

# Chapter 2

## Land Use



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### 1.0 EXISTING LAND USE PATTERNS

Summary data to be presented in 2007

### 2.0 FUTURE LAND USE

Rindge's desired future land use pattern should be driven by all of the elements of this Master Plan. It should reflect the vision statement, which speaks of a stronger sense of community, increased levels of natural resource protection, and retaining a sense of rural scale rather than a uniform spreading of residential, commercial, and industrial activity across the community. The future land use pattern should be driven by the natural resource chapter, and by the need to protect open space and important groundwater resources. It needs to reflect the likely development pressure that Rindge will experience, and respond to it realistically, providing opportunities on a level that are consistent with those market forces. The future land use plan will prioritize a local sustainable economy and will be further detailed in the economic development chapter.

To put numbers on that anticipated growth, assuming no significant change in regulations that affect rate of growth, present trends indicate that over the next fifteen years Rindge:

Will likely continue to grow by an average of twenty-five housing units per year, excluding student and senior housing;

Will likely experience a demand for as much as 400,000 square feet of new retail and commercial building space (averaging 30,000 square feet of construction per year); and

Will likely experience a demand for as much as 125,000 square feet of additional building space to accommodate uses such as light industry, office, research and manufacturing.

In December of 2005 the Town retained Randall Arendt to conduct a Commercial and Mixed Use Design Workshop. The findings generated during the workshop relate to properties along Routes 202 and 119, and provide very specific site level recommendations. The report has been included in the Appendices.

A population increase of approximately 20 percent is projected for Rindge by the year 2020 resulting in a year-round population of 5,450 (not including the students at Franklin Pierce College). The nature of that anticipated growth and development, and its placement on the landscape, will be driven by market forces, by individual landowner's preferences, and by

Rindge's land use policies and ordinances: its zoning ordinance, its site plan and subdivision regulations, its capital improvement plan, and others. Map 1, the Future Land Use Map outlines how the Rindge Planning Board would like to see all of these forces brought together. What follows is a written summary of those desired future outcomes.

As envisioned by the Rindge residents, after a review of the extensive planning activities to date, and so as to achieve the Vision outlined in the beginning of this master plan, **this new growth could best be accommodated while retaining the essential community character, while meeting market forces, and while protecting the community's natural resources, as follows:**

**By reinforcing the traditional village areas:**

Center Village, West Rindge Village, and East Rindge Village should remain as traditional villages with minor changes:

- Center Village is the civic center of the community, and the existing range of allowable uses should be encouraged. Expanding the Center Village should be considered.
- West Rindge Village should be extended to the west across Route 202 to Franklin Pierce College. The existing range of allowable Village District uses should be encouraged.
- East Rindge Village is primarily a residential village, and the existing range of allowable uses should be encouraged.

These Villages have a land use pattern that should foster pedestrian and bicycle use, and should slow traffic as it passes through the area. They reinforce the community's character and important historic and cultural resources. Neighborhood Charrettes should be organized in each of the villages, and should result in the development of neighborhood plans that reflect the desires of the village residents and the best interests of the town as a whole.

**By creating new village areas:**

Two locations have been identified for new village development patterns.

- The area across Route 119 from East Rindge has been identified as a new village area that could be structured using the existing list of allowable uses as a possible new Village District.
- The area on the west side of Route 202 south of its intersection with Forristall Road has also been identified as a new village area. This area already contains a higher density of housing, and could be structured using the existing list of allowable uses as a possible Village District.

Both areas could be developed with a land use pattern that fosters pedestrian and bicycle use, promotes safe traffic patterns, reduces curb cuts onto Route 119, and creates a village atmosphere. The purpose of these areas is to allow increased density in a limited area and at the same time reflect the area's unique character and resources. Neighborhood Charrettes should be organized in each of the areas composing the proposed new village areas, and should result in the development of neighborhood plans that reflect the desires of the residents and the best interests of the town as a whole.

### **By creating new mixed use development areas:**

Along the Route 202 and 119 Corridors there are several areas that would be better served by mixed use development patterns. These areas make sense for smaller scale commercial activity, and higher density residential uses. The size and mix of uses are intended to guide growth while preserving the rural, small town character and resources, which can foster safe and inviting pedestrian use, promote safe traffic patterns, reduce curb cuts, and encourage shared parking and driveways wherever feasible.

The purpose of the mixed use district is to allow increased density development in a limited area and to provide a transition from the more concentrated development at the highway access points to the residential development and open space. The design should connect everything in a visually appealing and functional manner. Design characteristics shall be consistent with traditional New England style architecture. The vision is to create nodes of development along the highway corridor, interconnected by secondary service roads with development focused at the highways access points and transitioning to less intense land uses on the outer edges of the district. The goal is to encourage the connection of properties through easements, driveways, and pedestrian walkways.

Provisions for frontage or secondary access roads should be required in these areas to better serve the community concern for preserving its appearance while ensuring the safety and capacity of Routes 202 and 119. It is possible that some of this development could be created using innovative land use regulations such as Open Space Cluster Development and the Village Plan Alternative to ensure that adjacent natural resources and open space are also protected.

In the future, the community may wish to research and incorporate the use of a Tax Increment Financing District for one or more of these mixed use development areas. The community may also wish to consider the use of Inclusionary Zoning to create a percentage of workforce and senior housing in these development areas.

### **By protecting the community's natural resource base, rural character and agricultural heritage and resources:**

The community should continue to work to protect the most sensitive of natural resources in the region in cooperation with neighboring towns, and by seeking to foster open space cluster development patterns in the rural areas. There are significant large unfragmented blocks of land that Rindge shares with neighboring communities. The town should communicate with these communities to ensure that opportunities to preserve these resources are coordinated, and neither town carelessly or unknowingly impacts one of these large blocks. It is also imperative to protect the Town's important water resources, wetlands and aquifers. Map 2, the Land Fragmentation Analysis Map also identifies the location of the largest potential greenway areas in the community. Preservation of open space, and low density development, are especially important in these areas.

Additionally the community should document and maintain a survey of lands suitable for agricultural purposes and preservation. Recognizing, publicizing and promoting on-going agricultural activities and enterprises should also be considered a priority for the Town.

In the future, the community may wish to research and incorporate other innovative land use regulations such as Transfer of Development Rights and the Village Plan Alternative to assist with the balance of development and preservation of these areas.

**By creating new roads and trails, and focusing on existing intersections:**

Two new roadways are proposed parallel to Route 202 to assist with managing access to Route 202 as new development takes place within the corridor. This was a recommendation of the Route 202 Corridor Study, and of the planning workshop led by Randall Arendt in 2005.

In addition, sidewalks may be desirable along the highway shoulders at the intersection of Routes 119 and 202 and perhaps continuing southerly and easterly along the roadways to link the existing commercial activities.

New multi-use trails are also proposed for the railroad corridor which runs parallel to Route 202, for a route that connects Franklin Pierce College to West Rindge, and for a final set that connects West Rindge to the preserved land, the Stearns Lamont Forest southeast of the intersection of Routes 119 and 202. These multi-use paths will expand the use of walking and biking as transportation choices, and support active living in Rindge.

A non-motorized trail system should be developed to link the Center Village to the recreational activities at Wellington Field. Additional opportunities for an internal town trail network should be explored.

The intersections along Route 202 that have been identified on the Future Land Use map are already in existence. These intersections support the existing activity along the Corridor, and intersecting roadways within the community. Efforts should be made to access new development from these existing intersections using frontage roads, and other cooperative connections that do not create additional curb cuts on Route 202.

**By requiring a higher quality of non-residential development:**

There is a concern that some non-residential development, particularly along state routes where the traveling public gets its primary view of Rindge, has not always been of the highest caliber. Not only does this create a poor image of the community, but it uses up valuable land resources in a manner that does not contribute as much as it might to the local tax base.

Reasonable improvements to the community's site plan review regulations could establish improved standards for the quality of design, construction, landscaping, lighting, and parking lot configuration for non-residential properties. The creation of a design manual and design guidelines for non-residential uses would help foster higher quality design.