

New Hampshire Livable Walkable Communities Toolkit



*Prepared by the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission
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2012



HNHfoundation



*Cover Photo: Littleton, NH
Courtesy of John Corrigan,
Safe Routes to School Coordinator, NHDOT*



Executive Summary

The updated 2012 New Hampshire Livable Walkable Communities Toolkit has been prepared for use statewide. The original Livable Walkable Communities Toolkit was created in 2004 as a resource for improving the livability and walkability of New Hampshire communities. An underlying goal is to increase rates of physical activity throughout the state. Through a process of community engagement and assessment of the built environment, the Livable Walkable Communities (LWC) Program brings together citizens and stakeholders to develop and act on specific strategies to improve your community's livability and walkability.

RSA 672:1 states that "proper regulations enhance the public health, safety and general welfare and encourage the appropriate and wise use of land." New Hampshire state policy (9-B:2) states that "It shall be the policy of the state of New Hampshire that state agencies act in ways that encourage smart growth."

In an effort to advance these policies, this project strives to incorporate livable, walkable community principles into local, state and regional planning programs, policies and statutes, including as feasible the State's Smart Growth Principles; the State Development Plan; and New Hampshire's Master Plan per RSA 674:2-4.

Creating more livable and walkable communities is an important factor in improving health, social and economic well-being in New Hampshire. People are healthier when they live in vibrant communities with convenient, affordable and safe access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity. Communities that work to offer these opportunities also realize important economic benefits by making themselves attractive to businesses and individuals.

The 2012 Livable Walkable Communities Toolkit improves and expands upon many of the steps and activities outlined in the 2004 Toolkit. Background information and success stories give the reader more information to help in developing vision and goals as well as examples and resources they can use in creating livable walkable communities.

The successful communities identified in this toolkit have many community values and principles in common which contribute to their success. **These principles should be the focus of any community aiming to improve public health, social and economic well-being.**

The updated toolkit identifies the key principles and recommendations for planners and municipalities, as well as coalitions and individuals. **With this update the Livable Walkable Communities Advisory Coalition hopes the benefits of livable, walkable communities will be a priority for all New Hampshire communities.**

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I. Introduction

Background on the 2004 LWC Toolkit

The original Livable Walkable Communities Toolkit was developed in 2004 by New Hampshire Celebrates Wellness (NHCW), a not-for-profit organization whose mission was to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of New Hampshire. *NHCW strived to accomplish its goals by mobilizing, training and supporting leaders from schools, worksites, older adult organizations, municipalities and communities to bring health initiatives back to their organizations and their communities.*

The original toolkit was developed as a resource for improving the livability and walkability of New Hampshire communities. An underlying goal is to increase rates of physical activity throughout the state. Through a process of community engagement and assessment of the built environment (e.g. pedestrian access and safety), the Livable Walkable Communities (LWC) Program brings together citizens and stakeholders to develop and act on specific strategies to improve your community's livability and walkability. The Livable Walkable Communities Advisory Coalition has recognized that for the continued health and economic viability of the region many factors need to be considered. The focus of this toolkit is on the following 11 categories:

- *Health*
- *Safety*
- *Destinations & Linkages*
- *Open Space & Recreation*
- *Environment & Natural Resources*
- *Historic Preservation*
- *Vibrant Economy*
- *Housing*
- *Village Center/Downtown*
- *Aesthetics*
- *Social Connects*

Also included in the 2004 Toolkit are user-friendly tools that can assist in construction of a community's LWC Action Plan:¹

- Roles & Responsibilities: Establishing the LWC Community Coalition
- Presenting the Vision: Engaging Community Members & Stakeholders
- Looking at the Big Picture: Community Assessment & Action Planning

¹ These Action Plans should be included within a communities Master Plan under RSA 674:2-4

2012 Livable Walkable Communities Toolkit Update

Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) received funding from HNHfoundation² in 2011 to update the 2004 Livable Walkable Toolkit. The goal is to promote the Toolkit as an educational and community planning resource to inform and educate communities, planning-related professionals, and policy makers about how they can retrofit the built environment – not only to encourage and implement safe places to walk and bike for children and their families – but also to increase access to healthy foods and additional opportunities for physical activity.

The Livable Walkable Communities Advisory Coalition (LWCAC) was formed to guide and determine how the Toolkit can be best updated with new information, community planning principles, and implementation strategies. The implementation strategies address community access to and accommodations for safe walking, biking and additional opportunities for physical activity, as well as access to healthy foods. The 2011-2012 LWCAC members include representatives from the following agencies:

- Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC)
- Healthy Eating Active Living – New Hampshire (HEAL NH)
- University of New Hampshire (UNH)
- UNH Cooperative Extension
- New Hampshire Planners Association (NHPA)
- Town of Londonderry
- Manchester Health Department
- Manchester Parks and Recreation Department
- Town of Bedford
- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
- New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT)
- PlanNH
- New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Transportation Solutions
- Local Government Center (LGC)

² <http://www.hnhfoundation.org/>

Goals/Objectives of Project

The long range goal of this project will be to incorporate livable, walkable community principles into local, state and regional planning programs, policies and statutes, including as feasible the State's Smart Growth Principles; the State Development Plan; and New Hampshire's Master Plan per RSA 674:2-4. **There is also a possibility that the updated Toolkit can be incorporated into the comprehensive planning efforts to be undertaken by all nine Regional Planning Commissions within the state over the next three years, as part of the New Hampshire Sustainable Communities Initiative.³ Objectives include:**

Objective #1: to organize and facilitate a new Livable Walkable Communities (LWC) advisory coalition of interested partners, agencies, citizens and stakeholders;

Objective #2: to utilize this new coalition to guide and determine how the updated Toolkit can be best updated with new information, community planning principles, and implementation strategies.

Objective #3: to draft and publish a new updated LWC Toolkit to be packaged and distributed to all 234 municipalities within the state (planning boards, town planners, public health and recreation officers) and to upload the Toolkit to the following websites:

- NH Office of Energy and Planning (OEP)
- Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association (NNECAPA)
- New Hampshire Planners Association (NHPA)
- New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA)
- Local Government Center (LGC)
- NH DOT Bike-Ped Program
- NH DOT Safe Routes to School Program
- NH Department of Environmental Services (DES)
- Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) New Hampshire
- UNH Cooperative Extension
- All Regional Planning Commissions in the state

Objective #4: to develop and implement a media program of the updated LWC Toolkit and how it can be used to enhance and promote livable walkable communities in the state.

³ All nine Regional Planning Commissions in New Hampshire received funding from HUD in 2011 to implement the Sustainable Communities Initiative, which is currently in the beginning stages. Program Contact: Nashua Regional Planning Commission.

II. Overview and Background of Livable Walkable Communities

Definition of Livable Walkable Communities

According to Walkable Communities, Inc., “Livable and walkable communities put urban environments back on a scale for sustainability of natural and economic resources and lead to more social interaction, physical fitness, and diminished crime and other social problems... [and] lead to whole, happy, healthy lives for the people who live in them.”

Livable communities are communities that provide & promote civic engagement and a sense of place through safe, sustainable choices for a variety of elements that include housing, transportation, education, cultural diversity, enrichment and recreation.⁴

Walkability is the measure of the overall walking and living conditions in an area; the extent to which the built environment is friendly to the presence of people walking, biking, living, shopping, visiting, enjoying or spending time in an area.⁵

Walkability includes items such as:⁶

- **A center:** Walkable neighborhoods have a center, whether it's a main street or a public space
- **People:** Enough people for businesses to flourish and for public transit to run frequently
- **Mixed income, mixed use:** Affordable housing located near businesses
- **Parks and public space:** Plenty of public places to gather and play
- **Pedestrian design:** Buildings are close to the street, parking lots are relegated to the back
- **Schools and workplaces:** Close enough that most residents can walk from their homes
- **Complete streets:** Streets designed for bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit

⁴ Walkable and Livable Communities Institute, http://www.walklive.org/?page_id=38 (08-30-11)

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Walkable Communities, Inc.

Why we Need Livable, Walkable Communities

Our abilities to live whole, healthy lives have become increasingly affected by the way our communities are designed and our opportunities for recreation and healthy eating. New Hampshire's cities and towns have become less walkable, both in urban and rural settings, and healthy foods, such as fruits and vegetables, are not readily accessible in many areas of our state. When it is difficult or unsafe to walk or bicycle, both in urban neighborhoods or rural towns, and it is difficult to access healthy, affordable foods, our population is at risk for poor health and quality of life. One quarter (24.9%) of New Hampshire adults, 18% of third grade students and 11.7% of high school students are obese.⁷ Overall, nearly two thirds (63.1%) of adults are overweight or obese.

Data show that specific demographic and ethnic groups are disproportionately affected by obesity and other related chronic conditions (such as heart disease, cancer or diabetes)⁸. These disparities adversely affect groups of people who systematically experience greater social and/or economic obstacles. The following describes the root causes and policy implications for addressing health disparities:

“Health disparities by racial or ethnic group or by income or education are only partly explained by disparities in medical care. Inadequate education and living conditions—ranging from low income to the unhealthy characteristics of neighborhoods and communities—can harm health through complex pathways. Meaningful progress in narrowing health disparities is unlikely without addressing these root causes. Policies on education, child care, jobs, community and economic revitalization, housing, transportation, and land use bear on these root causes and have implications for health and medical spending...”⁹

Creating more livable walkable communities is an important factor in overcoming health, social and economic disparities in New Hampshire. People are healthier when they live in vibrant communities with convenient, affordable and safe access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity.

People are healthier and happier and communities benefit economically as well. “Cities that increase access to healthy food markets and build activity-friendly environments can help reduce obesity rates while creating jobs and stimulating local economies.”¹⁰ Efforts to design communities that plan for open space and increase opportunities for people to be active bolster real estate markets by

⁷ NH Department of Health and Human Services, New Hampshire Obesity Data Book 2010, <http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DPHS/nhp/documents/obesity2010.pdf>.

⁸ Fact Sheet—CDC Health Disparities and Inequalities Report—U.S. 2011, <http://www.cdc.gov/minorityhealth/reports/CHDIR11/FactSheet.pdf>.

⁹ *Health Affairs*, October 2011, Vol. 30 No. 10, 1852-1859.

¹⁰ Leadership for Healthy Communities. Making the Connection: Linking Economic Growth to Policies to Prevent Childhood Obesity. February 2011.

enhancing property values, increasing home-sale prices and attracting new homebuyers. These economic benefits for property owners and real estate markets translate into higher revenues in property taxes for local governments. Economic benefits are also realized through promoting shopping and local businesses and creating new markets for jobs and businesses.

“Living in an area where the amenities of life – food, parks, playgrounds, libraries, restaurants and hospitals – as well as the opportunity to make social connections that are within walking or bicycle transportation, promotes healthy lifestyles, has a positive impact on the environment, and builds safer, people-friendly communities.”¹¹

In addressing this need a statewide project was launched in 2012, the outcomes of which will greatly enhance the opportunity to create more livable walkable communities throughout New Hampshire. The NH Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI) is an innovative planning initiative designed to coordinate planning efforts for transportation, land use, economic development, housing, environment, energy, cultural and historic resources, public health, and environmental planning and engage local communities to work together to develop comprehensive plans for their regions and culminating into an overall vision for New Hampshire’s future.

Benefits and Features of Livable Walkable Communities

Research from the University of New Hampshire, published in the journal Applied Research in Quality of Life identified the following overall benefits of walkable communities:

- “A walkable community provides residents with easy access to amenities, the ability to walk to these important locations in one’s home neighborhood has been linked to a higher quality of life.”
- “Social capital, a measure of an individual’s or group’s networks, personal connections and community involvement, brings benefits such as reduced isolation, career connections, and neighborhood safety.”
- “On the whole, the more walkable neighborhoods scored higher on every measure of social capital than the less walkable neighborhoods... Individuals in more walkable neighborhoods tended to have higher levels of trust and community involvement... and also reported being in good health and happy more often than those in the less walkable neighborhoods.”

¹¹ Ray Williams. *Psychology Today*. Why we need livable, “walkable” cities. May 28, 2011.

Benefits and features of livable and Walkable communities include¹²:

Benefits:

- Support and promote physical activity
- **Provide sidewalks,** on street bicycle facilities, multi-use paths & trails
- Provide open space and recreational facilities
- Create opportunities to build social capital
- Promote mixed use development with a network of connected streets
- **Allow home, work, school, and stores to be closer together (promoting access by bike and foot)**
- Reduce obesity, diabetes, and asthma by promoting healthy transportation alternatives
- Provide economic benefits to local governments, homeowners and real estate markets
- Positive environmental benefits to communities and the surrounding regions

Features:

- Informal places to meet
- Sensitivity to and protective of the environment
- Green Space for leisure and recreation
- Space for physical activity
- Essential services conveniently located and easily accessible
- **Safe, attractive sidewalks connecting residential and business areas**
- Frequent, convenient public transportation
- Multi-modal opportunities
- Safe, convenient accessibility for people with disabilities

“There’s an awareness that building livable, walkable places is not only good for the economy, it’s good for health, and good for everyone’s well-being.”¹³

¹² UNH Cooperative Extension. <http://extension.unh.edu/commdev/LiveWalk.htm> (08-30-11)

¹³ **Dan Burden, Walkable and Livable Communities Institute.**

III. How to use the 2012 Livable Walkable Toolkit

The 2012 Livable Walkable Toolkit is a user-friendly guide which aims to improve and expand upon many of the steps and activities outlined in the 2004 Toolkit. Background information, resources and success stories are included to give the reader more information that will help in developing community visions and goals as well as in creating livable walkable communities.

The first step in the planning process is that a community should develop a comprehensive vision and action plan for creating a more livable walkable community. Planning process actions include:

1. Develop a community coalition (see Appendix A)
2. Conduct community meetings and workshops to develop a vision and goals (Appendix A)
3. Conduct a community assessment (Appendix A & D)
4. Develop an action plan utilizing the 2012 Livable Walkable Toolkit and the policy recommendations as a guide (Action Plan template found in Appendix A)

Individuals and coalitions play a key role in creating livable walkable communities. The steps in forming a community coalition and conducting public workshops, including developing a community vision and goals are outlined in the 2004 Livable Walkable Toolkit. These steps lay the foundation for the assessment and action plan to be developed. The 2012 Livable Walkable Toolkit and the policy recommendations included in this guide come after the formation of your community coalition and development of the community's vision and goals.

When your community is ready to develop an action plan, use the matrix in section V to determine which recommendations might work best for your geographic location, size and interest. The success stories included in this update also provide examples and resources that could benefit your community. Holding a public workshop to develop the action plan as well as consulting with key officials and organizations in your community is recommended to get input from all sectors of the community.

Public awareness, education and outreach should be at the forefront of any effort to move the issue of livability and walkability forward. There are many resources in the state that are working to implement the principles outlined in this toolkit and communities are encouraged to leverage those resources and to work together to increase the livability and walkability of the entire state. The agencies listed on page 3 are all good resources for any community or coalition looking for information, funding mechanisms, capacity building or leadership training.

IV. Success Stories

Several successful examples of walkable communities in New Hampshire include:

Keene, Littleton, Portsmouth, Meredith and Exeter

Keene



DOWNTOWN /KEENE, NH

Keene has implemented a number of the features of a livable, walkable community. Most recently the City has adopted a resolution for the implementation of Complete Streets.¹⁴ Keene also has a vibrant city center. Keene's central square was awarded one of ten 2009 Great Public Places awards by the American Planning Association's (APA) Great Places in America program.

Through Great Places in America, APA recognizes unique and authentic characteristics found in three essential components of all communities — streets, neighborhoods, and public spaces. APA Great Places offer better choices for where and how people work and live every day, places that are enjoyable, safe, and desirable. Such places are defined



CENTRAL SQUARE /KEENE, NH

¹⁴ Complete streets (sometimes livable streets) are roadways designed and operated to enable safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transport users of all ages and abilities. Ritter, John. *Complete streets' program gives more room for pedestrians, cyclists.* [USA Today](#). (2007-07-29).

by many characteristics, including architectural features, accessibility, functionality, and community involvement.

The American Planning Association describes the characteristics and features of Keene that make it a great place:

Central Square is located in the heart of downtown Keene where the confluence of three streets — Main, Court and Washington — form the shape of a "Y." Central Square evolved organically. It wasn't until 1828, when the meetinghouse was removed from the common, that the idea of a square took root. Beautification efforts, begun in 1844 by the Forest Tree Society, met with resistance from merchants accustomed to unobstructed views of their signs from surrounding roads. The plantings, however, proved popular and by 1855 amenities, such as a bandstand and the present stone-post and iron-rail fence, were being added. Central Square is part of a local historic district and several surrounding buildings — including the much photographed United Church of Christ — are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Location and Access

- In heart of downtown, thus provides access from all directions. Three main roadways — from south, northeast and northwest — converge on square; east-west connector crosses Main Street on south edge of Central Square
- City Express bus service connects Central Square to residential neighborhoods, commercial areas and Keene State College. Regional bus service is available two blocks south of Central Square as is the Cheshire Rail Trail bicycle and pedestrian paths
- Three park pathways allow pedestrian access to Central Square from all sides of the circular-shaped square that is four-tenths of an acre in size

Commitment to Planning and Preservation

- Keene's 2008 Community Vision – “Moving Forward Together” reinforces the community's goal to maintain and expand city core and connect open spaces, including Central Square, through trail systems.¹⁵ The 2010 Keene Comprehensive Master Plan includes chapters addressing “downtown” and “a walkable community”. The Plan is written to weave the theme of sustainability throughout all sections. A Complete Streets resolution was also recently adopted
- Part of a locally designated historic district (2003) created to ensure that the underlying historic character of buildings is not lost in the process of renovation
- Two surrounding properties listed on National Register of Historic Places: United Church of Christ (1788, designated 1982), colloquially

¹⁵ City of Keene Comprehensive Master Plan, September 2011.

known as the "Church at the Head of the Square," and Colony Block (1870, designated 1983), a fine example of a Second Empire Victorian commercial building

- Washington Street was reconstructed in 2011 and now features complete streets amenities including dedicated bike lanes, enhanced sidewalks and crosswalks, porous asphalt and concrete surfaces and rain gardens
- Local zoning encourages a mix of uses in buildings surrounding square, thus providing range of potential park users
- Recent revitalization efforts include \$2 million facelift to the 1824 Chamberlain Block building across from square; used by Sears until 1993, the 38,000-square-foot building features 12 units of efficiency and one-bedroom affordable housing, offices and shops
- Plan for tree replacement created in 1967 when Dutch elm disease felled all but two trees in square; tree canopy now monitored and maintained by Department of Public Works

Place in History

- Central Square has been central to Keene's development; third meetinghouse served as spiritual and governmental focal point
- First session of Inferior Court for Cheshire (1771) and Superior Court (1772) held on site in meetinghouse; rallying point for the muster following Lexington Alarm, first Revolutionary War battle (1775)
- Site of numerous political debates and canvassing. Practice of displaying flags with candidates' names stemmed from 1856 nomination of state's Franklin Pierce for U.S. President. Whigs erected flag pole over building across from square with name of Winfield Scott; Democrats responded in like; Whigs, not to be outdone, cut down 100-foot tree and raised 50-by-30 foot flag

Iconic Community Space

- Image of Central Square, with church steeple rising behind it, defines Keene and is used in marketing materials; United Church of Christ steeple is rumored to be the most frequently photographed steeple after that of Boston's Old North Church
- Amenities include bandstand, fountain, benches, trees, and seasonal plantings
- Civil War monument erected in 1871; two 32-pound cannons flank statue; dedicated by James A. Garfield, who later became 20th U.S. president
- Annual festivals promote year-round use including annual holiday tree lighting, Ice and Snow Festival, Keene Music Festival, and Arts in the Park; fall pumpkin festival has set Guinness Book world record for most carved pumpkins (28,952 in 2003)

- Bandstand integral to history and current uses including press conferences, festivals, readings, and community events. Its location in Central Square, surrounded by businesses, city hall, the court house, and county buildings, make it a popular stop for political campaigns

Littleton



LITTLETON FARMERS MARKET/LITTLETON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

“The Riverwalk loop off Mill Street includes a pedestrian covered bridge over the Ammonoosuc River.”

Littleton sits along the Ammonoosuc River with a population of approximately 6,000 and is considered to be in the center of commerce in the White Mountain Region. The town has a vibrant livable and walkable downtown.

“There’s an old-fashioned charm to this small town along the roaring Ammonoosuc River. The heart of Littleton is walkable Main Street, which features handsome edifices, eclectic eateries, and plentiful shopping. And, visitors will discover that this village, situated on the edge of the White Mountains, is a perfect jumping-off point for outdoor adventure and wintry fun.”¹⁶

¹⁶ Marty Basch. *The Boston Globe*. Travel. November 16, 2011. <http://www.bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/travel/2011/11/16/littleton-provides-shopping-restaurants-and-outdoor-fun/LJJPTdbY9g1b9eBx7soBOO/story.html>. (11-21-11)

Some examples of Littleton's livable and walkable elements include:

- Cited as having a 98 percent score for walkable scale and features by Dan Burden of Walkable Communities Inc., leading expert on walkable communities
- Infill Development (chose to renovate old high school instead of moving it outside of town)
- Adaptive re-use
- Riverfront improvements (including covered walking bridge and Riverwalk loop)
- **Mixed-use zoning in the area surrounding downtown (mostly residential with pockets of retail)**
- Main Street Association founded in 1996
 - Lowered retail vacancy rate from 20% in 1992 to just 2% in 2011
- Littleton received a Main Street Award in May of 2003. "Littleton has far exceeded the expectations of the New Hampshire Main Street Center," said Kathy La Plante, director of the New Hampshire Main Street Center. "The community has a long list of accomplishments and highlights that make them a truly extraordinary community. It's wonderful that Littleton's efforts are being recognized nationally."¹⁷
- Attractions on Main Street
 - Downtown offers a nice variety of restaurants, an historic inn, a motel, a 100-year old renovated Opera House, dozens of specialty shops and numerous services, including a majestic post office, several local banks, a working gristmill, the world's longest candy counter
 - Summer farmers market with local growers and community events such as Summerfest, that features local artists



KARL STONE/SKI NH

"Jax Jr. Cinemas, on Littleton's Main Street, has been entertaining moviegoers for years."

¹⁷ Littleton Main Street Association. http://www.golittleton.com/littleton_main_street.php. (03-21-12)

Portsmouth



DOWNTOWN PORTSMOUTH, NH / DAN BURDEN

“Portsmouth, N.H., a city of roughly 21,000 people, sits near the mouth of the Piscataqua River, a short, wide river that divides New Hampshire and Maine. The city also is at the hub of a metropolitan region that includes the cities of Rochester and Dover, N.H., and many towns – Exeter, Hampton, Greenland, Stratham, Newington, and Rye, N.H.; Kittery, Eliot, South Berwick and York, Maine; and others.

The geographic location, historic past and cultural strength of Portsmouth regularly lands it on various "best places to live" lists. Prevention Magazine named Portsmouth one of the top 100 walking cities in America for 2008. Also in 2008, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named Portsmouth to its list of America's Dozen Distinctive Destinations, calling the city "one of the most culturally rich destinations in the country "with a stimulating mix of historic buildings, sidewalk cafes, great restaurants, art galleries, jazz clubs and distinctive artisans' boutiques." In 2009, Forbes Traveler listed Portsmouth as one of America's Prettiest Towns.

The region as whole is noted for its many restaurants, attractions and shopping opportunities, which include downtown Portsmouth, outlet malls Kittery, Maine, as well as major malls in Newington, New Hampshire.”¹⁸

¹⁸ Portsmouthnh.com. <http://www.portsmouthnh.com/visitors/index.cfm>. (11-22-11)

Portsmouth has been named the most walkable city in New Hampshire¹⁹ In addition, a recent UNH study showed that “more walkable” towns like Portsmouth had higher levels of social capital and cohesion than “less walkable” towns.²⁰

Bike Paths:

- Fall 1999: completion of the \$800,000 Rockingham Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge linking Portsmouth to Pease International Tradeport
- Fall 2008: Official opening of the New Hampshire Seacoast Greenway, creating the first complete statewide on-road portion of the East Coast Greenway (ECG), a 2000+ mile multi-use route stretching from Key West, Florida all the way to the Canadian border at Calais, Maine

Public Transit:

- COAST Bus: The Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST) has served the seacoast region of New Hampshire since 1981. In that time, COAST buses have carried over 10 million passengers and traveled over 6.5 million miles
- Originally founded as a private, non-profit organization, COAST operates as an independent public body through the passage of NH RSA 239 by the New Hampshire State Legislature in 1985. As a regional public transit system, COAST is not part of a specific town government (like Nashua or Manchester). It works cooperatively with the towns it serves to establish funding sources, routes and levels of service
- Lafayette Road Trolley

Historic Attractions:

- [Strawberry Banke Museum](#) - Historic Strawberry Banke Museum offers a glimpse into the everyday lives of people who called this area home for nearly four centuries
- [St. John's Episcopal Church](#) - One of the state's most historic churches, St. John's stands on a hill overlooking Bow Street. The church houses the oldest operating pipe organ in the U.S. and its bell was captured in the siege of Louisburg in 1745
- [Warner House Association](#) - One of the finest brick residences of the early 1700s left in New England
- [Wentworth-Gardner House](#) - A 2-1/2 story Georgian mansion built around 1760, the Wentworth-Gardner House is now a museum

¹⁹ Prevention.com and walkscore.com. <http://www.prevention.com/cities/index.html> , <http://www.walkscore.com/NH>. (11-22-11)

²⁰ <https://socialcapital.wordpress.com/tag/examining-walkability-and-social-capital-as-indicators-of-quality-of-life-at-the-municipal-and-neighborhood-scales>. (11-22-11)

- [John Paul Jones House](#) - John Paul Jones stayed in this building while his ships Ranger (1777) and America (1781) were outfitted. Featured in Sears paint commercials, the building has been home to the Portsmouth Historical Society since 1922
- [Jackson House](#) - The Richard Jackson House, built in 1664, is the oldest surviving wood frame house in New Hampshire. *Attractions: Historic Sites*

Outdoor Attractions:

- [Prescott Park](#) - This popular waterfront park features extensive flower gardens and is the site of one of New England's most popular outdoor summer events, the Prescott Park Arts Festival
 - [Albacore Submarine Park](#) - Home of the USS Albacore, the first Navy-designed vessel with a true underwater hull of cylindrical shape that has become the standard for today's submarines worldwide. *Attractions: Museums*
-

Meredith

Meredith, NH is situated in the lakes region in the heart of New Hampshire. The population was 6,241 in the 2010 U.S. Census.

Meredith is using a wagon wheel model of connectivity to establish non-motorized means of travel to central hubs in their town. Lakes Region Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) is helping Meredith pursue a safe routes to school program. Other projects for walkability include:

- Phase one of the [WOW trail](#) has been completed. Lakes Region HEAL provided a mini-grant to help with phase two and the completion of a trail map
- Lakes Region HEAL supported the creation of the new Meredith Walks Guide and met with town planner to develop a future vision of a livable, walkable community



CENTER OF MEREDITH/TRIPADVISOR.COM



TOWN GREEN/ACTIVERAIN.COM

“Meredith...has gone through some fantastic changes and revitalization in the past few years with the construction of the new Church Landing, the Chase House, and the Bay Point all offering fine dining and rooms with a view. Check out the unique shops at Mills Falls, grab an ice cream, check out the town docks, or take a ride on the Mt. Washington cruise line and get a tour of Lake Winnepesaukee up close and personal.”²¹

Exeter

Exeter, New Hampshire was founded in 1638 by the Reverend John Wheelwright. Exeter is located in the seacoast area of New Hampshire, approximately 50 miles north of Boston, MA and 50 miles south of Portland, ME. The population was 14,306 per the 2010 U.S. Census.



DOWNTOWN/ TOWN OF EXETER, NH

²¹Lakes Region Home. <http://www.lakesregionhome.com/article/view/18728/1/3277/> (11-22-11)



SWASEY PARKWAY/ TOWN OF EXETER

Eric H. of VisitingNewEngland.com praises Exeter in a photo travel essay of Downtown Exeter, NH:

“Have you ever felt instantly right at home in a place you have visited just a few times? Downtown Exeter, N.H., has that effect on us, and, up until now, I had no idea why. Putting on my better-late-than-never thinking cap and pondering why Exeter seems like a hometown to people like us from another area, I first thought of the mix of tree-lined streets, the charming hodgepodge of municipal and commercial buildings, the quintessential New England town gazebo, the leafy feel of Phillips Exeter Academy (a private university/preparatory school) and the locally-owned shops and restaurants that residents come out in large numbers to fully utilize.”²²

Other commendations include:

- Named by the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) as one of America’s most walkable cities²³
- Named by *Boston Magazine* as one New England’s best small towns²⁴

Historic Structures:

- Phillips-Exeter Academy
- American Independence Museum

²²Eric H. VisitingNewEngland.com. <http://www.visitingnewengland.com/Exeter-New-Hampshire-Photo.html> (11-22-11)

²³PBS. <http://www.pbs.org/americaswalking/travel/travelmost.html> (11-22-11)

²⁴*Boston Magazine*.

http://www.bostonmagazine.com/new_england_travel/articles/new_england_s_best_small_towns_exeter_nh/ (11-22-11)

Principles for Success

The successful communities listed in this toolkit have many livable and walkable principles in common which contribute to their success. These common principles should be the focus of any community aiming to increase livability and walkability. The common principles include:

- An attractive and vibrant downtown or central area where community gathering is focused;
- A mix of uses in the central community gathering area which include retail, commercial, residential, dining and open space/parks;
- Trails, pathways and linkages from other parts of the community to the central gathering area and walkable/alternative transportation amenities such as sidewalks, bike paths/lanes, trees/plantings, benches and crosswalks/signs;
- Open spaces and parks for community gathering and community events;
- A historic district or a focus on historic preservation to maintain the historic and cultural elements of the community; and
- Adaptive re-use and infill development

In addition to these community examples and common principles for success, a case study on improving the livability and walkability of two Manchester, New Hampshire neighborhoods is available (Appendix C) as a resource for developing a community action plan and creating specific community actions to improve livability and walkability.

The June 2011 Technical Memorandum: Toward a More Livable and Walkable Manchester from Dan Burden at the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute has the following key recommendations for the Crystal Lake and West Granite Neighborhoods in Manchester and for the Greater Manchester Area as a whole:

Crystal Lake

1. Capitalize on the existing utility corridor to create an eco-trail that connects the neighborhood to the lake, parks, schools and other community assets.
2. Modify Corning Rd. with narrower travel lanes, wider shoulders, better pedestrian crossings and a mini circle to support all users.

West Granite

3. Improve the crossing at Main Street and Walker.

4. Create an area master plan for the greater West Granite neighborhood.
5. Create a vision plan for Main Street in the West Granite neighborhood.

Greater Manchester area

6. Improve the trail that connects the west and east sides of central Manchester.
7. On all streets where people should be expected and supported in walking and biking, ensure there are sidewalks and pedestrian crossings.

V. Livable Walkable Communities Principles and Policy Recommendations

The principles and policy recommendations for the 2012 Livable Walkable Communities Toolkit were developed with specific audiences targeted for relevant recommendations: Planners, Municipalities, Coalitions and Individuals. Recommendations are further broken down to be specific to geographical contexts: Urban, Suburban and Rural. Recommendations are then further broken down into built environment classifications: Land Use and Development; and Transportation.

Urban, Suburban and Rural were the chosen geographical contexts and are defined broadly as follows²⁵, recognizing that the boundaries and distinction between types of land use patterns is often blurred:

Urban - urban areas are defined as the entirety of a major city: its downtown, commercial and industrial sub-districts, and neighborhoods.

Suburban - areas defined as metropolitan areas that are lower density than cities, and where land uses are often auto-oriented and segregated. However, suburban areas also encompass pre-World War II smaller towns and cities, as well as mixed-used activity centers.

Rural - areas with large expanses of undeveloped or agricultural land, dotted by small towns, villages, or any other small activity clusters.

“The phrase ‘built environment’ refers to the human-made surroundings that provide the setting for human activity ranging in scale from personal shelter to neighborhoods to larger-scale civic surroundings... The term built environment is widely used to describe the interdisciplinary field of study that addresses the design, construction, management and use of these man-made surroundings and their relationship to the human activities that take place within them over time.”²⁶

The built environment policy recommendations follow the three primary built environment classifications of Land Use, Development and Transportation:

Land Use and Development – Land use and development are combined as the recommendations for both are so closely defined. The goal of land-use planning is to further the welfare of people and their communities by creating convenient,

²⁵ US DOT. Federal Highway Administration. Context Sensitive Solutions.org <http://contextsensitivesolutions.org/content/topics/context/physical-setting-m/urban-rural-suburban/> (03-21-12)

²⁶ LiveWell Colorado. Built Environment Blueprint. Fall 2010.

equitable, healthful, efficient, and attractive environments for present and future generations.²⁷

Transportation – Includes all forms of getting from one place to another including walking, bicycling, automobiles and mass transit.

“Policies” are defined broadly and can be legislative, regulatory or visionary. The policies recommended may or may not be appropriate for each community and it is the responsibility of the community to conduct the necessary assessment (Appendix D) and to form the necessary vision and goals that will be the basework preceding formation and implementation of the policy recommendations and action plan.

Integration into Planning and Municipal Work

Integrating livable walkable principles and policies into planning and municipal work is a crucial element to creating healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities. Planners and municipalities play a key role in making the changes necessary and creating public support for more livable walkable communities. “Fundamentally, land use, active transportation and development issues are only going to be addressed through implementation of locally calibrated policies and procedures. If a community’s values (philosophy) are blocked by a policy, code, or procedure then they must be revisited. Frequently, outdated rules and regulations meant to prevent harmful outcomes are no longer relevant due to new technology or building innovation.”²⁸

Integration into Coalition Work

Integrating livable walkable policies into coalition work will most likely overlap with the work that is done by planners and municipalities, as well as individuals. Coalitions are a key element to the work that is done for creating the vision and for creating a link to the public and developing the support that is needed from the community to implement the action plan and policy recommendations. The first step in the process for creating a more livable walkable community is to create a community coalition that will be the driving force for the changes that the community wishes to make.

Individual Action

Individual action for creating and implementing livable walkable policies will overlap with coalition work. Individuals wishing to help move livable walkable policies forward in their community should find out what coalitions are doing and get involved with their work as well. Individuals can help by participating in

²⁷ The American Planning Association.

²⁸ LiveWell Colorado. Built Environment Blueprint. Fall 2010.

community workshops, attending local meetings and giving their input on issues related to livable walkable principles and projects and by creating awareness in the community for the policies they wish to see move forward and getting others involved.

Policy Recommendations Guidance Matrix

The matrix on the following page is setup by geographical context (Urban, Suburban and Rural) and built environment classification (Land Use and Development and Transportation). Relevancy to specific interests (Planner, Municipality, Coalition and Individual) is assumed for each recommendation, although most of them will be applicable to many, if not all interests. Policy recommendations that require further information and resources are identified in grey and discussed in the glossary (Appendix B).

Policy Recommendations Guidance Matrix

Geographical Area	Built Environment Category	Community Principles / Policies		Planners	Municipalities	Coalitions	Individuals
1. Urban	A. Land Use and Development	1	Encourage mixed land use and land use density that supports short distances between homes, workplaces, schools and recreation so people can walk and bike more easily to them	√	√		
		2	Conserve or create green spaces and parks that are easy to get to and can be used by a variety of people in a variety of ways	√	√	√	√
		3	Encourage land use that allows and incentivizes food production, including home based, community food production and urban agriculture	√	√	√	√
		4	Encourage and provide opportunities for places to live for different incomes and stages of life. Incentivize affordable living spaces, allow fast track permitting, density bonuses, reduce or waived parking permits.	√	√		
		5	Encourage and provide opportunities for access to transit for different incomes and stages of life	√	√		
		6	Foster accessibility and social equity for residents of all ages, abilities, incomes and cultural customs	√	√		
		7	Use the Low Impact Development (LID) approach for land development and storm water management	√	√		
		8	Encourage and give incentives for infill development and for building projects adjacent to and/or within existing neighborhoods	√	√		
		9	Create flexible land use types that enable buildings and spaces to accommodate several different uses	√	√	√	
		9a	Support utilization of vacant lots for recreational activities: basketball, courts, skate parks, walking circuits	√	√	√	

Geographical Area	Built Environment Category	Community Principles / Policies		Planners	Municipalities	Coalitions	Individuals
		9b	Support utilization of vacant lots for small farming/community garden projects. Also support space being set aside for gardening in new developments	√	√	√	
		10	Employ the Main Street Four Point Approach	√	√	√	√
1. Urban	B. Transportation	1	Provide a safe means of getting about for pedestrians and bicycles, including sidewalks and bike paths that are safely removed from automobile traffic. Generate right-of-way laws that support this concept and provide clear way-finding	√	√	√	
		2	Provide a public transportation system and provide access to public transit to reduce dependence on automobiles. Also, provide transportation stops that are visible, clean, and shelter from the elements, when possible	√	√		
		4	Consider Complete Streets design guidelines when building or rebuilding roads	√	√		
		5	Consider all ways that people could and/or need to get about. Keep in mind that not everyone can or does drive their own car	√	√		
		6	Provide street design with pedestrians and bicyclists in mind: better transit stop design, street furniture, bike racks, building frontage, sidewalk width and landscaping	√	√	√	
		7	Adopt the Safe Routes to School model to encourage students to walk and/or bike safely to their school	√	√	√	√
		8	Locate parks and recreational amenities within walking distance of residences and schools. Incorporate trails, sidewalks and pedestrian way-finding signage	√	√	√	

Geographical Area	Built Environment Category	Community Principles / Policies	Planners	Municipalities	Coalitions	Individuals
		9 Cooperate with and support regional and state efforts to raise awareness of relationships between land use and transportation issues, and incorporate in planning and development	√	√		
		10 Examine street design guidelines to ensure that policies are designed to “move people” and have an emphasis on multimodal transportation. “Road diets” are also recommended to include bicycling and transit opportunities	√	√		
2. Suburban	A. Land Use and Development	1 Encourage mixed use developments near neighborhoods that enable walking and biking	√	√	√	
		2 Modify codes to allow the purchase of vacant lots for community garden space. Require space for agriculture/open space in new developments.	√	√		
		3 Use greenspace to shape suburban development patterns into opportunities for active and passive recreation and public gatherings/events	√	√	√	√
		4 Incentivize affordable housing in new developments; fast track permitting, density bonuses, reduce/waived parking permits	√	√		
		5 Employ the Main Street Four Point approach	√	√	√	√
		6 Encourage use of town lots or business parking lots for farmers markets, craft fairs and community gatherings	√	√	√	√

Geographical Area	Built Environment Category		Community Principles / Policies	Planners	Municipalities	Coalitions	Individuals
		7	Encourage and provide opportunities for access to transit for different incomes and stages of life	√	√		
2. Suburban	B. Transportation	1	Locate parks and recreational amenities within walking distance of residences and schools. Incorporate trails, sidewalks and pedestrian way-finding signage	√	√	√	
		2	Cooperate with and support regional and state efforts to raise awareness of relationships between land use and transportation issues, and incorporate in planning and development	√	√		
		3	Examine street design guidelines to ensure policies are designed to “move people” and have an emphasis on multimodal transportation. “Road diets” are also recommended to include bicycling and transit opportunities	√	√		
		4	Provide street design with pedestrians and bicyclists in mind: better transit stop design, street furniture, bike racks, building frontage, sidewalk width and landscaping	√	√	√	
		5	Adopt the Safe Routes to School model to encourage students to walk and/or bike safely to their school	√	√	√	√
3. Rural	A. Land Use and Development	1	Preserve open spaces, agriculture and recreation, with an emphasis on farmland protection	√	√	√	√
		2	Provide community gardens within existing communities and require space in new developments. Encourage use of town lots or business parking lots for farmers markets	√	√	√	

Geographical Area	Built Environment Category		Community Principles / Policies	Planners	Municipalities	Coalitions	Individuals
		3	Promote Agritourism and Ecotourism	√	√	√	√
		4	Focus land use planning on the long-term vision	√	√		
		5	Plan new developments in proximity to existing neighborhoods	√	√		
		6	Incentivize affordable housing in new developments: fast track permitting, density bonuses, reduced/waived parking permits	√	√	√	√
		7	Employ the Main Street Four Point approach	√	√	√	√
		8	Create Master plans for parks and recreation sites to ensure access for all ages and abilities	√	√	√	
		9	Encourage and provide opportunities for access to transit for different incomes and stages of life	√	√		
3. Rural	B. Transportation	1	Transportation Planning should include car sharing, bike plans, centrally located civic center and connections to schools	√	√	√	

Geographical Area	Built Environment Category	Community Principles / Policies		Planners	Municipalities	Coalitions	Individuals
		2	Adopt the Safe Routes to School model to encourage students to walk and/or bike safely to their school	√	√	√	√
		3	Increase bicycling and walking facilities to include connections that can be used during the winter for cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing	√	√	√	
		4	Create long-range transportation strategies with strong partnerships between city and county officials	√	√		
		5	Facilitate greater collaboration between environmental and public health agencies, planning organizations, regional councils of government and state and local transportation agencies	√	√	√	

VI. Appendices

- A. 2004 Livable Walkable Toolkit**
- B. Glossary**
- C. Walkable and Livable Communities Institute Technical Memorandum:
Toward a More Livable and Walkable Manchester, June 2011**
- D. Community Assessment Scorecards**

