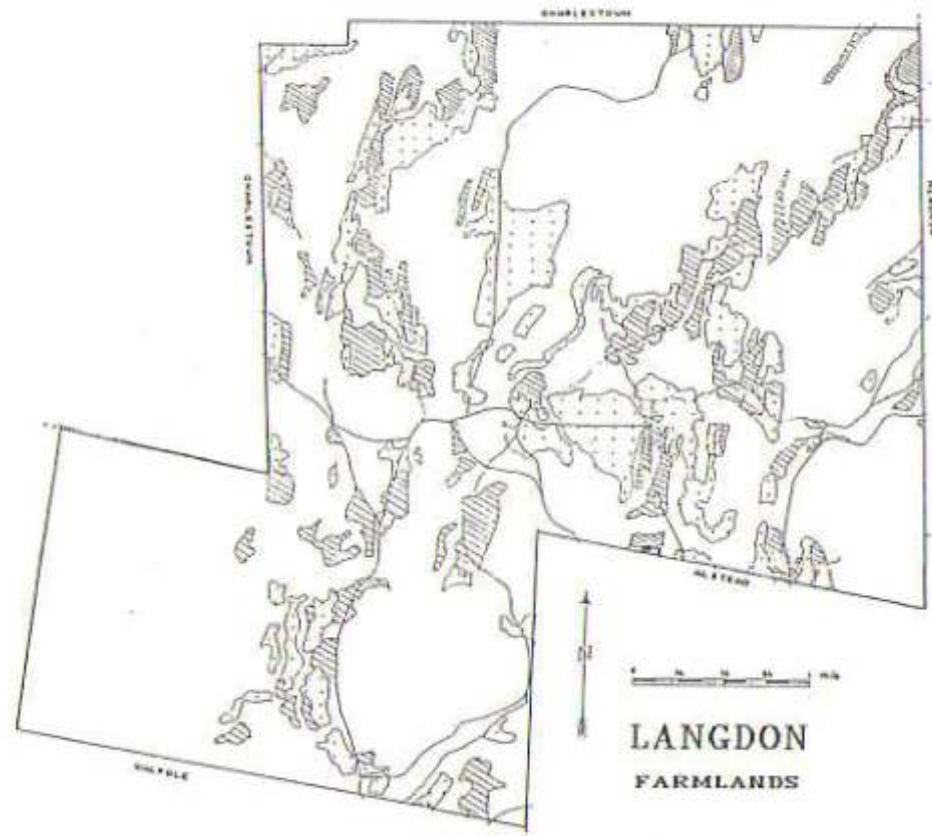
Prime Farmland Soils - Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is also available for those uses (the land could be cropland, pasture land, rangeland, forest land, or other land, but not urban built-up land or water). It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed, including water management, according to acceptable farming methods. In general, prime farmlands have an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity.

Additional Farmland Soils of Statewide Importance - This is land, in addition to prime farmland soils, that is of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage and oilseed crops. Generally, additional farmlands of statewide importance include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some may produce as high a yield as prime farmland if conditions are favorable.

Prime agricultural lands are the easiest to develop for the very same reasons that are the best farm lands. They have relatively gentle slopes and good drainage and, since they have already been cleared for agricultural purposes, they don't have to be cleared for development. Since the road system in Langdon was built originally to serve the farms in the town, the prime agricultural lands are already on the existing roads.

The importance of agriculture to a community is easy to underestimate. Farming was the major occupation in Langdon for a century and a half, but since World War II many of the farm operations have ceased and the fields are returning to forest. The remaining farms still produce fruit, grain, milk, beef, pork, poultry and breeding stock for the economy.

Agricultural land is quite scarce in New England, especially New Hampshire. Farmers in New Hampshire produce only 15% of the food that is consumed in the state. The other 85% must be imported from other states. Food prices are higher in New Hampshire because of transportation and handling costs required to move the food from the large producing states in the midwest.



MAP 7. Farmlands in Langdon are divided into two groups, Prime Farmlands and Important Farmlands. As a percentage of Langdon's total area, there is very little farmland. These lands are identified on the map as follows:



Prime Farmlands



Farmlands of Statewide Importance

As the population of the state increases, the amount of cropland decreases. A study of this situation published by the New Hampshire Food Policy Committee in 1979 revealed that in the 50 year period up to 1975 the population of New Hampshire increased at a rate of 7,300 per year while the cropland decreased at a rate of 9,300 acres per year.

Cropland in New Hampshire has been reduced to just over 100,000 acres. Any further reduction could only increase the amount of food that would have to be imported. This is just one of the many reasons to prevent the further loss of agricultural land. The study mentioned above goes into great detail on this subject. (18)

Development is only one of the ways that crop land can be lost. It can also be lost through neglect or lack of use. Neglect while the land is in use can lead to erosion and depleted or polluted soils. Agricultural land that is not used regularly tends to revert to its natural state. In just a few years brush can take over the land and if this is ignored, it will return to forest. It is expensive and time consuming to reclaim neglected agricultural land, but it can be done. Once the land has been converted to housing or commercial development, it can never be reclaimed for farming.

Besides the production of foodstuffs, agricultural land provide other important benefits to the town.

1. Farms are important in maintaining the rural character of the town, which virtually all of the residents voted important in the survey.
2. They provide:
 - a. open space
 - b. scenic views
 - c. local employment
 - d. wildlife habitat
3. They promote energy efficiency by reducing the amount of food imported.
4. They improve water conservation.

FOREST RESOURCES

Most of Langdon's land area is covered with forest. A comparison of maps 6 and 7 gives an indication of the location of forest areas. All of the areas designated as steep

18. Recommendations for a New Hampshire Food Policy, N.H. Food Policy Study Committee, Concord, 1979.

slopes, and all of the moderate slopes, except those shown on the farmlands map, are covered with forest. These forests are a major asset to the town both economically and aesthetically. Forests provide many benefits, including a permanent supply of lumber, firewood and other wood products, including food in the form of products from the sugar maple. There are three working sawmills and several commercial sugaring operations in Langdon.

Forests also provide wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, wind and sound screens. They hold soils in place and help prevent the unrestricted erosion of soils during heavy downpours. With all of these important benefits, it is necessary to establish regulations to protect the forests.

These land capability and agricultural land considerations, along with the expressed desires of the town residents, suggest several items for consideration in the Master Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A plan to maintain the rural residential and agricultural character of the town.
2. The encouragement of the continued use of agricultural lands for agricultural purposes and discourage the conversion of this land for other purposes.
3. The protection of the quality of the town's water sources.
4. A recommendation that Langdon establish a "Resource Conservation Plan" which designates certain of Langdon's natural resources as "critical" and require a more careful consideration of any attempt to develop areas which would impinge on the critical resources, critical resources should include:
 - a. Floodplains and wetlands
 - b. Steep slopes
 - c. Prime agricultural land
 - d. Scenic view and open space
5. A recommendation that a simple zoning regulation be adopted to recognize the existing patterns in the town and to encourage orderly growth in the future. These regulations should include the Resource Conservation Plan of item 4 and a Site Plan Review as provided under RSA 674:43.
6. A recommendation that a regulation be established for the control of forest resources to provide for the

future and continued availability of forest products and to prevent damage caused by unprofessional logging operation on steep slopes or important watershed areas and resulting in erosion and sedimentation.

Chapter 7 Master Plan

1992 - 2010

In order to plan for the future and meet as many of the desires of the residents on Langdon as possible, it is necessary to develop a specific and somewhat complicated schedule of items to be included in the Master Plan. Some of these affect more than one area of growth and/or development and an effort will be made to make it as simple as possible and yet cover all the areas.

In order to preserve the rural residential and agricultural character of Langdon and provide for an orderly, environmentally sound, and progressive growth, it is necessary to have both specific goals and a coordinated Master Plan. The following recommendations are made:

1. Adopt a zoning ordinance. A number of the Master Plan recommendations can only be carried out by adopting a zoning ordinance. This will involve not only the writing of the ordinance, but also gaining the approval of the townspeople who will have to approve it at the Town Meeting.

The zoning ordinance should be simple, and divide the town into as few districts as possible. The recommended districts are:

- A. Rural District
- B. Village District
- C. Critical Resource Overlay District

The Rural District, which consists of most of the town, provides for land to be used for agriculture, forestry, low density housing, and home businesses. Several (or many) uses can be listed as "special exceptions" which means that certain uses are forbidden except under special conditions which are set forth in the ordinance itself. If the proposed use is listed as a special exception and meets the conditions of the ordinance, the Zoning Board of Adjustment can grant "special exception." Conditions generally ensure that the particular use will not be detrimental or injurious to the neighborhood. The Planning Board should determine the exact list of permitted uses and special exceptions after further study, and it should define each use.

The Village District is primarily an historic district, which allows residential or commercial use that is compatible with the existing structures. Higher density housing is normally recommended for village areas, but since Langdon does not have a public water or sewer system, the lot size must be such that it will support its own water and septic systems. Consequently higher density housing will not be possible in the Village District. Regulations need to be drawn to ensure that good siting and design principles will be followed to allow new buildings to be harmonious with the district.

The Critical Resource Overlay District should include the following environmental protection districts:

1. Important Farmlands District - Development of these lands should be discouraged by negotiating conservation agreements and deed restrictions on such land. The purchase of development rights should be considered if financially feasible.

2. Steep Slope District - Development should not be allowed on slopes exceeding 25%, while a larger lot size may be necessary for lots with a 15-25% slope to allow for proper septic siting and drainage considerations. Ridgelines should also be protected both to avoid damage due to change drainage patterns and to prevent the changing of scenic views and skyline vistas.

3. Floodplain District - No development should be allowed within the boundaries of a floodplain. Development occurring in flood-plain areas may cause property damage and pose safety risks to residents of housing located within floodplain boundaries. Shorelines of ponds, streams, etc., should be protected. Access to fire ponds should not be blocked.

4. Wetlands Conservation District - No building development or septic systems should be allowed in the wetland district. Permitted uses should include agriculture, forestry, and recreation uses not requiring alteration of the wetland. Septic systems should be set back no less than 75' from the edge of the wetland. Water catchments, logging roads and driveways should be listed as special exceptions.

In addition to the creation of these Districts, the zoning ordinance should include, but not be limited to:

1. Require each proposed new business or residential development to furnish an impact study on the need for increased services, including construction or altera-

tion of infrastructure, and to post bond for the payment of the proportional costs of such services.

2. Minimum lot area and/or frontage requirements for each type of housing.
3. Regulations for the protection of the town's water resources.
4. Setbacks between:
 - A. roads and buildings or other structures including support structures for buildings and roads,
 - B. roads and parking lots or areas,
 - C. roads and visual screening,
 - D. septic systems and floodplains or wetlands (75 feet),
 - E. buildings and adjacent property (side and rear setbacks)
5. Maximum height restrictions of 35 feet for all buildings or structures, due to limitations of current fire equipment.
6. Off-street parking requirements, including layout and number of spaces.
7. Mobile home (manufactured housing) regulations.
 - A. Allow mobile homes on individual lots as long as they meet the requirements for other houses on the same lot.
 - B. Mobile home parks, should residents approve one in the future shall be required to furnish adequate water and provide parking, sewage and trash disposal for each site in the proposed park. Environmental impact and other studies, if required, shall be paid for by the proposer of such park. Landscaping may be required to protect views.
8. Commercial and industrial development regulations.
 - A. Encourage home based occupations, with proper restrictions regarding traffic, noise, pollution, etc.
 - B. Identify and, if possible, reserve suitable areas for future commercial and/or industrial development.
 - C. Encourage small non-polluting light industries and commercial developments to locate on well planned sites where they will not create land use, visual, or traffic problems.
 - D. Discourage strip development and the introduction

of commercial businesses or light industry in residential areas.

9. Regulations for the conversion of single-family dwelling to apartments, condominiums, or multiple-family dwellings.
10. Cluster and multiple-family housing regulations, to include "affordable housing" if necessary.
11. Earth removal regulations
12. Sign regulations, to include speed limit and street signs.
13. Exceptions, variances, and grandfathers.
14. Detailed definitions of each use regulated.
2. Adopt a site plan review regulation - Under the provisions of RSA 674:43, a town can "empower the Planning Board to review or disapprove site plans for the development of tracts for nonresidential uses, or multi-family dwelling units other than one- or two-family dwellings, whether or not such development includes a subdivision or resubdivision of the site."

The adoption of a site plan review regulation will allow the Planning Board to evaluate proposed projects in greater detail than provided under sub-division regulations (or zoning regulations if they are adopted). Regulations should be written to include requirements for site access, drainage, parking, water and sewage disposal systems, exterior handicapped features, and landscaping. The Planning Board may require that a surveyed plot plan, working drawings, and impact studies be submitted as a part of the application.

The town should require a bond for the landscaping and other improvements proposed, as part of the site plan review. This would ensure that the proposed design is, in fact, completed.

3. Update the subdivision regulations, to include:
 1. minimum lot size requirements, including provisions for a sliding scale based on slope and soil conditions.
 2. road frontage requirements.
 3. road access requirements, including slope of drive-

way, making access for fire engines and emergency vehicles a major consideration for approval.

4. A provision whereby the Planning Board may require an impact study, the cost of which is to be paid for by the developer, for any major subdivision proposal; and that the costs of professional consultants to ensure compliance of these requirements be paid by the developer.
5. A provision whereby the developers may be required to pay for, or post bond for the payment of, a reasonable portion of the off-site road improvement costs required by their development.
6. A provision whereby the developer of large subdivisions be required to set aside adequate land area for recreational use by the occupants of the subdivision, or contribute the equivalent in land or money for this purpose to the town.
7. A 4:1 maximum ratio of lot length to width to prevent "toothpick" or "bookend" lots.
8. A provision for compliance hearings on preconditions.
4. Preserve the agricultural character of the town by:
 1. guiding development to non-agricultural soils, if possible;
 2. encouraging deed restrictions, conservation agreements, and purchasing development rights;
 3. increasing the penalty for taking agricultural land out of current use; and
 4. ensuring that land use regulations do not unduly restrict farming operations.
5. Establish a forest management policy to ensure longterm sustained yield and avoid problems of erosion and sedimentation caused by non-professional cutting.
6. Consider the formation of an historic district in the village.
7. Apply for National Register of Historic Places designation for the Town Hall and Congregational Church.
8. Begin proceedings required to establish scenic roads in Langdon. Some areas should be considered for scenic

roadside or picnic areas and some might warrant the negotiation of scenic easements.

9. Establish Critical Resources Overlay Maps to identify areas that should be protected from development. These critical areas include farmlands, floodplains, wetlands, and steep slope areas.
10. Base future land use decisions on the Natural Land Capability together with the consideration of Critical Resources.
11. Establish an Acceptable Growth Rate and control this rate by limiting the number of residential building permits issued each year. This limit should provide for moderate growth but be limited at a point no more than 50 percent above the decade average.
12. Discourage development in remote areas which would require additional maintenance of roads or increased distances to be traveled by services such as police, fire or ambulances.
13. Consider the impact of new development and/or construction on historic resources. Particular attention should be paid to heavy truck traffic.
14. At least one public recreational facility is recommended. This could be a multiple use area, including playground, ball field(s), picnic area, trails, etc. Encourage organizations and clubs to finance or sponsor the facility. Investigate the possibility of a donation or long term lease for such a property.
15. Apply for land and water conservation grants for the above or for other development.
16. Establish a Capital Improvements Program to implement the recommendations in this chapter which require large town expenditures, including school expenses. These projects should be ranked by priority and phased in over several years.

Chapter 8

Adoption of Master Plan

The Planning Board of the town of Langdon, New Hampshire, in accordance with the provisions of RSA 675:6, and following the duly noticed public hearings held on 29 January, 1992, does hereby adopt the Langdon Master Plan of 1992, including the findings, recommendations, goals and policies contained in this plan to aid the Planning Board and other Town Boards in the performance of their respective duties for the purpose of guiding and accomplishing the coordinated and harmonious development of the Town of Langdon, New Hampshire.

Planning Board

William Doran, Chairman

Rodney Campbell

Caroline Cross

Frank Sellers