

# Town of Mason, New Hampshire

## MASTER PLAN

- 2020 Update -

*Compiled by*

- The Mason Planning Board
- The Mason Conservation Commission
- The Mason Energy Commission

*With Assistance from*

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission





## **MASON PLANNING BOARD 2020 MASTER PLAN SUMMARY**

The 2020 Mason Master Plan Summary represents a view of a yearlong effort of members of the town's planning board and subcommittees. Through their time, dedication and commitment to this process, the result is a comprehensive, thoughtful, and well-organized Master Plan that represents the wants and needs of our town of Mason, NH. Although I am presenting you with this summary, I highly recommend that you to take the time to review the entire 2020 Mason Master Plan. Each chapter is designed to guide you through the accomplishments, future focus, and suggestions to protect our town vision and values.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the Conservation and Energy Commissions for their contributions. A special thank you to Planning Board members Kate Batcheller and Dane Rota for taking on the task of writing chapters and reviewing of other chapters. Lastly, a big thank you to Cassie Mullen at the Nashua Regional Planning Commission for being our editor, collaborator, assisting in developing chapters and coordinating/analyzing/reporting our survey. The only disappointment in this process, per the community-wide survey (results provided at the end of the plan), is that only half of the respondents thought the Beatles were the greatest band that ever lived. 😊

Scott D. MacGarvey  
Chairman  
Mason Planning Board

### **Chapter II – Existing Land Use**

- Remain primarily a rural residential and agricultural community over the coming decades with uncrowded and quiet living conditions and a scenic unpolluted environment.
- Protect the character of the rural areas and their natural resources through wise development. Avoid incompatible land use such as heavy industry.
- Continue to be sensitive to natural resources such as steep slopes, wetlands, and groundwater as the zoning ordinances are amended.
- Develop alternative methods to manage long-term growth and density in the community. A forward-looking approach would be to create and implement different zone districts and within them consider becoming more flexible when it comes to allowing for alternative lot sizes and permitted densities of development.
- New Land Use Board members should be encouraged to participate in the Land Use Training workshops sponsored by the Office of Energy and Planning, NRPC and others.

### **Chapter III – Population and Housing**

- Protect historical housing stock.
- Maintain the rural/agricultural character of the town as well as the residential community.
- The Planning Board should research and consider implementing policies and programs available and best suited to influence the future development of a supply of housing that is high quality and affordable to residents.

### **Chapter IV – Community Facilities**

- The Town of Mason should develop a Capital Improvement Program to help plan and budget for facility and equipment purchases
- The Town should establish public Wi-Fi at all public facilities.
- The Town should research storage solutions accessible to all departments, including electronic storage if possible.

### **Chapter V – Economic Development**

- Improvement of the road network connecting Mason to surrounding commercial hubs.
- Expansion of telecommunications infrastructure.

### **Chapter VI – Historic Resources**

- Conduct a Historic Resources Survey.
- Create a map of all historical sites in Mason.
- Consider National historical designation for the Capt. B. Mann House, the boyhood home of Sam Wilson (Uncle Sam), Town Hall, and Pickity Place.
- Ensure that historical information located in town – books, papers, artifacts, etc. – are stored using the best preservation and conservation practices, are properly catalogued and accounted for and are accessible to the public, where feasible.
- Create a permanent source of funding for the Historic Society to preserve, protect, display, and educate residents about Mason’s history.

### **Chapter VII – Conservation**

- Conserve priority lands, especially quality wildlife habitat and areas abutting conserved lands. 57% of Master Plan survey respondents agreed that Mason needs to conserve more undeveloped lands and wildlife habitat.
- Improve Mason’s Wetlands Protection Ordinance to include buffers.
- Develop and maintain a town-wide trail system.
- Increase public understanding about how water quality can be affected by land use by providing information for homeowners on well protection, and by advising about proposals before local land use boards.

## **Chapter VIII - Energy**

- Encourage energy efficiency savings in municipal, residential, and commercial building construction, operation, and maintenance wherever possible.
- Encourage renewable energy production at homes and businesses.
- Increase public awareness of ways to reduce energy use in homes, businesses, and public facilities.
- Identify land use policies that can reduce energy consumption while fitting within the Master Plan goals for the town.
- Encourage improvement of local transportation efficiency.
- Increase resilience of electric supply through encouraging renewable energy micro-grids such as community solar.
- Publicize existing and new renewable energy installations through sponsoring open houses and posting profiles of their performance on town website and MEC library (on <http://www.mason-nh.org/> website).
- Increase work from home options, reducing commuting energy consumption, through improved internet speed and access.
- Consider energy efficiency in the acquisition, operation, and maintenance of municipal vehicles.

## **Chapter IX – Transportation**

- The Town of Mason should work to maintain a “share the roadway” policy so that pedestrians and bicyclists are able to travel safely alongside vehicles on the roadways. This policy shall also apply to horseback riders. In addition, Mason should promote public education for drivers regarding ‘horse etiquette’ to ensure safe interactions between horses, riders, and vehicle operators on the road.
- The Town of Mason should consider designating space for a commuter parking area to serve people that would like to carpool. A survey could be conducted to determine commute patterns, and carpool parking locations could then be designated along popular routes. The Town should also consider setting up an online carpool information exchange.
- The Planning Board strongly encourages that the Town work to revive the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), making sure to allot necessary funds to support the Highway Department and Highway Department projects.
- The Town should consider developing policy/regulation, with assistance from the Planning Board and Conservation Commission, to discourage the upgrade of Class VI roads to Class V. This could save the Town from an increasing burned of road maintenance costs and preserve green space.
- The Conservation Commission encourages that the Town should consider energy efficiency and reduction in the use of fossil fuels in favor of renewable sources regarding new transportation/maintenance purchases.

- Mason should consider forming a permanent road advisory committee to study the Town's roads and make recommendations on changes to the current road policies including, but not limited to, paving, gravel road treatment (i.e. dust control) and signage.
- The Town should consider increasing the budget for maintaining paved roads.

## CHAPTER I VISION STATEMENT AND INTRODUCTION



### I Section A – Introduction

In accordance with New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated (RSA) 674:1 the Planning Board shall “.....prepare and amend from time to time a master plan to guide the development of the municipality.” The Master Plan for the Town of Mason was last updated in 2007. In 2019 the Planning Board undertook the task of updating and publishing a new master plan. It would be nice to report that a lot has changed in Mason since 2007. The fact of the matter is the Town has not, and based on the 2020 Master Plan Survey, the residents of Mason prefer to maintain the status quo. That is NOT to say that municipal services (the Police Department, Fire Department, Highway Department), committees, boards, commissions, and all the volunteers in Town, have not made improvements that benefit all the residents in Town during this time.

We will not regurgitate the RSAs outlining the purpose of the master plan, nor is the vision statement intended to be a history. It suffices to say that the master plan provides a framework for the Planning Board and the Town as a whole to use in shaping the future over the next 5-10 years. The master plan represents the Planning Board's road map to achieve the wishes of the residents of Mason.

To capture those wishes, wants, and needs of the residents in Mason and develop this master plan, the Planning Board collected data from a variety of public sources to evaluate the overall quality of life in Mason. This included a public survey in February and March of 2020. There were over 270 respondents. That says a great deal about the residents in Town. If you are at all familiar with survey statistics, a 20% response rate is phenomenal. Thus, the Planning Board can clearly formulate a vision that best represents the residents of Mason.

## **I Section B – Vision**

The overall vision for the Town is maintain its rural character. However, it was clear from the survey that improvements need to be made. These improvements need to be factored into all policies, decisions and Town regulations yet still allow the rural nature even as Southern New Hampshire grows. As alluded to above, we like living here, we like dirt roads, we like the Town center, we like the streams and forests, and we like that there are no stoplights in Town (and proud of it). Having said all that, we need to make improvements. The following section outlines the priorities and objectives required to achieve the vision for the future:

### **Objectives and Planning Board Recommendations**

- Broadband, broadband, broadband! This MUST be in place for Mason to join the 21<sup>st</sup> century, attract new residents, attract small businesses, allow people to work from home, and improve connectivity for basic users. An increase in the number of people that can work from home also increases potential volunteers for the fire department. This could reduce response times. Not having reliable broadband is akin to not having electricity 100 years ago. The current Broadband Committee is making great progress in achieving the end state of reliable broadband for all in Town.
- Roads, roads, roads! The highway department does an excellent job in maintaining the roads. HOWEVER, dirt roads must be improved, not just maintained, to the point mud season is not a risk to your vehicle and so that 4-wheel drive or tracked vehicles are not a requirement to get from point A to point B. In the summer, there are residents that cannot open their windows due to the dust. The Planning Board highly recommends the Board of Selectman (BOS) appoint a Gravel Road Committee to investigate cost effective ways of improving the gravel roads and maintaining existing paved roads.
- In the event a Manchester-Nashua- Boston commuter rail service is put into service; the Town must be prepared for a ripple effect. This will encourage more subdividing of property and increase burdens on Town departments and schools.
- Reasonable energy and conservation initiatives must continue. One of the reasons we all like living here is due to the efforts of the Conservation Committee. Through the relatively new Energy Committee, the Town needs to research renewable energy to power homes (such as a solar panel farm).
- We need to attract small businesses that conform to our rural culture, create jobs, and increase revenue to reduce taxes. As mentioned previously, broadband is key here. Improved roads are also essential.

The ‘Objectives and Planning Board Recommendations’ outlines the major concerns for the future of this Town. The subsequent chapters of this Master Plan discuss numerous other important issues in detail.

Lastly, the Planning Board would like to remind the residents that most of the Town runs on volunteers. Virtually every committee, commission and board is staffed by residents willing to give up personal free time to make Mason a better place to live. The Planning Board would like to send a sincere ‘thank you’ to all who contributed and assisted in developing this master plan.

## CHAPTER II EXISTING & FUTURE LAND USE



- Remain primarily a rural residential and agricultural community over the coming decades with uncrowded and quiet living conditions and a scenic unpolluted environment.
- Protect the character of the rural areas and their natural resources through wise development. Avoid incompatible land use such as heavy industry.
- Continue to be sensitive to natural resources such as steep slopes, wetlands, and groundwater as they zoning ordinances are amended.
- Develop alternative methods to manage long-term growth and density in the community. A forward-looking approach would be to create and implement different zone districts and within them consider becoming more flexible when it comes to allowing for alternative lot sizes and permitted densities of development.

### II Section A - Introduction

Mason is a community built upon hundreds of years of history and has generally been intact as a pristine rural community. The Town's past shaped not only the land but the character of those who reside in Mason. Mason now lies on the edge of sprawling development from both the south and the east. Maintaining the rural character that attracted so many unique individuals over its many years is more of a challenge than ever before.

Dirt roads, vast forested areas, scenic views, historic landmarks, stone walls, pristine streams, and small-town character are highly valued by the citizens of Mason. Our vision is one where all these valuable assets are protected; for once they are lost, they cannot be replaced. We realize as a community that change will come. Therefore, our vision must guide us towards planned and thoughtful growth that will maintain the rural atmosphere so cherished by our community. We need to strike a well-balanced land use pattern and to maintain the town's uncrowded rural character.

## Objectives and Planning Board Recommendations

The Planning Board recommends the following initiatives:

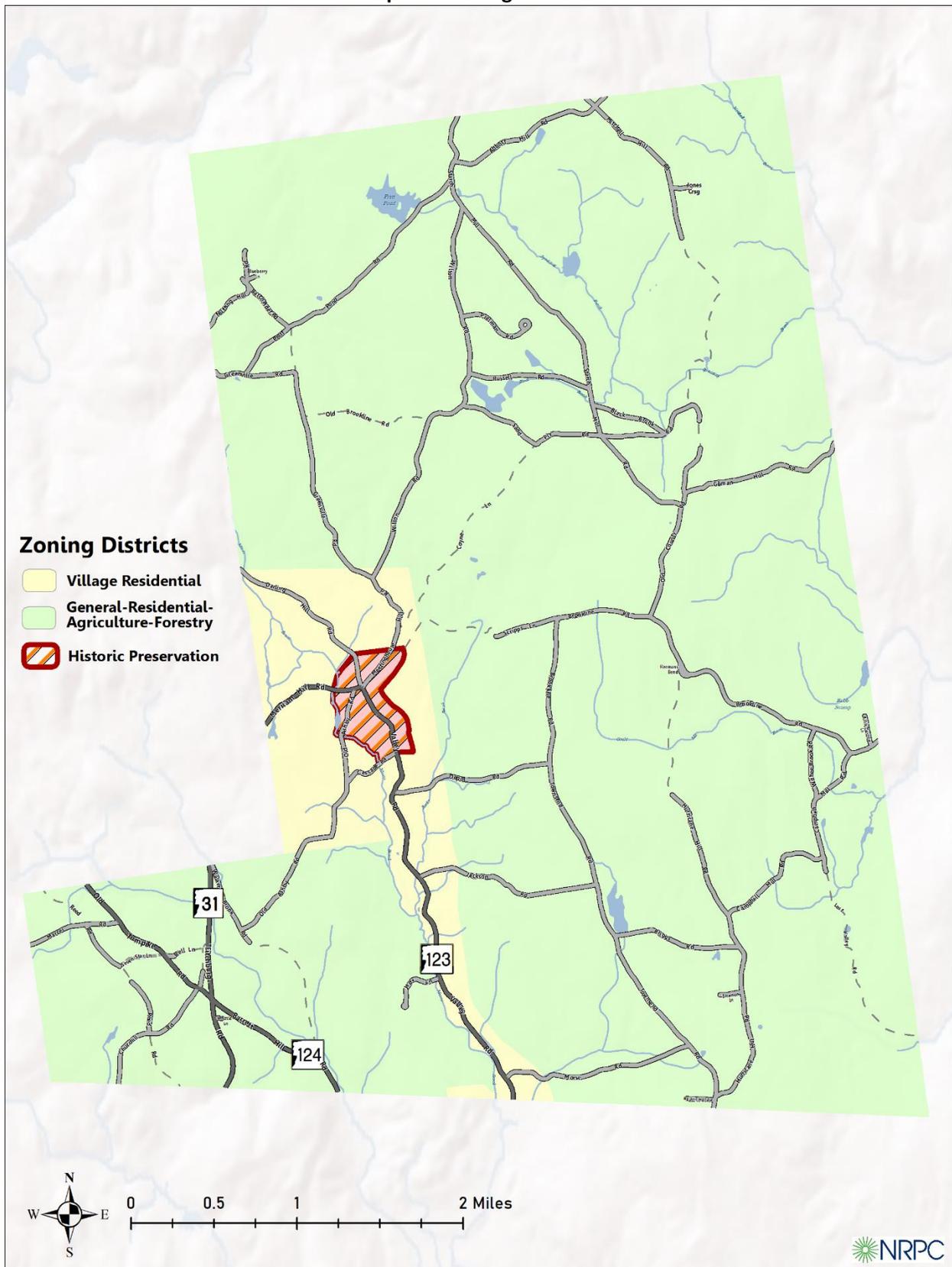
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- New Land Use Board members should be encouraged to participate in the Land Use Training workshops sponsored by the Office of Energy and Planning, NRPC and others.

## II Section B – Existing Land Use

Land use both determines and responds to the character of a community. Existing land-use patterns are the physical expression of numerous public and private decisions that have been made in the past. In turn, existing land use permits and regulations have had and will have a substantial impact on the location and type of future growth.

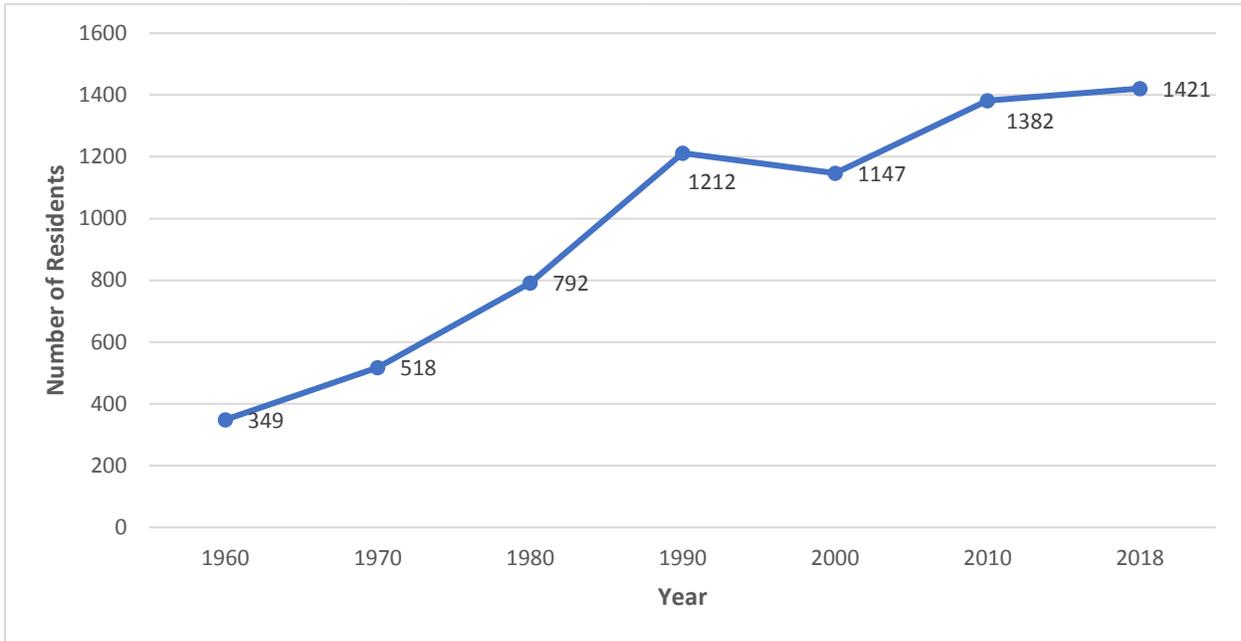
Currently, most of Mason is zoned as “General, Residential, Agriculture, and Forestry,” or GRAF for short. Uses permitted in the district are single-family residential, various home occupations, agriculture, general forestry, and granite quarrying. The Village Residential District is the second-largest district and runs along Route 123 as well as around the Town Center. The primary uses in the Village Residential District are single-family residential and home occupations. The smallest district is the Historic Preservation District, which encapsulates the Town Center. The Historic Preservation District permits the same uses as the Village Residential District, with the additional provision that the existing colonial or other architectural treatment of the District shall be maintained in any alterations or improvements to existing buildings or in the construction of new buildings. Existing Zoning is shown in Map II-1.

Map II-1. Zoning in Mason



The predominant land use in Mason is single-family residential and is driven by the residents' desire to maintain a rural lifestyle (see Map II-2). Most of this development is in year-round single-family homes with some agricultural uses spread throughout the town. Residential use is located throughout the town but is concentrated in the southern portion. There are lesser concentrations occurring in the north.

Figure II-1. Mason Population 1960-2018

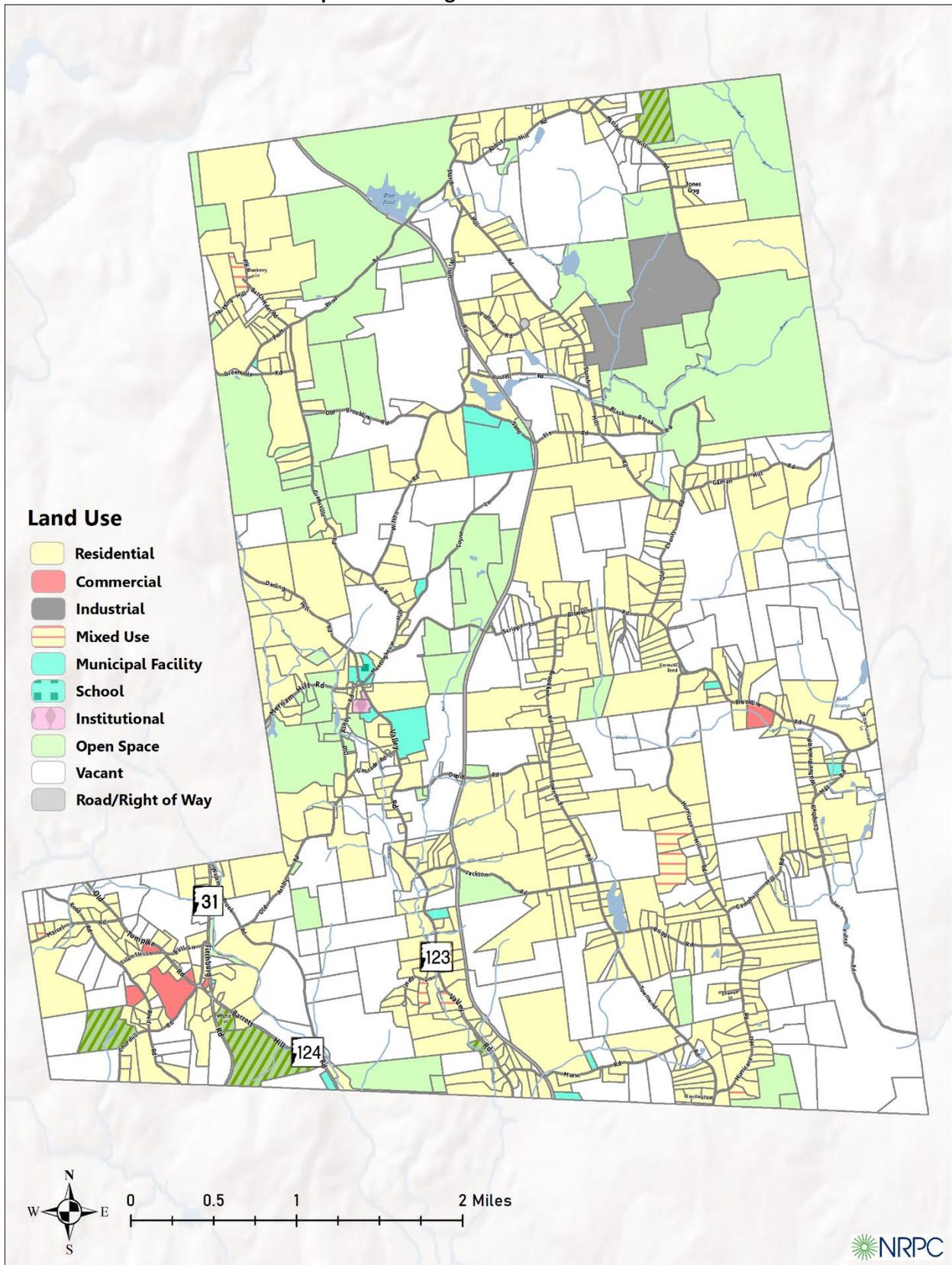


Source: N.H. Office of Energy and Planning

*Between 2000 and 2010,  
Mason's population increased  
by 19%*

Population growth (up 2.7% from 2010) will translate into land-use change. The 2018 person-per-square-mile NH Office of Strategic Initiatives for Mason is 59.27. Increasing residents and changing demographics require more permanent, diverse, and affordable dwellings. Mason's planning and decision-making must always consider the proper use of man-made and natural resources. Man-made resources include the road network, public and private buildings, farms, and recreation land areas.

Map II-2. Existing Land Use in Mason



Decisions must strike a balance between responding to development needs and financial pressures and at the same time preserve the natural resources and quality of life treasured by all.

**Table II-1. Existing Developed Land Use in Mason**

Land Use	# of Parcels	Calculated Acres	% of Developed Land	% of Total Acres
<b>Residential</b>	587	5,559	86.92%	36.22%
<b>Commercial</b>	6	56	0.87%	0.36%
<b>Agricultural</b>	5	177	2.76%	1.15%
<b>Industrial</b>	2	6	0.10%	0.04%
<b>Municipal/State</b>	22	168	2.63%	1.10%
<b>Institutional</b>	2	6	0.10%	0.04%
<b>Mixed Use</b>	7	73	1.14%	0.47%
<b>Transportation Infrastructure</b>	11	350	5.47%	2.28%
<b>Total (Developed)</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>6,395</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>41.66%</b>

Source: NRPC Parcel Data, NRPC Conserved Land Data

Note: Mason NH total calculated area: 15,347 acres. Total parcels: 936

**Table II-2. Existing Undeveloped Land Use in Mason**

Land Use	# of Parcels	Calculated Acres	% of Undeveloped Land	% of Total Acres
<b>Conservation</b>	81	3,053	34.1%	19.9%
<b>Vacant</b>	213	5,899	65.9%	38.4%
<b>Total (Undeveloped)</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>8,952</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>58.3%</b>

Source: NRPC Parcel Data, NRPC Conserved Land Data

Note: Mason NH total calculated area: 15,347 acres. Total parcels: 936

\*\* Undeveloped Area includes: 6 acres surface water and 5,106 acres Current Use Land

## II Section C – Future Land Use

The population of Mason is projected to increase by 14% between 2010 and 2040 based on projections by the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (Sept 2016). This means the town should anticipate adding about 192 people over this period of time. The New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives reports that *per capita* land consumption in New Hampshire has risen to 1.6 acres. Using this assumption, the 192-person increase in population would result in 307 additional acres being used for residential development. Although this is not a major land-use change, there is good reason to encourage the development of higher-density housing that will use less land and keep the rural character of the town.

Growth in Mason will be influenced by convenient access to regional economic centers in Milford, Nashua, and Keene. Light industrial and commercial services should be encouraged to locate along Route 31. The Town should also encourage home occupations and cottage industries. One area to

monitor is the proposed commuter rail service extension from Manchester – Nashua – Boston. The town must prepare for the ripple effect of additional population growth.

The only Industrial activity is the granite quarry located on Starch Mill Road, Fletcher’s Quarry.

Future land-use patterns and densities, and future actions by town officials, will depend upon economic and population pressure, private sector decisions, and the availability of land. Decisions to sell off large tracts of land, which would be broken up into smaller tracts, could alter the physical characteristics of the town as well as have a fiscal impact. Such decisions could either preserve and enhance or adversely affect, the Town’s rural character. We want to build out town’s future according to a shared vision that balances public needs and individual freedoms.

## CHAPTER III POPULATION AND HOUSING



- Protect historical housing stock.
- Maintain the rural/agricultural character of the town as well as the residential community.
- The Planning Board should research and consider implementing policies and programs available and best suited to influence the future development of a supply of housing that is high quality and affordable to residents.

### III Section A – Introduction

Mason, situated along the Massachusetts border and to the west of Nashua, is a part of the Greater Nashua Region. This chapter illustrates Mason’s population and housing trends within this region and draws comparisons to surrounding communities. The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) region is comprised of Mason, Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Hudson, Litchfield, Lyndeborough, Merrimack, Milford, Mont Vernon, Nashua, Pelham, and Wilton. An analysis of the population and housing trends enables the Mason Planning Board to determine whether amendments to the zoning ordinance might be required in order to address any housing inequities.

#### Data Sources, Limitations and Units of Analysis

The information in this chapter is based primarily on the 2010 US Census, 2018 American Community Survey data, and the 2019 Nashua Region Housing Needs Assessment Update as included in its Regional Plan in conjunction with other local and state studies, estimates and reports. Wherever possible more recent data from other sources have been utilized; however, alternative up-to-date data or estimates are often only available for larger geographical units, such as the county, statistical areas, or the state.

Because Mason is a smaller community, smaller-scale assessments like the American Community Survey have more volatile data with larger margins of error due to minimal sample sizes. The 2010 US Censes is the largest, most accurate option for data and has been used in this chapter as a default in many areas to provide the best analysis and conclusions.

### Objectives and Planning Board Recommendations

The Planning Board recommends the following.

- Protect historical housing stock.
- Maintain the rural/agricultural character of the town as well as the residential community.
- The Planning Board should research and consider implementing policies and programs available and best suited to influence the future development of a supply of housing that is high quality and affordable to residents.

## III Section B – Population

### Historical Trends

Historical population is presented in Table III-1 and Figure III-1. Since its separation from Greenville in the late 1800s, The Town of Mason remained a small community until the 1960s. Then, Mason’s population doubled over the next two decades as many post-World War II Baby Boomers moved to Mason to raise their families. Such large population increases are typical during periods of social and physical changes in communities.

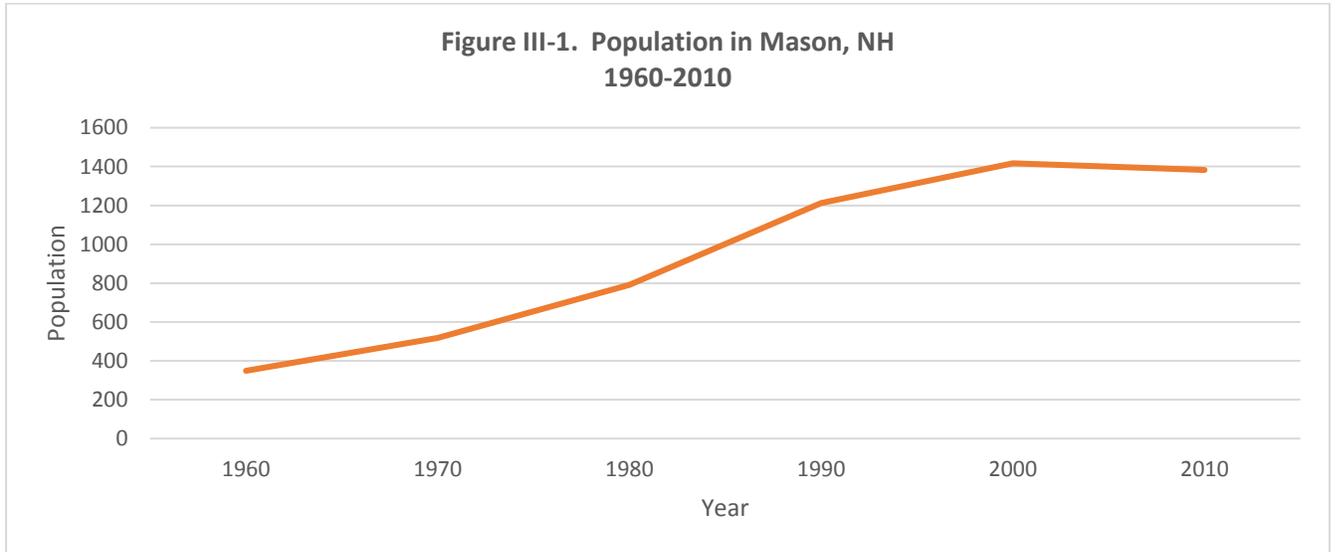
The regional population expansion during 1970s through the 1990s stems from two broad trends, the growth of the greater Nashua economy and migration from the Boston area following improvements in the state and federal highway system.

After 1990 population growth began to slow and started decreasing after 2000. This could be due to an aging population, and the national trend of smaller family sizes.

**Table III-1. Historical Population,  
Mason, NH**

Year	Population	# Change	% Change
1960	349	-	-
1970	518	169	48.4
1980	792	274	52.9
1990	1,212	420	53.0
2000	1,147	205	16.9
2010	1,382	-35	-2.5

Source: 1960-2010 US Census



Source: 1960-2010 US Census

### Population Density

Mason is a sparsely populated community compared to the surrounding area. Population densities (population/land area) for the NRPC region are presented in Table III-2. Between the 2000 and 2010 Census, Mason’s population density has increased from 48 to 58 persons per square mile. During that same period, Mason also became more densely populated than the Town of Lyndeborough and now ranks 12<sup>th</sup> in the region for population density. Mason still has the smallest population numerically out of all the NRPC communities.

**Table III-2. NRPC Region Population Density -- 2000 and 2010**

Municipality	2000			2010		
	Population	Density (per sq mi)	Rank	Population	Density (per sq mi)	Rank
Amherst	10,769	312	7	11,201	332	7
Brookline	4,181	208	9	4,991	252	9
Hollis	7,015	215	8	7,684	243	8
Hudson	22,928	785	2	24,467	865	2
Litchfield	7,360	487	5	8,271	558	5
Lyndeborough	1,585	52	12	1,683	56	13
Mason	1,147	48	13	1,382	58	12
Merrimack	25,119	761	3	25,494	790	3
Milford	13,535	523	4	15,115	599	4
Mont Vernon	2,034	121	11	2,409	143	11
Nashua	86,605	2,830	1	86,494	2831	1
Pelham	10,914	409	6	12,897	497	6
Wilton	3,743	143	10	3,677	144	10
Region	195,788	610	-	205,765	608	-
State of NH	1,235,786	137	-	1,316,256	147	-

Sources: 2000 and 2010 US Census

**Age Distribution**

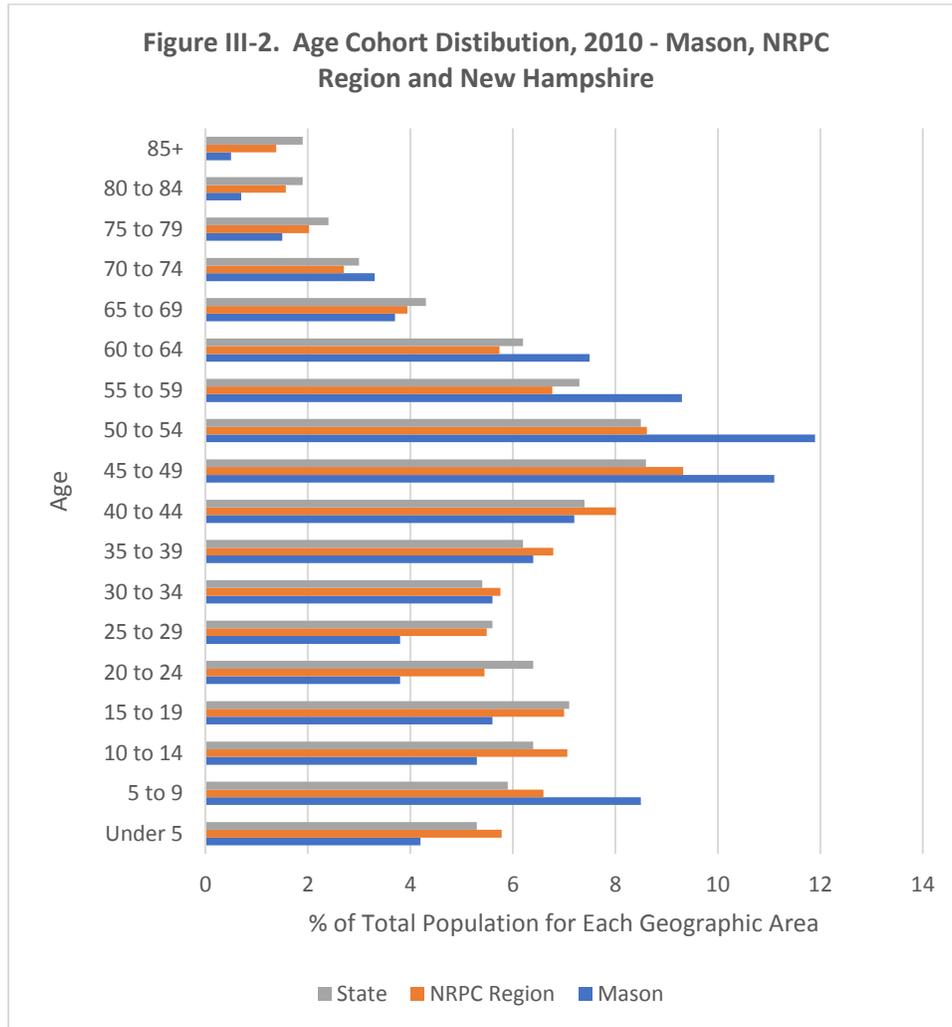
Examining the age profile of community population provides insight into future changes in local population and the future needs of the Town. Mason’s age distributions for 2010 are depicted in Table III-3 and Figure III-2 along with the NRPC region and the State.

**Table III-3. Age Distribution, Mason, NRPC Region, NH, 2010**

Age	Mason	% Total	NRPC Region	% Total	State	% Total
Under 5 years	58	4.2	11,898	5.8	69,806	5.3
5 to 9 years	117	8.5	13,578	6.6	77,756	5.9
10 to 14 years	73	5.3	14,535	7.1	84,620	6.4
15 to 19 years	78	5.6	14,402	7.0	93,620	7.1
20 to 24 years	52	3.8	11,208	5.4	84,546	6.4
25 to 29 years	53	3.8	11,291	5.5	73,121	5.6
30 to 34 years	77	5.6	11,846	5.8	71,351	5.4
35 to 39 years	89	6.4	13,972	6.8	82,152	6.2
40 to 44 years	100	7.2	16,488	8.0	97,026	7.4
45 to 49 years	154	11.1	19,183	9.3	113,564	8.6
50 to 54 years	165	11.9	17,728	8.6	112,397	8.5
55 to 59 years	128	9.3	13,936	6.8	96,289	7.3
60 to 64 years	104	7.5	11,805	5.7	81,954	6.2
65 to 69 years	51	3.7	8,116	3.9	57,176	4.3
70 to 74 years	46	3.3	5,549	2.7	39,586	3
75 to 79 years	21	1.5	4,160	2.0	31,774	2.4
80 to 84 years	9	0.7	3,221	1.6	24,971	1.9
85 years and over	7	0.5	2,849	1.4	24,761	1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1382</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>205,765</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,316,470</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: 2010 US Census

Mason has a higher proportion of residents between ages 45 and 64 years, and ages 5 to 9 years than both the NRPC region and the State. However, Mason has a smaller proportion of residents between ages 10 to 29 years and over age 75. These comparisons indicate that Mason has an older population with less school-age children than the region and the state.



Source: 2010 Census

### III Section C – Income

The standard of living in New Hampshire is high. Mason embodies the Nashua Region and the Southern Tier overall with some of the highest levels of income and well-being in the State of New Hampshire. Table III-4 shows the most recent detailed data available for median family, median household, and per capita income for individual municipalities, the NRPC region, and the State. The median per-capita income in Mason is also the median for the NRPC region, and \$4,378 higher than the state. Median household income and family income in Mason are higher than both the NRPC region and the state.

**Table III-4: Median Household, Family, and Per Capita Income, 2018**

Community	Household Income	Family Income	Per-Capita Income
Amherst	\$135,234	\$149,542	\$60,938
Brookline	\$138,092	\$143,100	\$50,185
Hollis	\$132,500	\$148,820	\$62,329
Hudson	\$96,224	\$108,874	\$42,146
Litchfield	\$97,051	\$113,868	\$41,622
Lyndeborough	\$90,938	\$101,250	\$45,137
Mason	\$106,833	\$116,797	\$42,926
Merrimack	\$103,043	\$114,429	\$45,836
Milford	\$77,813	\$94,680	\$37,438
Mont Vernon	\$113,125	\$115,865	\$44,911
Nashua	\$73,022	\$88,118	\$38,435
Pelham	\$103,940	\$115,909	\$42,718
Wilton	\$76,395	\$92,750	\$42,008
<b>NRPC Region</b>	<b>\$103,043</b>	<b>\$114,429</b>	<b>\$42,926</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>\$74,057</b>	<b>\$91, 245</b>	<b>\$38,548</b>

Source: 2018 American Community Survey

Table III-5 shows a breakdown of household income in 2010 by category. Mason has a greater percentage of its population in the \$50,000 to \$74,999, \$100,000 to \$149,999, \$150,000 to 199,999, and greater than \$200,000 income ranges than the region. The largest income category in Mason was households earning \$50,000 to \$74,999. Compared with the region, Mason also has a higher percent of its households in low-income categories. One factor that may influence this statistic is that there are increases in number of residents in the highest age categories. The elderly is one group that demonstrates low household incomes due to the fixed incomes associated with retirement and diminished rates of workforce participation.

**Table III-5: Percent of Households in each Income Category, 2010**

Community	< \$10,000	\$10,000- \$14,999	\$15,000- \$24,999	\$25,000- \$34,999	\$35,000- \$49,999	\$50,000- \$74,999	\$75,000- \$99,999	\$100,000- \$149,999	\$150,000- \$199,999	> \$200,000
Amherst	2.2	0.3	2.5	5.2	8.0	12.4	11.8	24.0	18.6	14.8
Brookline	0.5	1.3	2.6	6.0	6.1	12.6	15.2	25.3	16.4	14.0
Hollis	0.0	1.6	3.6	6.6	8.6	13.4	10.7	22.9	12.5	20.1
Hudson	3.2	1.0	4.4	7.2	9.5	19.5	16.0	22.9	8.9	7.4
Litchfield	0.5	2.3	5.6	3.8	13.2	15.9	10.4	28.2	13.9	6.1
Lyndeborough	2.8	1.7	6.0	6.0	12.4	20.3	17.3	19.3	8.8	5.5
Mason	6.5	4.6	3.2	6.1	4.2	22.4	10.9	21.6	11.1	9.3
Merrimack	2.6	0.80	3.8	4.4	8.8	17.2	17.6	25.20	10.9	8.6
Milford	2.9	2.2	11.8	7.1	17.0	15.5	15.1	16.4	7.5	4.5
Mont Vernon	2.1	0.5	2.1	5.1	6.7	15.8	24.3	21.6	9.5	12.2
Nashua	5.3	3.9	10.0	8.1	11.7	15.8	14.6	18.5	7.0	5.1
Pelham	3.5	2.6	4.9	5.7	8.8	16.0	12.1	24.9	11.0	10.5
Wilton	0.4	6.5	6.8	4.8	17.2	15.2	15.6	25.0	3.9	4.6
<b>NRPC Region</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>7.5</b>

Source: 2010 US Census

### Educational Attainment

Table III-7 portrays educational attainment for the residents of Mason. The characteristics of educational attainment of Mason residents are similar to those for the region and the State. The proportion of residents in Mason with no high school is less than that for the NRPC Region and the State. Like the rest of the region, Mason also demonstrates a higher proportion of professional degrees than the State overall. Over 38% of Mason’s population over age 25 has at least a bachelor’s degree. This trend is consistent with the employment and economic data discussed in Chapter V.

**Table III-7. Highest Level of Educational Attainment of Population over Age 25**

Education Level	Mason		Region		State of NH	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8	0.7	3,385	2.3	21,176	2.2
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade (No Diploma)	24	2.2	6,692	4.5	46,431	4.9
High School graduate	315	28.4	37,797	25.2	263,005	27.6
Some College (No Degree)	222	20.0	27,352	18.3	177,691	18.7
Associates Degree	115	10.4	14,680	9.8	96,387	10.1
Bachelor's Degree	293	26.4	38,076	25.4	213,277	22.4
Graduate or Professional Degree	134	12.1	21,849	14.6	134,148	14.1

Source: 2018 American Community Survey

## III Section C – Housing

### Household Size

Table III-8 illustrates Household data in Mason for the years 2000 and 2010. In 2010, the average household size in the NRPC region is 2.60, down slightly from the 2000 average of 2.68. This is consistent with the national trend towards smaller household sizes. Mason experienced the largest growth in households in the region, a 22% increase in units from 2000 to 2010. However, average number of persons per household and average number of persons per Family household have both decreased. Mason has the second smallest average of persons per family in the region with approximately 2.96 persons per family household (though the same average as the State). So, while overall number of households are increasing in Mason, family sizes and persons per household are decreasing.

**Table III-8. Households, 2000 and 2010**

Community	Total HH 2000	Total HH 2010	% Change	Average # of Persons per Household		Average # of Persons per Family HH	
				2000	2010	2000	2010
Amherst	3,590	4,063	13.18	3.00	2.76	3.26	3.06
Brookline	1,343	1,631	21.44	3.11	3.06	3.36	3.31
Hollis	2,440	2,811	15.20	2.88	2.73	3.16	3.05
Hudson	8,034	8,900	10.78	2.83	2.73	3.17	3.13
Litchfield	2,357	2,828	19.98	3.12	2.92	3.35	3.22
Lyndeborough	560	643	14.82	2.83	2.62	3.20	2.89
Mason	433	529	22.17	2.65	2.61	3.02	2.96
Merrimack	8,832	9,503	7.60	2.84	2.67	3.19	3.06
Milford	5,201	5,929	14.0	2.58	2.53	3.11	3.04
Mont Vernon	693	838	20.92	2.90	2.87	3.17	3.18
Nashua	34,614	35,044	1.24	2.46	2.42	3.05	3.01
Pelham	3,606	4,357	20.83	3.03	2.96	3.33	3.28
Wilton	1,140	1,418	24.39	2.65	2.59	3.06	3.02
<b>NRPC Region</b>	<b>72,410</b>	<b>78,494</b>	<b>8.29</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>3.14</b>	<b>3.07</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>474,606</b>	<b>518,973</b>	<b>9.35</b>	<b>2.53</b>	<b>2.46</b>	<b>3.03</b>	<b>2.96</b>

Sources: 2000 and 2010 US Census

**Housing Supply and Types**

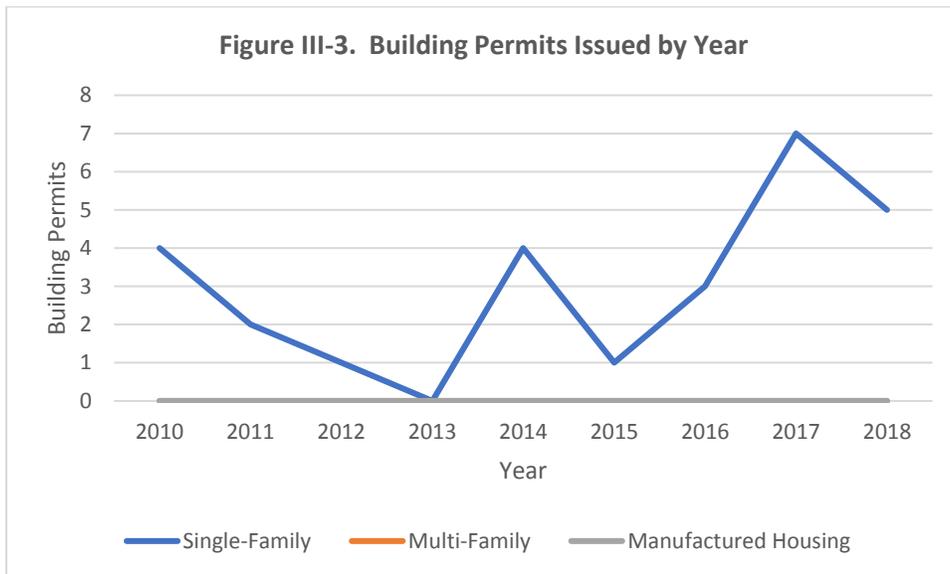
Housing stock in Mason is almost exclusively single-family homes. Within the past 8 years, no building permits have been issued for multi-family or manufactured housing. Single-family building permits issued were slightly higher in 2017 and 2018. Types of building permits issued, and number of permits issued are shown in Table III-9 and Figure III-3.

This is consistent with results of the 2020 master plan survey. Most residents thought that the current zoning was appropriate. The majority were not in favor of duplex housing, multi family, or cluster developments. The survey data coupled with existing housing trends indicates that single family housing will likely continue to be the most predominant housing in Mason.

**Table III-9. Building Permits Issued by Year**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total Housing Units (2018)
<b>Single-Family</b>	4	2	1	0	4	1	3	7	5	577
<b>Multi-Family</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
<b>Manufactured Housing</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
<b>Total Housing</b>	4	2	1	0	4	1	3	7	5	598

Source: NH Office of Strategic Initiatives, NH Housing Supply Report



Source: NH Office of Strategic Initiatives, NH Housing Supply Report

### Housing Tenure

Housing tenure refers to whether a housing unit is owned or rented by the occupants. Table III-10 presents housing tenure for Mason, the NRPC region and the State. Of 529 occupied housing units in Mason, 489, or 92.4 percent, are owner occupied, and 7.3 percent are renter occupied. The Nashua region has a higher percentage of both owner occupied and renter-occupied units than the State. On a regional basis, Mason has the smallest proportion of rental units. The rental housing market overall is very tight in the Region and throughout Southern New Hampshire. There is practically no available rental housing supply in some communities and the supply is very tight in many other parts of greater Nashua.

**Table III-10: Housing Tenure, 2000 and 2010**

Community	Total Units (#)		Occupied (%)		Owner Occupied (%)		Renter Occupied (%)		Vacant (%)		Seasonal* (%)	
	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
<b>Mason</b>	455	571	95.2	92.6	90.5	85.6	4.6	7.0	4.8	7.4	2.2	2.8
<b>Region</b>	74,341	82,568	97.8	95.1	68.6	69.0	29.2	26.0	2.2	4.9	0.7	0.7
<b>State</b>	547,024	614,754	86.8	84.4	60.5	59.9	26.3	24.5	13.2	15.6	10.3	10.4

\*Included in Vacant Housing Units, also includes recreational and occasional use.

Source: 2010 US Census

### Age of Housing

Most of the housing stock in Mason was built between 1980 and 2009. Approximately 25% of the units were built in the 1980s alone. Mason also has a significant number of units that were constructed prior to 1940. It is estimated that 101, a little over 16% of Mason’s total housing stock is of the pre-World War II era. These homes are a significant cultural resource for the community as they are architecturally significant and represent the heritage of the community (see Chapter VI, Historic Resources). Age of housing stock in Mason is depicted in Table III-11.

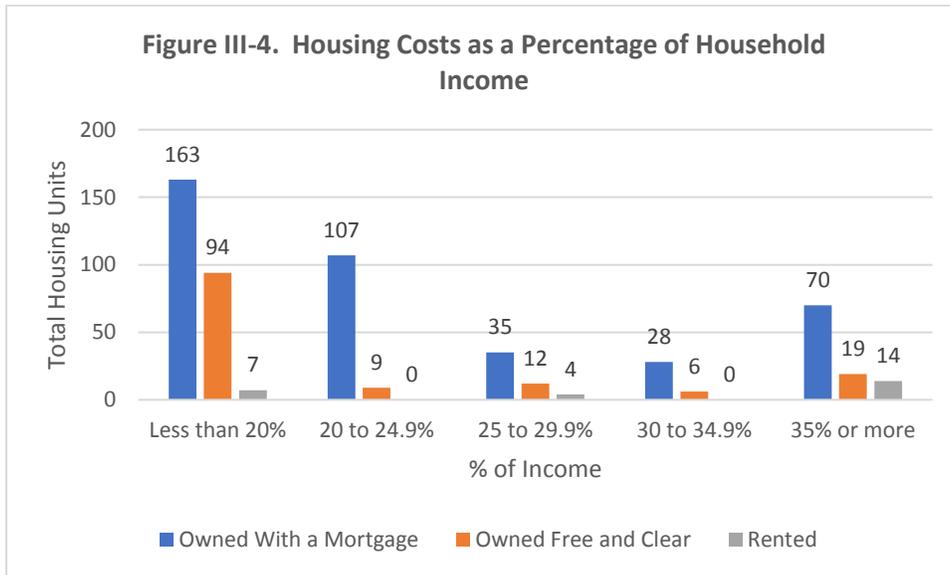
**Table III-11. Age of Housing Stock**

Year Built	# of Units	% of Total Housing
<b>Pre 1939</b>	101	16.2%
<b>1940 - 1949</b>	11	1.8%
<b>1950 - 1959</b>	33	5.3%
<b>1960 - 1969</b>	18	2.9%
<b>1970 - 1979</b>	86	13.8%
<b>1980 - 1989</b>	158	25.4%
<b>1990 - 1999</b>	87	14.0%
<b>2000 - 2009</b>	115	18.5%
<b>2010 or Later</b>	13	2.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>622</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

2018 American Community Survey, DPO4

### Housing Affordability

Figure III-4 portrays the cost of housing in Mason relative to household income based on units that are owned with a mortgage, owned free and clear, or rented. For example, approximately 163 households own their home, have a mortgage, and pay less than 20% of their income toward monthly mortgage and associated costs. Overall, housing is relatively affordable in Mason with most households paying less than 30% of their income towards mortgages and associated costs. However, rent is very expensive in Mason with most households paying more than 35% of their monthly income toward rent. This could create a barrier to younger residents and families living in town.



Source: 2018 American Community Survey

### III Section D – Population Projections

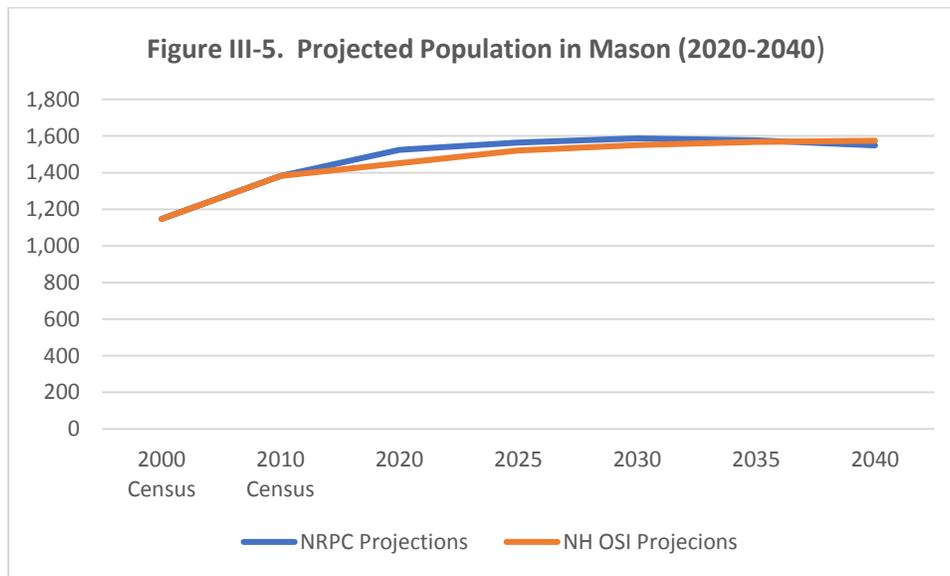
The Nashua Regional Planning Commission’s population projections for the region are presented in Table III-12 and depicted for Mason in Figure III-5. The forecasting methodology is based on building permit trends and a community’s historical share of its respective county’s growth according to the 1980, 1990, 2000 Census. Rates of change are applied to the most recent population estimate as a growth factor, from which the projection is derived. By this method, changes that have taken place in the 1980, 1990, and 2000 populations guide the projections beyond the year 2010.

Mason’s population is expected to grow approximately 0.38 percent annually over the next 20 years. If projections hold true, this may mean the addition of 401 persons by 2040; however, the actual rate of growth in any community is unpredictable and due to forces beyond most local control. Keeping this in mind, it can be reasonably expected that Mason will grow at a moderate pace in comparison to the region and only see a 12% population change over the next 20 years.

**Table III-12. Population Projections, NRPC Region**

Community	2000 Census	2010 Census	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	% Change (2010-2040)	% Annual (2010-2040)
<b>Amherst</b>	10,769	11,201	11,452	11,550	11,563	11,579	11,521	2.9%	0.09%
<b>Brookline</b>	4,181	4,991	5,470	5,681	5,857	5,984	6,060	21.4%	0.65%
<b>Hollis</b>	7,015	7,684	8,034	8,226	8,380	8,534	8,648	12.6%	0.39%
<b>Hudson</b>	22,928	24,467	25,692	26,119	26,369	26,581	26,596	8.7%	0.28%
<b>Litchfield</b>	7,360	8,271	8,808	9,087	9,312	9,571	9,764	18.1%	0.55%
<b>Lyndeborough</b>	1,585	1,683	1,798	1,826	1,837	1,819	1,790	6.3%	0.21%
<b>Mason</b>	1,147	1,382	1,524	1,565	1,587	1,577	1,548	12.0%	0.38%
<b>Merrimack</b>	25,119	25,494	25,949	26,312	26,380	26,908	27,120	6.4%	0.21%
<b>Milford</b>	13,535	15,115	16,203	16,629	17,146	17,756	17,738	17.4%	0.53%
<b>Mont Vernon</b>	2,034	2,409	2,635	2,731	2,814	2,873	2,901	20.4%	0.62%
<b>Nashua</b>	86,605	86,494	88,166	89,593	90,457	90,759	90,360	4.5%	0.15%
<b>Pelham</b>	10,914	12,897	13,905	14,357	14,723	15,063	15,282	18.5%	0.57%
<b>Wilton</b>	3,743	3,677	3,871	3,928	3,958	3,954	3,921	6.6%	0.21%
<b>NRPC Region</b>	<b>196,935</b>	<b>205,765</b>	<b>213,507</b>	<b>217,605</b>	<b>220,381</b>	<b>222,959</b>	<b>223,249</b>	<b>8.5%</b>	<b>0.27%</b>

Source: Nashua Regional Planning Commission, 2014, OSI Population Estimates.



Source: US Census 2000-2010, NRPC Projections 2014, NH Office of Strategic Initiatives Projections 2016

### **III Section E – Conclusions**

Mason is essentially a bedroom community. With the addition of broadband availability and the impacts of COVID 19, it will most likely remain so with more people working at home. On the other hand, Mason could see an increase in small businesses as outlined in Chapter V.

The town wide Master Plan survey results were not in support of making changes to land use regulations to allow for multifamily housing. There are now, and will be, more buildable lots in Mason. Currently median home prices are very affordable. When broadband communications are installed, Mason will likely become a more desirable community to live in, which could potentially drive housing prices up. Increases in prices and costs of building could create barriers to young families starting out as well as low income households, and even families falling in the middle for income. Thus, we could see an increase in "affluence." With that increase, we could see a higher demand for town services and a desire for such extravagant things like paved roads.

In summation, statistical trends in Mason predict future population growth. As revealed by the Master Plan survey, Mason residents are in favor of preserving the rural character of Town. Moving forward, the Planning Board will maintain the current land use regulations to maintain the status quo.

## CHAPTER IV COMMUNITY FACILITIES



- The Town of Mason should develop a Capital Improvement Program to help plan and budget for facility and equipment purchases.
- The Town should establish public Wi-Fi at all public facilities.
- The Town should research storage solutions accessible to all departments, including electronic storage if possible.

### IV Section A - Introduction

An important function of town government is to provide residents and property owners with a level of service commensurate with taxes and fees paid that meet the current needs of the populace. In Mason's case, these include public safety (police, fire, and ambulance), public works (water, sewer, roads, solid waste disposal, and cemetery maintenance), schools, recreation, cultural facilities, health and welfare services, and the town government operations (selectmen, property maintenance, and assessment).

The degree to which these facilities are developed has a significant impact on the quality of life and general character of a community. This section of the Master Plan presents an inventory of such facilities and services, an assessment of the adequacy of the current level of service, and any plans or recommendations to expand, improve, or add to an existing facility or service.

### Objectives and Planning Board Recommendations

The Planning Board recommends the following initiatives:

- The Town of Mason should develop a Capital Improvement Program to help plan and budget for facility and equipment purchases.
- The Town should establish public Wi-Fi at all public facilities.
- The Town should research storage solutions accessible to all departments, including electronic storage if possible.

## IV Section B – Facilities

### Mann House (Town Offices)

The Town Offices are located at 16 Darling Hill Road in the village center. The two-story wood frame structure, known as the Mann House, was built in 1774 and was given to the Town in 1984 by Jim and Anna Rowse who owned New England Apple Products. It houses the offices of the Selectmen, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, and the Building Inspector. The common room is used for all Town board meetings, as a waiting room, and for researching maps. The Town Offices share this location with the Library and the Town’s Historical Room upstairs. The Town Offices are wheelchair accessible and are open daily during regular business hours, excluding weekends and holidays, and certain evenings for meetings.



Currently the office is equipped with a Dell computer system. There are two desktops in the Board of Selectmen’s Office for account and for the Selectmen’s Assistant. There are two desktops in the Library, one of which is for public use. There is also a laptop for the Supervisors of the Checklist.

### Existing and Future Needs

Storage space is an issue for all departments. There is a single room upstairs that houses documents and records for the Building Inspector, Supervisors of the Checklist, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Conservation Commission, Energy Commission, and tax records. Off-site storage should be considered.

### Town Hall

The Town Hall, located at the heart of the Village, was built in 1840 and is used for Town Meeting and other community events. The building, while highly valued by the townspeople, needs significant repair. Fortunately, the process of the restoration of the Town Hall has begun. In March of 2018, a warrant article for \$5,000 was passed at town meeting for an engineering study to be completed. An additional \$5,000 was raised through grants. The Historic Building Assessment was completed in January 2019. A call for resident volunteers went out in June of 2019 for the establishment of the Town Hall Restoration Committee. Committee members were appointed by the Board of Selectmen and conducted their first official meeting in January 2020.



The process of restoration has been divided into three phases. The first being the foundation and drainage, the second being the roof and the third being the interior. An

engineering study for the drainage and foundation have been contracted to determine cost for phase one. Once costs have been determined fundraising will begin.

### Police Protection

The Police Station is located at 38 Darling Hill Road and is a 1.5 story, framed modular building built in 2006 and it is handicapped accessible. Equipment consists of a 2016 Chevy Tahoe which is in



low/average condition, a 2018 Chevy Tahoe in good condition, and a 2020 KIA Telleride in excellent condition. There are three full-time and one administrative assistant. Dispatch services are provided by the Hollis Communications Center.

Traffic safety concerns, particularly at intersections, are town wide. Local safety activities are typically addressed as they arise. Burglaries are down compared to previous years.

**Table IV-1. Police Department Calls for Service 2017-2019**

Year	# of Calls for Service
2017	902
2018	1017
2019	513

Source: Mason Annual Reports

### Existing and Future Needs

- New portable radios (\$3,500-\$6,000 per unit)
- Additional storage space outside of the Police Department building
- Updated security camera hardware
- Storage at the range

**Mason Fire Rescue**

The fire station is located at 101 Depot Road and was built in 1965. It is a 2-story, 3,486 square foot wood frame structure and it is not handicapped accessible. The building is used only for the Fire Department and Fire Department Association. A new building was also added to the property to house both forestry vehicles. It is a 1.5 story, 792 square foot, wood frame structure. It is not handicapped accessible.



The Fire Department is equipped with the following trucks:

- 1990 1,250 gpm pumper in excellent condition
- 2000 1,250 gpm pumper in excellent condition
- 2005 1,800-gallon tanker in excellent condition
- 1968 M715 150-gallon forestry in good condition
- 1982 M50A3 1,000-gallon forestry in good condition

There is one part-time fire chief, one part-time assistant chief and volunteers that receive stipends for work performed. Dispatch service is performed through the Hollis Dispatch Center. Mutual aid is provided by the Souhegan Mutual Aid Association as well as the Townsend and Ashby, MA fire departments. There have been many cases mutual aid is received and many cases where mutual aid has been given to neighboring towns. The Brookline Ambulance Service provides coverage and transport service for Mason EMS calls.

**Table IV-2. Fire Department Responses, 2009-2019**

Year	Fire	EMS	Total
<b>2009</b>	40	59	<b>99</b>
<b>2010</b>	47	64	<b>111</b>
<b>2011</b>	-	-	-
<b>2012</b>	61	67	<b>128</b>
<b>2013</b>	44	65	<b>109</b>
<b>2014</b>	-	105	-
<b>2015</b>	64	97	<b>161</b>
<b>2016</b>	81	111	<b>192</b>
<b>2017</b>	66	91	<b>157</b>
<b>2018</b>	57	75	<b>132</b>
<b>2019</b>	80	87	<b>167</b>

Source: Mason Annual Reports

**Existing and Future Needs**

Current facilities and equipment are satisfactory.

**Highway Department**

The Mason Public Works Department is located at 83 Depot Road and is a one- story wood frame office building attached to a 60' x 80' metal garage building. The office is not handicapped accessible. The staff of the Highway Department consists of 4 full-time and 5 part-time employees.

**Table IV-3. Mason Public Works Department Equipment List**

Year	Make & Model	Type / Unit #	Condition	Capacity
1987	John Deere 672B	Grader	Good	13' blade
1999	International 4900	Dump	Poor	7 cu.yd
2000	International 2554	Dump/Sander	Good	7 cu.yd
2006	International 7600	Dump /Sander	Good	14 cu.yd
2006	Volvo L70	Loader	Good	2.75 cu. Yd
2007	Sterling L8511	Dump /Sander	Good	7 cu. Yd
2007	Isuzu	Flatbed/Dump	Good	
2011	Ford 250	Pickup	Fair	
2011	Ford 250	Pickup	Good	Extra cab
2011	Chevrolet Silverado	One-ton dump	Good	3 cu. Yd
2011	Trailer	Utility/ Landscape	Good	
2015	John Deere 310 SL	Backhoe	Good	1 cu. Yd
2009	Chevrolet Tahoe	SUV	Good	
1963	Trailer	Utility/ Landscape	Fair	

**Major projects completed by the Public Works Department since 2010 include the following:**

- 2011 - Purchased new Ford 250 4x4 Pickup \$32,525. Chipseal paved roads \$50,000.
- 2012 - \$50,000. For paved road repairs Added \$35,000 to Capital Reserve Equipment Fund, Purchased a stainless-steel sander \$20,500.
- 2013 - \$50,000 for paved road repair. Added \$14,815 to Highway Barn/Garage Capitol Reserve Fund
- 2014 - \$50,000 for paved road repairs
- 2015 - \$50,000 for paved road repairs, purchased new John Deere 310SL backhoe \$76,500 with trade-in
- 2016 - \$50,000 for paved road repairs, \$363,000 for new highway garage
- 2017 - \$50,000 for paved road repairs, \$22,640 to upgrade radio system to highband, received \$65,098 from State SB 38 for highway improvements
- 2018 - \$50,000 for paved road repairs, Chipseal 6.3 miles of paved roads, Highway garage completed, purchased 2006 International 7600 10-wheeler

- 2019 - \$65,000 for paved road repairs, reclaim and pave Abbott Hill and Mitchell south, reclaim 0.6 mile on Greenville Road from town line.
- 2020 - Reclaim and pave .5 mile on Wilton road, pave 0.6-mile Greenville road.

### Existing and Future Needs

The Road Agent indicates that the improved garage is sufficient for department needs. The Public Works Department is working maintain paved roads that are in good condition while gradually fixing roads in poor condition. The gravel roads can be challenging with summer downpours causing washouts and drought conditions causing dust problems. Calcium chloride is applied more regularly to mitigate dust issues. Winter thaws have added more mud seasons that previous years calling for more crushed stone. As weather patterns change, the Town will need to adapt to them.



### **Mason Public Library**

The Mason Public Library, located at 16 Darling Hill Road in the village center, is a part of the 1774 Capt. B. Mann House that also serves as the Town Offices. There have been some additions to the building to create approximately 915 square feet of space. The building is handicap accessible; however, it is very restricted.



Library staff consists of one part-time director, 2 part-time staff and 2 substitutes. A three-member elected Board of Trustees set policy and serve as a link between the library and the community. The library is open 26 hours per week.

Library resources include 10,194 catalogued books, 3 magazines, 1 newspaper, 136 audio CDs and 338 DVDs. There is one donated collection of books from the collection of Elizabeth O. Jones, kept in storage. There is a circulating collection of books donated in memory of David M. Ahern. There is one computer, one fax machine and one copier/printer/scanner for public use. Additional staff equipment includes one computer, one bar-code scanner and one typewriter.

### Future Needs and Plans

The Library Director sees a need for the following improvements:

- More space for library collections
- More room for library programs and community activities
- Improved handicap access throughout the library
- A new bathroom that is separate from the current bathroom shared with the Town Offices
- Public Wi-Fi for use by library patrons
- More online/virtual programming
- Digital content, E-books, and audios

- Laptops/devices that can be loaned out to patrons

In June 2020 the Mason Public Library, in partnership with the New Hampshire State Library, applied for a 2020 IMLS CARES (Institute of Museum and Library Services Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) discretionary grant. This grant would be used for Chromebooks that could be loaned to patrons, and iPads to be used by patrons in the library.

### Recreation

There are a number of recreation facilities in the Town of Mason. The ball fields on Sand Pit Road are used by softball league in addition to active ball players regularly. Playground equipment and a basketball court are also present at this same location. The major community playground is located at the Mason School in the center of Town.



Trails are important recreational facilities in Mason; besides the Railroad Trail, Mason’s Class VI roads serve as open space recreation facilities for motorized and non-motorized uses. There are trails on conservation lands, particularly ones suited for horseback riding on the Town’s Bronson Potter lands and on the Fifield Tree Farm Conservation Easement, which is private land where the public is allowed to use trails on foot and horseback. No ATVs are allowed on these trails, nor on town conservation lands. Mason area horseback riders have organized a club called MANE (Mason Area Neighborhood Equestrians) which holds trail events.



The Town of Mason provides recreation facilities and activities through a volunteer Recreation Committee, consisting of five members. The Committee organizes several programs including an Easter Egg Hunt, Memorial Day Festivities, a Halloween Party, and a wreath-making event. There are no full-time recreation employees.

Respondents to the master plan were not in favor of developing new recreational facilities.

73% of respondents were against creating a dog park in Town. When asked if the town should create/upgrade a recreation area on Pratt Pond, 38% of respondents answered “maybe,” 34% answered “No” and 24% answered “Yes.” Many residents reported that they liked the rail trail and conservation lands and would like to preserve them.

**Education**

The Town of Mason belongs to SAU# 89. The Town has one public school, the Mason Elementary School, which offers preschool, kindergarten, and grades 1-5. Previously, Mason students were enrolled in the Mascenic Regional School district for middle and high school. Since 2009, Mason students now attend Milford Middle School (grades 6-8) and Milford High School (grades 9-12).



In 2019, 83 students enrolled in Mason Elementary school, ranging from 9-14 students per grade, 28 students from Mason were enrolled in Milford Middle School, and 51 students were enrolled in Milford High School (2019 Mason Annual Report).

**Table IV-4. Number of Mason Students Per Grade**

Grade	# of Students
Preschool	12
Kindergarten	14
Grade 1	11
Grade 2	10
Grade 3	10
Grade 4	14
Grade 5	12
Grade 6	10
Grade 7	9
Grade 8	9
Grade 9	13
Grade 10	16
Grade 11	12
Grade 12	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>162</b>

Source: 2019 Mason Annual Report

**Table IV-5. Education Budgets by District in the NRPC Region**

School District	2019 adopted operating budget
Amherst	\$28,779,100
Brookline	\$9,676,491
Hollis	\$12,145,453
Hudson	\$53,596,093
Litchfield	\$22,849,638
Mason	\$3,179,718
Merrimack	\$77,654,036
Milford	\$41,819,674
Mont Vernon	\$5,160,557
Nashua	\$112,015,068
Pelham	\$30,993,844
Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative	\$12,598,674

Source: Annual Town Reports

**Table IV-6. Cost Per Pupil, 2018-2019**

Grade Level	Mason	Milford	State Average
Elementary	\$19,954	\$15,644	\$16,520
Middle School	-	\$15,937	\$15,490
High School	-	\$16,675	\$16,600

Source: NH Department of Education

\*Cost per Pupil is calculated by subtracting tuition and transportation from K-12 current operating expenditures, and then dividing by the average daily membership in attendance

### Future Needs and Plans

If the population of school-age children continues to grow, an additional 30 ft. by 30 ft. classroom may need to be added to the Mason Elementary School in the future.

## **IV Section C – Conclusions**

Mason would benefit from developing a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to help plan for town/department needs and purchases. Once a CIP has been established, the Town could implement impact fees for new developments, which could be beneficial in funding Town purchases. Both the library and the police department need new equipment which could be included on the CIP.

The Town could also benefit from establishing public Wi-Fi, a need identified by the Mason Public Library, especially as residents are dealing with the effects of COVID-19 where telecommuting and online learning have become the new normal.

Lack of storage space was also a common theme among many departments. The Town should research additional storage solutions that would be accessible to all Town departments.

## CHAPTER V ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



- Improvement of the road network connecting Mason to surrounding commercial hubs.
- Expansion of telecommunications infrastructure.

### V Section A – Introduction

*Development without growth?* *Economic development* is often used interchangeably with economic growth – that is, growth in output measured by gross domestic product (GDP) and related indicators. But growth does not necessarily translate to quality of life in a community like Mason. Therefore, the Master Plan must consider economic development goals that are broader than mere growth. Examples include the preservation of natural resources as well as intangibles like innovation, entrepreneurship, sense of community, and personal skill development. Improvements in outcomes related to these goals will lead to outcomes that benefit most, if not all, of Mason’s residents. The approach of this chapter is to examine trends in economic data over recent years, integrate input from residents related to these factors, and identify policies that the town should adopt to encourage future economic development. Bottom line up front.... the focus issues in this chapter are the future of broadband communications infrastructure and maintenance of road networks.

### Objectives and Planning Board Recommendations

The Planning Board recommends the following initiatives:

- Improvement of the road network connecting Mason to surrounding commercial hubs.
- Expansion of telecommunications infrastructure.

## V Section B - Overview of Indicators Affecting Economic Development

### Employment

Employment data often provides a useful indicator of a community’s economic health. Low unemployment spurs consumer and government spending and, in return, increases resources available for private and public infrastructure investments to promote economic development. Changes in Mason’s local unemployment rates over the past decade tend to mirror those of the U.S. labor market. Since the peak of the last U.S. economic recession in 2008 and up to the 2020 COVID 19 crisis, unemployment rates in Mason have steadily declined. The 2.2% unemployment rate recorded in 2017, shown in Table V-1, reflects the national downward trend. Local trends also indicate that a higher percentage of Mason’s working-age population have jobs compared to the state-wide average. Feedback from the 2020 Master Plan Survey shows that 77% of residents’ work location is outside of Mason (Table V-2). Looking ahead over the next 5-10 years, Mason’s Master Plan must factor its mobile (and virtual) based workforce and determine policies that will counter the effects of future business cycle downturns.

**Table V-1. Employment Status  
 (Population 16 Years and Over)**

Employment Status	Mason	Hillsborough County	New Hampshire
<b>Employed in Civilian Labor Force</b>	69.90%	66.50%	64.70%
<b>Unemployed in Civilian Labor Force</b>	2.20%	3.30%	3.00%
<b>Armed Forces</b>	0.00%	0.10%	0.20%
<b>Not in Labor Force</b>	27.90%	30.10%	32.10%

Source: American Community Survey, DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics, 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates

**Table V-2. Place of Employment**

Place of Employment	Percent of Respondents
<b>Work in Surrounding Town (NH)</b>	38%
<b>Work Out of State</b>	29%
<b>Work in Mason (Includes Stay at Home Parent)</b>	23%
<b>Telecommute</b>	10%

Source: 2020 Mason Master Plan Survey

### Occupational Trends

Mason’s occupational structure reflects the mix of residents employed in white and blue-collar professions as shown in Table V-3. This trend appears to be correlated to education levels depicted in Table V-4. For example, the percentage of residents employed in professional vocations is consistent with the percentage of the population that has attained a college-level degree. Similarly, the number of Mason’s local businesses listed in Table V-5 and their corresponding business sectors shown in Table V-6 reflect Mason’s rural character.

**Table V-3. Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over by Occupation**

Occupation	Mason	Hillsborough County	New Hampshire
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	43.30%	41.40%	40.30%
Service occupations	9.10%	15.10%	16.00%
Sales and office occupations	22.60%	24.50%	23.80%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	12.70%	7.90%	8.70%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	12.30%	11.10%	11.20%

Source: American Community Survey, DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics, 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates

**Table V-4. Educational Attainment in Mason, NH**

Education Level	Percent of Population (Over Age 25)
Less than 9th grade	1.4%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	2.1%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	32.4%
Some college, no degree	19.8%
Associate degree	9.4%
Bachelor's degree	23.2%
Graduate or professional degree	11.7%

Source: American Community Survey, S1501: Educational Attainment, 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates

**Table V-5. Sample of Employers in Mason, NH**

Employer	Product/ Service	Employees*
<b>Parker's Maple Barn and Restaurant</b>	Food, gifts	50
<b>Pickity Place</b>	Food, gifts, herb plants	25
<b>The Driving Range</b>	Food, entertainment	20
<b>Wolf Rock Construction</b>	General contracting	8
<b>A1 Services</b>	Auto repair, towing, rubbish removal	6
<b>Dream Barns</b>	Pole frame construction	4
<b>Cleveland Farm Supplies</b>	Cordwood, farm supplies	3
<b>Mason Hollow</b>	Garden Plants	2
<b>Barrett Hill Farm</b>	Meat, fruit, and vegetables	5
<b>Mason Brook Nursery</b>	Garden Plants	2
<b>Mason State Line Variety Store</b>	Groceries, novelties	2
<b>Hilltop Farm</b>	Meat products	2

Sources: NH Economic and Labor Market Information Data System, Mason Town Website and Communications, 2019  
 \*Numbers do not reflect seasonal variation.

**Table V-6. Local Businesses by Sector**

Sector	Number
<b>Agriculture</b>	6
<b>Artisans</b>	1
<b>Building and Home Services</b>	3
<b>Education</b>	2
<b>Health and Wellness</b>	1
<b>Media and Blogs</b>	1
<b>Professional Services (Financial, Legal, and Other)</b>	3
<b>Real Estate and Rentals</b>	2
<b>Food and Entertainment</b>	3
<b>Retail</b>	2
<b>Technology</b>	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>

Source: Town of Mason Website

### Where People Work and How They Get There

Mason’s working population is highly mobile compared to the rest of New Hampshire. Of currently employed residents who responded to the 2020 Master Plan Survey, 77% reported working outside of the Town’s geographic boundaries, including those who telecommute. Travel time to and from work is significantly higher than the state average as shown in Table V-7.

**Table V-7. Travel Time to Work**

	Mason	Hillsborough County	New Hampshire
<b>Less than 10 minutes</b>	5.8%	12.1%	14.7%
<b>10 to 14 minutes</b>	6.9%	14.3%	13.6%
<b>15 to 19 minutes</b>	4.2%	14.5%	13.8%
<b>20 to 24 minutes</b>	11.7%	13.5%	13.1%
<b>25 to 29 minutes</b>	3.8%	6.7%	6.7%
<b>30 to 34 minutes</b>	8.3%	11.9%	12.2%
<b>35 to 44 minutes</b>	19.0%	7.5%	7.7%
<b>45 to 59 minutes</b>	14.1%	8.6%	8.4%
<b>60 or more minutes</b>	26.2%	11.0%	9.8%
<b>Average travel time minutes</b>	44	28	27

Source: American Community Survey, S0801: Commuting, 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates

An automobile is the prime means of transportation and less than 10% of commuters carpool to and from work. It is no surprise that residents consider road maintenance a key service provided by the Town. Mason’s road network is also vital for the delivery of goods and services from commercial firms like Amazon, Walmart, and others to residents’ homes. According to the 2020 Master Plan Survey, 59% of respondents favor improving the Town’s Highway Department capabilities. Over 95% of respondents believe the Town should invest more (53%) or sustain (44%) the current budgetary resources devoted to maintaining paved and gravel roads. In addition, residents overwhelmingly approved warrants for Highway Department equipment and facilities at the 2019 and 2020 Annual Town Meetings. Chapter IX of the Master Plan addresses strategies to improve roads and other transportation issues that impact economic development in Mason.

### The Trend Toward Telecommuting

Telecommuting (also known as telework and e-commuting) has gained popularity among both public and private sector employees and their employers. More large businesses (40%) offered telecommuting in 2017 compared to 2010 as a strategy to increase employee morale and productivity. Many jobs in sales, customer service, marketing, and technology can be performed remotely via telecommuting.

Telework also has a positive impact on the environment. Less driving means less air pollution, notwithstanding the growing popularity of hybrid and electric vehicles. Locally, telecommuting appears to be well suited for Mason’s working residents, especially those who would otherwise spend an average of 90 minutes driving to and from work. However, Mason’s inadequate and unreliable communications infrastructure is an impediment to telecommuting. Only 10% of Mason’s residents reported on the 2020

Master Plan Survey that they routinely telecommute. Many respondents indicated that a lack of reliable broadband communications limits their ability to work from home. Employers expect their staff to be efficient in performing their job functions, whether they work in the office or at home.

Most recently, the COVID 19 crisis has forced businesses to reshape the way many services, including health care, are delivered to consumers. If social distancing becomes the norm in the US economy, telecommuting will become an essential means for conducting business operations. In any event, the future of telework depends heavily on improvements in Mason’s telecommunications infrastructure. 90 % of 2020 Master Plan Survey respondents strongly agree or agree that Mason should do more to expand telecommunications infrastructure. 61% support a plan to expand broadband service in Mason, even if it requires residents who 'opt-in' to pay a surcharge on their internet utility cost. One resident summed it up this way, “the internet access is a major concern for us.” The inability to effectively work from home and stream content is unreal in these times. It will only hurt this town as we continue to move forward.” Accordingly, Mason recently established the Broadband Commission to identify ways and means to increase the availability and reliability of data communications in the town. Such improvement is likely to yield positive trends in non-growth factors such as innovation, entrepreneurship, sense of community, and personal skills all are intangible building blocks in Mason’s economic development. Section C discusses the Commission’s work and its impact on future economic development in Mason.

## **V Section C – Impact of Telecommunications on Economic and Social Activity**

Perhaps the most dramatic development affecting economic development since Mason’s 2007 Master Plan update is the explosion of commercial transactions conducted electronically on the Internet. “Business to consumer” websites include major retailers like Amazon, Walmart, and Target. Distance learning platforms offered by public and private educational institutions also fit in this category. Video streaming and interactive gaming services also offer entertainment venues to Mason’s residents that were virtually non-existent ten years ago. More recently, “consumer to consumer” e-Commerce has gained popularity. Firms like Etsy and eBay facilitate sales between individual consumers by taking care of transaction details on their websites and charging a fee to one or both parties. Others like Facebook provide a platform for consumer to consumer sales without charging a fee. Social media has become a popular means for Mason’s residents to share information regarding the local availability of goods and services. As briefly mentioned above, the COVID 19 crisis has spurred novel uses of the Internet for activities ranging from religious services to health care.

E-commerce has tremendous potential to boost economic development in Mason over the next decade. In addition to promoting sales of goods and services, E-commerce provides opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship, and skill development. However, the future of E-commerce in Mason depends on a well-maintained road network. The conditions of paved and gravel roads greatly affect the efficiency of pickup and delivery services to businesses and residences that are spread over Mason’s 24 square miles. As noted in Section B, Mason’s road network is a vital link for the delivery of goods and services to

residents' homes. However, like telecommuting, lack of full access to modern telecommunications in Mason limits the potential of E-commerce to many of its residents.

Mason's Broadband Commission is examining solutions to expand the availability and quality of the Town's existing communications infrastructure. One solution comes from legislation known as SB 170, adopted in New Hampshire during 2018. SB 170 allows towns to issue bonds to build broadband infrastructure in unserved areas as defined by the Federal Communications Commission. Mason falls within the definition of an "unserved" area due to its lack of high-speed internet access. Other rural communities like Chesterfield have already passed local bond ordinances to allow public-private partnerships with service providers. 2020 Master Survey Plan results indicate wide support for the Commission. As one resident put it "We need high-speed internet access. It is becoming too much of a necessity. It marvels me that all the surrounding towns have cable and here Mason sits with none."

## **V Section D – Conclusion**

Because Mason's residents highly value its rural character, growth is not a high priority economic goal. Yet, many agree that there are other aspects of economic development that would benefit most of Mason's residents. Two major areas where Mason should focus its resources are the expansion of telecommunications infrastructure and improving the road network that connects Mason to its surrounding commercial hubs. Incremental improvement in these two areas will enhance the quality of life for the majority of the Town's residents without degrading the rural nature of the community.

## CHAPTER VI HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES



- Conduct a Historic Resources Survey.
- Create a map of all historical sites in Mason.
- Consider national historical designation for the Capt. B. Mann House, the boyhood home of Sam Wilson (Uncle Sam), Town Hall and Pickity Place.
- Ensure that historical information located in town – books, papers, artifacts, etc. – are stored using the best preservation and conservation practices, are properly catalogued and accounted for and are accessible to the public, where feasible.

### VI Section A - Introduction

The historic and cultural resources within the Town of Mason contribute significantly to the Town's quality of life and rural character. In the 2020 Master Plan Survey, almost a third of respondents felt that the "historic charm" was one of Mason's best features. This chapter illustrates the Town's history, summarizes the historic data gathered to date, provides recommendations for next steps and identifies resources to assist the Town in achieving its historic preservation goals. The Historic and Cultural Resources Chapter is an important component of the Master Plan because the information provided will assist the Town with both the inventory of existing resources and the identification of those features and resources worthy of preserving, maintaining or developing in the coming years.

#### Objectives and Planning Board Recommendations

The Planning Board Recommends the following initiatives:

- Conduct a Historic Resources Survey.
- Create a map of all historical sites in Mason.
- Consider National historical designation for the Capt. B. Mann House, the boyhood home of Sam Wilson (Uncle Sam), Town Hall, and Pickity Place.

- Ensure that historical information located in town – books, papers, artifacts, etc. – are stored using the best preservation and conservation practices, are properly catalogued and accounted for and are accessible to the public, where feasible.
- Create a permanent source of funding for the Historic Society to preserve, protect, display, and educate residents about Mason’s history.

### **What has been achieved?**

Since the 2007 Master Plan update, the following has been achieved:

- Three properties were listed on the NH State Register of Historical Places.

## **VI Section B - History of Mason**

### **Background**

The land area of Mason was originally known as Township Number One and had been given to New Hampshire upon its partition from the colony of Massachusetts under King George II in 1741. In 1768, the settlers of the Township petitioned Governor John Wentworth for a charter. Governor Wentworth chose the name Mason, likely in honor of Captain John Mason the founder of New Hampshire. The traditional industry in Mason was agriculture. A starch factory operated in Town for several years leading to the growth of potatoes by local farmers for sale to the factory. With the development of the railroad in 1850, the market for Mason farmers grew to the Boston region as well as other large cities and towns, with shipments of milk, eggs, and other products. Mason is also known for granite outcroppings that in the early years were used to build foundations for homes, barns, and public structures. In 1867 granite quarrying began on a large scale with the purchase of the Mason, or Glen, Quarry. The Fletcher Quarry became a settlement of nearly 200 people that worked in the quarry, producing granite for various buildings and monuments throughout the country.

A full history is available in Appendix A of this plan.

### **Today**

Technological innovation in the field of transportation had a lasting impact on Mason. Agriculture diminished over time and Mason residents began to commute to neighboring towns for work. This has turned Mason into a bedroom community for those who work in nearby towns. Mason’s community grew significantly in the 1980’s and has also seen significant growth since 2000. However, Mason still has many 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century homes that remain in use. The Town Offices are presently located in the Captain Benjamin Mann house on Darling Hill Road, built in 1773. Captain Mann was a commanding officer at the Battle of Bunker Hill. The Uncle Sam house, the boyhood home of Samuel Wilson, on Valley Road, was built in 1780. Several of Mason’s one room schoolhouses remain standing, and there is a very well-preserved Town Pound on Meetinghouse Hill Road. The 1840 Town Hall is still used for Town Meeting.

The continued growth of the community makes it even more important to identify important historical sites and make recommendations for their continued preservation.

## VI Section C – Current Preservation Efforts

### Town Hall

The Town Hall, located at the heart of the Village, was built in 1840 and is used for Town Meeting and other community events. The building, while highly valued by the townspeople, needs significant repair.

The restoration process began in March of 2018, when a warrant article for \$5,000 was passed at Town Meeting for an engineering study to be completed. An additional \$5,000 was raised through grants. The Historic Building Assessment was completed in January 2019. A call for resident volunteers went out in June of 2019 for the establishment of the Town Hall Restoration Committee. Committee members were appointed by the Board of Selectmen and conducted their first official meeting in January 2020.



The process of restoration has been divided into three phases. The first being the foundation and drainage, the second being the roof and the third being the interior. An engineering study for the drainage and foundation have been contracted to determine cost for phase one. Once costs have been determined fund raising will begin.

## VI Section D – Designation of Historic Sites

### National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation. Established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and administered by the National Park Service within the Department of the Interior, the Register lists properties of local, state and/or national significance in the areas of American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture. Resources may be nominated individually, or in groups, as districts or as multiple resource areas and must generally be older than 50 years.

The primary benefit of a National Register listing is the recognition it affords and the appreciation of local resources which is often stimulated through such recognition. The National Register also provides for review of effects which any federally funded, licensed or assisted project, most notably highway projects, might have on a property which is listed on the Register or eligible for listing. Register standing can also make a property eligible for certain federal tax benefits (investment tax credits) for the rehabilitation of income-producing buildings and the charitable deduction of donations or easements.

Contrary to many commonly held beliefs, National Register listing does not interfere with a property owner's right to alter, manage, dispose of or even demolish his property unless federal funds are involved. Nor does National Register listing require that an owner open his property to the public. A National Register district must have the approval of a majority of property owners in the district. For a single, privately owned property with one owner, the property will not be listed if the owner objects. National Register listing can be an important catalyst to change public perception and increase historic awareness but cannot prevent detrimental alterations or demolition. Yet, it remains an important first step toward historic awareness, respect, and protection. Statewide there are nearly eight hundred National Register listings. Thirty-two individual buildings or sites and five districts in the region are listed on the Register.

Currently Mason does not have any buildings listed in the National Register, but the Mann House and Town Hall would be good candidates.

### **New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places**

The State of New Hampshire Register of Historic Places program encourages the identification and protection of historical, architectural, archaeological and cultural resources. The program provides for listing in order to encourage awareness of the historical significance of the listed structure but does not mandate protection. Benefits of listing include public recognition, consideration and advocacy in the planning of local and state funded projects, qualification for state financial assistance for preservation projects (i.e., LCHIP) and special consideration or relief in the application of some access, building and safety code regulations. Listing takes place through application to the NH Division of Historic Resources. Mason has three properties listed in the State Register, shown in Table VI-1.

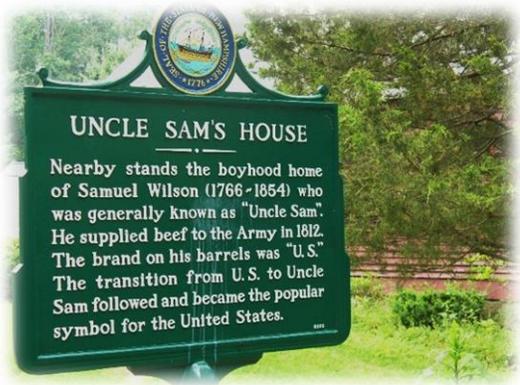
**Table VI-1. Mason Properties Listed in the NH State Register of Historic Places**

<b>Inventory #</b>	<b>Property Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Listing Date</b>
<b>MAS0002</b>	Jackson Road Railroad Trestle	Rail Trail over Jackson Road	July 30, 2012
<b>MAS0003</b>	Mason Town Hall	7 Meetinghouse Hill Road	July 30, 2018
<b>MAS0004</b>	District 5/Sunny Valley School House	834 Valley Road	April 29, 2019

Source: NH Division of Historical Resources, NH State Register of Historic Places

### New Hampshire Historical Highway Markers

Markers are an easy, inexpensive way to tell both residents and visitors about significant people, places and events in a community's past. The State Marker Program was originated by the New Hampshire Legislature in 1955. The aim of the program is the erection of appropriate markers designating events, people and places of historical significance to the State of New Hampshire. Communities who would like to be considered for a marker submit a request for consideration by the State Highway Department and Division of Historical Resources. There is generally no cost involved for a marker on a state-maintained road. There is a charge of \$1,100 for a marker on a private road. Statewide there are approximately 260 historical markers. Few have been erected in NRPC communities with only one in Amherst, one in Mason, two in Merrimack, one in Milford and one in Pelham. Hudson does not currently have any State markers. The state marker in Mason is located on NH 123 about .5 miles south of the Town Center in front of the boyhood home of Uncle Sam. This marker was placed in 1966.



The sole purpose of the marker program is recognition. The program is non-restrictive; it does not protect historic sites nor does it obligate owners in any way. The criteria which apply to marker selection are also much less stringent than those for getting a property listed on the National Register. A marker may be used to point out historic sites that have changed considerably over time or even to commemorate events for which there is no standing evidence, anything which has historical significance to a community. For the simple recognition of a historic property, the historical marker program may be a better tool than the National Register, more readily visible and much easier to use.

Mason should consider Historical Highway Markers for the Mann House and Town Hall.

## VI Section C – Resources

### Mason Historical Society

The Mason Historical Society is made up entirely of volunteers and is a major resource to the Town for historic preservation. The Historical Society was incorporated in 1968, and maintains a collection of Town Reports, Church records, School Reports, Cemetery records, and the Fruitdale Grange records. They also maintain extensive Genealogy records of Mason residents.

### Historic Resources Survey

Preservation through documentation is the most basic and essential of preservation strategies. There are several reasons for undertaking an historic resources survey. In addition to providing a permanent written and photographic record of a town's architecture, a good inventory is the foundation for other preservation tools. It can be of service to the historic district commission and can be used to prepare nominations for listing of historic structures in the National Register of Historic Places. Data gathered in

a survey may encourage a greater appreciation of historic structures and sites by local citizens. Historic resource assessments are also necessary for accomplishing environmental reviews required in projects receiving federal funding, such as highway projects. As the beginning of a comprehensive historic preservation strategy, information gathered should act as a firm foundation for future decision making, by identifying buildings suitable for and worthy of preservation and/or rehabilitation.

A complete historic resources survey can help a community weigh proposed actions more carefully, so that it does not inadvertently expend its long-term assets in realizing immediate objectives.

### **Historic District Regulations**

In 1976 The Town of Mason voted to adopt a Preservation District to preserve and protect the historical heritage of buildings and lands in the district. The ordinance requires that the existing colonial or other architectural treatment of the district be maintained in any alterations or improvements to existing buildings or in the construction of new buildings. In the 2020 Master plan survey, 59% of respondents felt that the Historic Preservation District is an important part of Mason’s zoning and should be continued. In keeping with these efforts, the Town could consider is the adoption of a Local Historic District.

Historic districting can be an effective technique for protecting the character of an area. Unlike zoning which focuses on land use, an historic district emphasizes exterior appearance and setting. Yet unlike site plan review, historic districts allow officials to exercise authority over construction and alteration of single-family dwellings, however, buildings alone need not comprise a district. Effective district preservation should involve streetscapes, landscapes, contributing views and viewsheds as well as buildings. It should be noted that historic districting is not an appropriate method for protecting all historical resources in an area, especially where properties are widely scattered. Historic districting also may not be the most effective means of protecting a significant land area, but districting can be effectively combined with other techniques.

### **Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit**

The Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HTC) was formally introduced by Congress in 1979. Previously, there was a 10% federal tax credit for non-residential buildings in service prior to 1936 and a 20% federal tax credit for structures that the National Park Service has deemed as historic. New Tax Legislation signed at the end of 2017 (Public Law No: 115-97) has eliminated the 10% credit.

To qualify for the 20% tax credit, the building must be a certified historic structure per the National Park Service. The structure must be used for a business or other income-producing purpose, and a substantial amount of the tax credit must be spent on rehabilitation of the building.

The investment tax credits provide some incentive to rehabilitate older buildings instead of undertaking new construction. Larger structures with income-producing potential could benefit from the use of the credits, which would also ensure the sympathetic rehabilitation of the buildings.

### **Certified Local Government (CLG) Program**

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 provides for matching grants-in-aid to the states from the Historic Preservation Fund for historic preservation programs and projects. Federal law requires that at least ten percent of each state's Historic Preservation Fund grant be designated for transfer to eligible local governments that apply for the money. A local government can participate in the program once the State Preservation Office certifies that the community has established its own historic preservation commission, district and a program meeting certain federal and state standards. Matching grants are made each year to certified local governments for survey and planning projects, including preparation of National Register nominations and historic resource surveys. Currently, the CLG program represents the only source of state funds available for communities interested in preservation planning. In the Nashua Region, the only communities designated as CLGs are the City of Nashua and the Towns of Amherst and Hollis.

## CHAPTER VII NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION



- Conserve priority lands as opportunities arise, especially quality wildlife habitat and areas abutting conserved lands.
- Improve Mason’s Wetlands Protection Ordinance to include 100-foot buffer around all wetlands.
- Develop and maintain a town-wide trail system. Recently formed Trails Committee is examining the existing trail system and establishing priorities for trail work.
- Increase public understanding about how water quality can be affected by land use, by providing information for homeowners on well protection, and by advising about proposals before local land use boards.

### VII Section A – Introduction

Introduction. The 2020 Master Plan survey results showed that a large majority of Mason’s residents value its rural character, it’s large tracts of open spaces, and the opportunity to live in a town that cares about its natural beauty. The purpose and mission of the Conservation Commission is to protect these community natural resources that sustain a (special sense of community) healthy environment that benefits all of Mason’s residents. The following sections describe the Commission’s priority objectives for improving Mason’s precious natural resources and strategies for achieving those objectives.

#### Objectives and Planning Board Recommendations

The Planning Board and Conservation Commission recommend the following initiatives:

- Conserve priority lands, especially quality wildlife habitat and areas abutting conserved lands. 57% of Master Plan survey respondents agreed that Mason needs to conserve more undeveloped lands and wildlife habitat.
- Improve Mason’s Wetlands Protection Ordinance to include buffers.
- Develop and maintain a town-wide trail system.
- Increase public understanding about how water quality can be affected by land use by providing information for homeowners on well protection, and by advising about proposals before local land use boards.

### What has been achieved?

See Appendix B.

## VII Section B – Objectives for Conservation

The following are the key objectives of the Conservation Commission currently.

- **Protect important natural resource lands. Setting particular parcels as priorities is generally not practical, since it's unknown when opportunities may arise. For any conservation opportunity, the land should include some of the following key qualities:**
  - Open space lands abutting existing conservation lands, and large contiguous tracts of forests, especially on the east side of Mason.
  - Wildlife corridors, and Highest Ranked habitats mapped in NH 2015 Wildlife Action Plan.
  - Grasslands for their scenic quality, agricultural potential, and diversity of habitat.
  - Aquifers, riparian buffers and stream connectivity along Mason's streams and wetlands. Aquifers are underground geologic formations that store and transmit groundwater in sufficient quantities to support water supply wells. Aquifers can be either fractures in bedrock, or deep sand and gravel deposits. Both kinds of aquifers are found in Mason, but only sand and gravel aquifers are mapped and protected through Mason's Aquifer Protection Bylaw. Riparian buffers are described under A. Increase Wetlands Protection.
  
- **Encourage outdoor recreation by creating a town-wide trail system** that connects Mason Railroad Trail with existing trails on conservation lands and town Class VI roads. As trails are connected, **produce a Trails Map for Mason.**
  
- **Develop a policy on the conversion of Class VI roads to Class V that carefully weighs long-term costs and benefits to the town.** This policy objective applies to both protecting natural resource lands and to creating a town-wide trail system. Many Class VI roads serve as important trail connectors and cut through large blocks of open space integral to Mason's rural character.
  
- **Increase public understanding about land use issues and how water quality and quantity can be affected by land use.**

## VII Section C – Recommendations for Achieving Conservation Objectives

### Protect Important Natural Resource Lands

#### Encourage Voluntary Land Conservation.

**The Commission should establish a plan for contacting and consulting with owners of lands in conservation priority areas.** Voluntary land conservation with willing landowners through conservation easements, donation, or public acquisition offers the best option for permanent land protection, wherever possible. The Conservation Commission should encourage the use of conservation easements to protect large tracts of open space while keeping it in private hands, advocating for sustainable forestry as a long-term land use for large parcels. The Commission should establish a plan for contacting and consulting with owners of lands in conservation priority areas.

### Secure Funding for Land Conservation

- Voluntary land conservation depends on funding for the purchase of land or easements. Even when land or easements are donated, there are transaction costs.
  
  - Matching funds for purchase of easements or land are available on a competitive basis through New Hampshire's Land and Community Heritage Program (LCHIP), the Moose Plate program, the Land & Water Conservation Fund, and NH DES Source Water Protection and Aquatic Resource Mitigation programs. These grants usually require a local match.
- 
- The Town should continue to invest in its Conservation Fund through Current Use Change Tax payments.
  
  - Selective timber harvesting on Town conservation lands could be done as appropriate, with assistance of the Town Forester. Most survey respondents felt that forestry should be allowed on conservation land. The Commission should ask Mason's Town Forester to draw up a Forest Management Plan for all appropriate town conservation lands.
  
  - As a last resort when needed for priority projects, a special appropriation such as a bond could be voted on at Town Meeting.

### Land Use Planning

If a Boston/Nashua/Manchester rail connection is put in, it is probable that there will be increased development pressure in Mason, particularly in the northern parts of town. In this eventuality, factoring more natural resource protection into Mason's zoning and regulations would be wise since every residence and business in Mason depends on its own land for water supply and sewage disposal.

- *Subdivision Open Space Designation* - Mason's subdivision regulations now allow for 15% of a parcel that is proposed for major subdivision (3 or more lots) to be designated by the Planning Board as permanent open space. Objective A lists the types of land appropriate for protection through subdivision open space designation. Mason Planning Board is encouraged to use Mason's 2019 Conservation Plan for guidance when specifying open space in major subdivisions.

- *Subdivision Regulation* - The Planning Board can take measures to protect water resources by including provisions in its site plan and subdivision review regulations for on-site stormwater infiltration and storage of increased runoff caused by increased impervious surfaces (roofs, driveways, roadways) from development. Water protection measures like stream crossing standards and limited impact development (LID) techniques can also be adopted through subdivision regulations, as can provisions to control stormwater runoff during construction. The Conservation Commission should draft proposed changes to the Mason Land Use and Regulations for Planning Board consideration during the application review process.
  
- *Review of Land Use Proposals* - When land use proposals are presented to the Planning Board and Zoning Board, the Conservation Commission should provide input about any potential effects on natural resources, especially water quality and wetlands. Mason's natural resources have benefited from a good relationship between the Commission and the Boards. Keeping the Commission in the loop about upcoming hearings is vital.
  
- *Conservation Subdivision* - Mason's 2007 Master Plan Update recommends Conservation Subdivision as a land use tool in its Water Resources Management Plan section. (page 86) Conservation Subdivision reserves parts of the subdivided property to be permanently protected from development, while the property's allowed zoning density remains unchanged. Mason's 2019 Conservation Plan provides the basis for determining the land to reserve. Wildlife corridors, riparian buffers, unfragmented forests, prime farmland soils, and recreational trail connections can be all protected through this form of subdivision. Conservation Subdivision would need to be adopted through a zoning bylaw.

**Increase Wetlands Protection by improving Mason's Wetlands Protection Ordinance to include riparian buffers and stream connectivity guidelines**

The Wetlands Protection Ordinance could be improved by including riparian buffers and stream connectivity guidelines. Riparian buffers are naturally vegetated areas next to streams, ponds, and wetlands that protect water quality by filtering runoff from nearby land uses. Riparian buffers stabilize stream banks and provide habitat for wildlife. Riparian buffers are usually forested, helping to shade streams and protect water bodies from the impact of adjacent land uses.

Riparian buffers provide the following natural services:

- Water quality protection by filtering runoff through natural vegetation. One hundred feet is the recommended buffer width for adequate filtration.
- Flood hazard mitigation by storing floodwaters and enabling them to be released gradually, protecting downstream properties.
- Wildlife habitat and corridors for connecting habitats, so wildlife can find food and shelter without disturbing human habitats. Fish need shady streambanks for cool water in summer. Three hundred feet is the recommended buffer width for wildlife.

These natural services of riparian buffers are becoming even more important in this era of climate change, as heavy storms become more frequent. Streams and wetlands must receive and carry away greater volumes of water. Riparian buffers are key to reducing flood damages.



Continuous stream connectivity, especially along all Mason's major brooks, is vital to enable aquatic life to travel freely along the stream, and to protect public safety by making road crossings that retain a stream's natural bed. When culverts are under-sized, road crossings can be choke points that get clogged, leading to washouts from stormwaters. Road design for adequate stream connectivity is essential given the increasing intensity of storms. Stream crossing design guidelines for the 21<sup>st</sup> century can be on the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Website<sup>1</sup>.

**The Conservation Commission would like to propose future Wetlands Protection revisions for the Planning Board to consider.** The town's present Ordinance has no riparian buffers. It needs amending to include buffers and stream connectivity guidelines for proposed stream crossings. A 50-foot buffer would be the minimum recommended. This is the median width found for NH town Wetlands Ordinances in a 2014 analysis done by Dartmouth's Rockefeller Center for Public Policy. A 100-foot buffer provides better wetlands protection. At least nineteen New Hampshire towns have buffers of 100 feet or more. An amended ordinance could also contain reference to Best Management Practices (BMPs) for land uses and activities that pose a potential threat to water resources. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) provides information on BMPS.

The Master Plan survey indicated significant support for wetlands protection through improved regulations. Half the respondents agreed that wetlands protection should be increased, while only one-fifth were opposed.

### **Outdoor Recreation**

Mason's chief open space recreation facilities are our town's trails. A Trails Committee is now established and working with the Conservation Commission and Mason trail users to create, maintain, and promote a town-wide trail network for hikers and snowshoers, horseback riders, cross-country skiers, and snowmobilers.

Once the network is connected, a Trails Map for Mason should be produced. The spine of Mason's trail system is the Railroad Trail, whose 6.7 miles cross the entire town from north to south. The town's old Class 6 roads and trails on public lands and private conservation lands that are open to the public make

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<sup>1</sup> [www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wetlands/streams\\_crossings.htm](http://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wetlands/streams_crossings.htm)

an extensive network for exploring Mason's countryside, enabling people to get out and enjoy our town's natural beauty.

Hunting and fishing are popular forms of recreation which depend on Mason's unfragmented open spaces and water quality. Conservation of large blocks of open space and riparian buffers is a vital means to sustain opportunities for hunting and fishing.

#### **Class VI Roads**

The Planning Board and Conservation Commission could co-ordinate to develop a policy to guide the Select Board when making decisions on the conversion of Class VI roads to Class V. A Class VI roads policy should encourage their retention as trail connectors while discouraging the fragmentation of wildlife habitat that could result from their conversion to Class V roads. Such a policy could save the town from an increasing burden of road maintenance costs. Many roads became Class VI due to the difficulty of maintaining them. Mason has sufficient frontage on existing Class V roads to accommodate nearly a doubling in development (2007 Master Plan update).

#### **Increase Public Understanding About Land Use Issues**

The Conservation Commission should publicize information for homeowners about private well protection, stormwater runoff control, landscaping with native plants, and Best Management Practices (BMPs) to prevent fuel storage and re-fueling of equipment from polluting surface and groundwater. Impervious surfaces in developed areas, such as roofs and driveways, accelerate storm runoff and cause erosion and sediment to pollute nearby water bodies. Landscaping such as rain gardens can be designed to allow runoff to infiltrate into the ground, reducing stormwater erosion. Sources of information on Best Management Practices are available at NH Department of Environmental Services website.

The Conservation Commission should do outreach to farmland and forestland owners about the natural resource qualities of their land and offer information on enhancing wildlife habitat through farm and forest management.

The Conservation Commission should disseminate information about controlling invasive plants and should involve schools in conservation activities. All conservation information should be made available on the town website under the Conservation Commission documents section. Other social media are important means of communication as well.

## CHAPTER VIII ENERGY

- Encourage energy efficiency savings in municipal, residential, and commercial building construction, operation, and maintenance wherever possible.
- Encourage renewable energy production at homes and businesses.
- Increase public awareness of ways to reduce energy use in homes, businesses, and public facilities.
- Identify land use policies that can reduce energy consumption while fitting within the Master Plan goals for the town.

### VIII Section A - Introduction

Mason Energy Commission (MEC) was established in 2018. By statute, MEC's duties are to research municipal energy use and cost; work with local, regional, state and federal organizations, schools and municipal departments to assess energy inefficiencies and recommend sustainable practices such as energy conservation, energy efficiency, energy generation, and zoning practices; and promote community-wide energy efficiency practices through education and outreach.

MEC's goal is to encourage sustainable energy use by the town and its residents through increasing energy efficiency savings and utilization of renewable energy sources.

"Sustainable" means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Bruntland Report for the World Commission on Environment and Development, 1992).

#### Energy Commission Objectives and Recommendations

The Energy Commission has the following objectives and priorities:

- Encourage energy efficiency savings in municipal, residential, and commercial building construction, operation, and maintenance wherever possible.
- Encourage renewable energy production at homes and businesses.
- Increase public awareness of ways to reduce energy use in homes, businesses, and public facilities.
- Identify land use policies that can reduce energy consumption while fitting within the Master Plan goals for the town.
- Encourage improvement of local transportation efficiency.
- Increase resilience of electric supply through encouraging renewable energy micro-grids such as community solar.

- Publicize existing and new renewable energy installations through sponsoring open houses and posting profiles of their performance on town website and MEC library (on <http://www.mason-nh.org/> website).
- Increase work from home options, reducing commuting energy consumption, through improved internet speed and access.
- Consider energy efficiency in the acquisition, operation, and maintenance of municipal vehicles.

### What Has Been Accomplished?

Since being established in 2018, the Energy Commission has accomplished the following:

#### Mason Municipal Energy Use

- Energy Audit for Mann House (funded by Eversource)
- Lighting study for town buildings (funded by Eversource)
- Municipal energy use inventory and tracking

#### Community outreach

- Button Up energy efficiency workshop in conjunction with MEC-hosted community supper
- Working relationships with NHSaves, Clean Energy NH, Monadnock Sustainability Network, Hillsborough Area Renewable Energy Initiative, and Temple Energy Committee

## VIII Section B – Recommendations and Strategies for Achieving the Energy Objectives

### Energy Efficiency Savings

**Time frame: ongoing to 5 years**

1. Encourage implementation of energy audits for all municipal buildings, to increase energy conservation and money savings through low cost investment in energy efficiency measures.
2. Research and encourage town adoption of electricity supply aggregation for all residents, with 100% renewable supply option (community power).
3. Adopt more energy efficient building code for new construction, such as 2012 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC. Durham has adopted this)
4. Incorporate energy efficiency in new construction, renovation, and maintenance of all municipal buildings.
5. Track municipal energy use through EPA’s Portfolio Manager to measure the benefits of energy efficiency improvements.

**Recommendation 1. Energy audits** have been completed for weatherizing the Mann House and Library (done by Margaret Dillon of SEEDS 12/2018) and for lighting (done by Carl Edin of EMC, 5/2019) at all qualifying town buildings (Mann House and Library, Police Dept, Fire Dept, Highway Dept). Both these Eversource funded audits included 50% rebates for investments in energy efficiency (air-sealing, insulation, new lighting).

The projected cost of implementing the Mann House audit was \$17,060 to insulate and seal the basement walls, air sealing and upgrading insulation levels at all three ceiling planes, general weather-stripping and air sealing, and insulating the walls of the original structure, the 50% Eversource rebate through their Municipal Energy Efficiency Program would have reduced the town's investment to \$8,530. However, due to moisture issues in the Mann House basement, the Select Board decided not to implement the audit until these issues are addressed.

The projected cost of the lighting proposal was \$22,842. After applying Eversource rebates, the projected town cost would have been \$12,341 for new LED bulbs, fixtures, and streetlights.

At this time, the lighting proposal is going through the Eversource process and is expected to be implemented in 2020, at least in part.

**Recommendation 2. Community power**, enacted into law in New Hampshire on October 1, 2019, allows towns in New Hampshire to procure and provide electricity for its residents and businesses, including, but not limited to, demand side management, conservation, meter reading, and other related services and operation of energy efficiency and clean energy districts. Electric distribution utilities continue to deliver electricity over their poles and wires, but the town can choose to construct, for example, a renewable energy project to be the source of power for the town. It is anticipated that local choice can lower costs and help to modernize New Hampshire's energy system. In addition, there could be savings from lower energy cost and/or additional revenue from selling power back into the grid. Services offered through community power can be on an opt-in basis. Customers opting out will remain on default service. Community power can be provided by a single municipality or county, or by a group of such entities operating jointly.

**Recommendation 3. Building code update** to increase energy efficiency could be done in co-operation with the Planning Board as they update subdivision regulations.

**Recommendation 4. Town Hall** may be the next major municipal construction project, now in the process of engineering studies for drainage and structural issues. Members of MEC should be involved in the construction planning to advocate for energy efficiency measures.

**Recommendation 5. Data on municipal energy use** has been gathered by MEC members. EPA's Portfolio Manager can be used to compare Mason's buildings' energy use with similar sized buildings. The data will highlight areas for efficiency improvements. For energy usage from 2013 to 2018, the town's average energy expenses of \$66,518 are made up of 58% for vehicle fuels, 25% for building heat, and 17% for electricity. For 2019 the energy usage is similar and broken down in Table VIII-1.

**Table VIII-1. Energy/Fuel Prices**

Energy/Fuel Type	Price
Electricity	48,432 kwh / \$11,626
Heating Propane	5,996 gal / \$11,876
Heating Fuel Oil	2,644 gal / \$6,573
Vehicle Gasoline	2,609 gal / \$10,475
Vehicle Diesel	7,575 gal / \$21,650

These data strongly indicate that the town would find the most improvement in energy efficiency and subsequent savings by looking into municipal vehicle energy use, such as how to boost fuel efficiency in operations, and to find appropriately powered vehicles for the jobs that need doing.

### Renewable Energy Production

**Time frame: 10 years**

1. Increase resilience of electric supply through encouraging renewable energy micro-grids such as community solar.
2. Research feasibility for municipal micro-grid; if feasible, investigate possible sites. Research feasibility of town generating its own power, in part or full, using renewable energy sources, i.e. solar PV farms and wind. Revenue return on investment, design, cost and implementation to be assessed.

**Recommendation 1. Encourage renewable energy micro-grids** such as community solar. Because Mason is largely forested, many residences are sited unfavorably for solar access without extensive land clearing. Community solar arrays offer a way for a group of people to band together to invest in solar power with reduced upfront costs and economies of scale. Optimally sited large buildings such as schools, churches and other sizable structures, as well as fields with southern exposures, make ideal places to host community solar arrays.

Community solar projects provide solar hosts with lower priced power while investors receive benefits of group net metering. Anyone who is able can invest in a community solar system, as long as they are electric utility customers of the same distribution system as the host site. Mason zoning ordinance and regulations should accommodate community solar, due to the climate protection benefits of these clean energy projects.

**Recommendation 2. Research feasibility for municipal micro-grid.** A community solar project to provide power for municipal buildings may not be cost effective at this time, but costs of photovoltaic arrays and storage continue to drop. Such a project may become feasible within the decade. A MEC member has estimated that a solar array of less than a tenth of an acre in size could match the annual

municipal electric usage, which is around 50,000 kilowatt hours/year.

## Public Awareness

### Time frame: ongoing

1. Publicize existing and new renewable energy installations through sponsoring open houses and posting profiles of their performance on the Town and MEC Library website.
2. Publicize opportunities for energy efficiency financing through supplier rebates, on-bill financing, and other sources such as tax credits.
3. Publicize energy efficiency information and education programs, such as “Button Up NH” and an “Energy Considerations Checklist” to help contractors and home owners.
4. Work with schools to increase students’ understanding of energy conservation and sustainable energy sources.

**Recommendation 1. Publicizing local renewable energy installations** can show that renewables are an achievable energy source for people in Mason. The sun would be the most appropriate renewable energy source for Mason. Due to our town’s irregular terrain, wind may work only in limited areas. “Open houses” at existing solar installations would enable people to learn directly about this technology. MEC sponsorship of such events would fulfill the goal of encouraging sustainable energy use by town residents.

**Recommendation 2. Energy efficiency financing** is available through NHSaves, sponsored by the utilities operating in NH. Eversource is the utility (electricity distributor) for Mason. NHSaves offers rebates and incentives for homes, towns, and businesses to install energy efficiency measures such as lighting, energy star appliances, heating systems and weatherization. Utilities offer low-interest (2% APR in 2019) loans to pay for these measures. For loans of less than \$2,000, on-bill financing can be a way to pay for efficiency measures. This means that electric bills remain the same as before the measures were installed, and the value of the saved electricity is used to pay off the loan over 2 years. NHSaves.com website gives up-to-date information on this.

**Recommendation 3. Energy efficiency information and education programs** help homeowners, businesses and towns learn how to save energy. MEC hosted a well-attended “Button Up NH” program for homeowners sponsored by NHSaves, presented in conjunction with the MEC-hosted September 2019 Community Supper. This program could be repeated in a few years as technology advances. Information such as an “Energy Considerations Checklist” to help contractors and homeowners focus on energy efficiency for new projects can be publicized by MEC on town websites and at local events.

**Recommendation 4. School administrators and teachers are key people** to spread awareness of energy conservation and sustainability. MEC plans to work with them at Mason Elementary and upper grades in Milford to introduce clean energy concepts using teaching kits from Vermont Environmental Education Program. Their website at <VEEP.org> offers curriculum.

## Land Use Policies

### Time frame: ongoing to 5 years

1. Assure that zoning/subdivision regulations are amenable to renewable energy development.
2. Assure that zoning continues to allow for home businesses in order to reduce travel.
3. Ensure that developers and contractors site and build the most energy efficient new construction.

**Recommendation 1. Renewable energy development** – work with Mason Planning Board to integrate renewable energy access (e.g. ability of sunlight to reach a solar energy system) considerations into regulations for new subdivisions, in accordance with RSA 672:1: III-a —

III-a. Proper regulations encourage energy efficient patterns of development, the use of solar energy, including adequate access to direct sunlight for solar energy uses, and the use of other renewable forms of energy, and energy conservation. Therefore, the installation of solar, wind, or other renewable energy systems or the building of structures that facilitate the collection of renewable energy shall not be unreasonably limited by use of municipal zoning powers or by the unreasonable interpretation of such powers except where necessary to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

**Recommendation 2. Home businesses reduce the need to commute**, and they offer local services, thus reducing overall transportation energy use. Mason zoning allows home businesses to have one non-family employee, increasing the viability of small enterprises while keeping them small. Because of its energy saving potential, MEC supports the continuance of this zoning provision (Article V: A, 3) allowing for home businesses in all zones of the town.

**Recommendation 3. Encourage the town to adopt Building Code and Site Plan Review regulations** that incorporate the highest standards for energy efficiency and consideration of renewable energy sources, both in the siting and the construction of buildings.

## Transportation

### Time frame: ongoing to 5 – 10 years

1. Reduce people's need to commute to work through improved internet speed and access.
2. Save fuel and reduce auto use by establishing a park and ride facility convenient for Mason commuters. Enable car-pooling through an internet app so commuters can make connections.
3. Consider energy efficiency in the acquisition, operation, and maintenance of municipal vehicles.
4. Reduce municipal fuel use, paving, and wear on highway maintenance vehicles by discouraging the upgrade of Class VI roads to Class V. Class VI roads are not town-maintained.

**Recommendation 1. High speed internet access** is lacking across large areas of Mason. More people could save energy by working at home if high speed internet were widely available. A Mason broadband committee is presently working on this; MEC should support their efforts.

**Recommendation 2. Park and ride facilities** in Mason would be useful to encourage car-pooling. Meeting and leaving vehicles at such a facility would eliminate the need to drive Mason’s rough roads to pick up ride-sharers. It could also be helpful if a Manchester to Boston rail connection is established with a Nashua stop. Such a rail connection may over time increase residential development pressure in Mason, although towns closer to Nashua would feel this effect sooner.

To enable carpooling, the NH Dept of Transportation website has a section dedicated to helping commuters find compatible carpoolers: <https://www.nh.gov/dot/programs/rideshare/> NH Rideshare is a free service. Commuters who register with the site are provided with a list of potential ride sharers. It is up to the registrant to contact these people and work out an agreeable arrangement.

**Recommendation 3. Vehicle efficiency** needs to be a consideration in the acquisition, operation, and maintenance of municipal vehicles. New Hampshire’s Climate Action Plan recommends that our state strive to achieve long-term reductions in greenhouse gas emissions of 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. The Climate Change Policy Task Force also recommends 67 specific actions to achieve climate goals, one of which is:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings, electric generation, and transportation (New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services).

Transportation is now the single largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions nationwide (epa.gov). This holds true in terms of municipal energy use as well. In 2019, the town of Mason’s municipal vehicles produced 185,774 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions, according to the amount of gasoline and diesel used by the town (listed on page 4 Objective A Recommendation 5).

Research and development of efficient municipal vehicles is making rapid progress, including police cruisers, buses, and pick-up trucks. Where feasible, replacing old/poor performing municipal vehicles with plug-in vehicles would cut carbon dioxide emissions in half, resulting in increased efficiency and decreased emissions.

The Electrification Coalition (EC), a nationwide group dedicated to electrifying the U.S. transportation sector collaborates with numerous US cities to leverage their buying power through a one-stop platform ([DriveEVFleets.org](http://DriveEVFleets.org)) to make cost-efficient EV purchasing decisions. The town of Mason could investigate using this platform. In future it may be possible to offset electric cost of plug-in vehicles by installing a solar array at the Mason Highway Complex, making the municipal vehicles more efficient.

## CHAPTER IX TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION



- The Planning Board strongly encourages that the Town work to revive the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).
- The Town should consider increasing the budget for maintaining paved roads
- Mason should consider forming a permanent road advisory committee to study the Town’s roads and make recommendations on changes to the current road policies including, but not limited to, paving, gravel road treatment (i.e. dust control) and signage.
- The Conservation Commission encourages that the Town should consider energy efficiency and reduction in the use of fossil fuels in favor of renewable sources regarding new transportation/maintenance purchases.

### IX Section A - Introduction

The intent of Traffic and Transportation chapter is to provide information to assist the Town of Mason in assessing how growth and transportation patterns will impact travel demands, as well as the ability of the existing local system and infrastructure to accommodate those demands. This chapter includes an inventory of the existing highway network in the Town, including highway classification, traffic volumes, roadway conditions, crash statistics and travel patterns. Issues related to transportation and mobility are discussed, including highway policy, travel demand, and alternative modes of transportation. Recommendations to improve the highway network, and mobility in general, are also provided.

### Objectives and Planning Board Recommendations

The Planning Board recommends the following initiatives:

- The Town of Mason should work to maintain a “share the roadway” policy so that pedestrians and bicyclists are able to travel safely alongside vehicles on the roadways. This policy shall also apply to horseback riders. In addition, Mason should promote public education for drivers regarding ‘horse etiquette’ to ensure safe interactions between horses, riders, and vehicle operators on the road.

- The Town of Mason should consider designating space for a commuter parking area to serve people that would like to carpool. A survey could be conducted to determine commute patterns, and carpool parking locations could then be designated along popular routes. The Town should also consider setting up an online carpool information exchange.
- The Planning Board strongly encourages that the Town work to revive the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), making sure to allot necessary funds to support the Highway Department and Highway Department projects.
- The Town should consider developing policy/regulation, with assistance from the Planning Board and Conservation Commission, to discourage the upgrade of Class VI roads to Class V. This could save the Town from an increasing burned of road maintenance costs and preserve green space.
- The Conservation Commission encourages that the Town should consider energy efficiency and reduction in the use of fossil fuels in favor of renewable sources regarding new transportation/maintenance purchases.
- Mason should consider forming a permanent road advisory committee to study the Town's roads and make recommendations on changes to the current road policies including, but not limited to, paving, gravel road treatment (i.e. dust control) and signage.
- The Town should consider increasing the budget for maintaining paved roads.

### **What has been achieved?**

Since the 2007 Master Plan was adopted, the Town has not experienced any drastic transportation-related changes but instead has sustained the existing road system and rural/agricultural character by continuing to enforce the Mason Land Use Regulations.

### **What has changed?**

The 2019 Master Plan Transportation Chapter update features the following updates since the 2007 chapter:

- Update of objectives and planning board recommendations
- Update of road classifications
- Update of data in all tables and figures
- Incorporation of the change of school districts from the Mascenic Regional School District in New Ipswich to the Milford School District
- Addition of gravel/dirt roads section

## IX Section B - Road Classifications

### State Classification

The State-aid classification system was developed by the state of New Hampshire, as defined by RSA 229 – 231, to determine responsibility for construction, reconstruction and maintenance as well as eligibility for use of state aid funds. The following is a description of the state-aid system:

- Class I, Primary State Highway System, consists of all existing or proposed highways on the primary state highway system, excepting all portions of such highways within the compact sections of towns and cities, provided that the portions of turnpikes and interstate highways within the compact sections of those cities are Class I highways.
- Class II, Secondary State-Highway System, consists of all existing or proposed highways on the secondary state highway system, excepting portions of such highways within the compact sections of towns and cities. All sections improved to the satisfaction of the Commissioner are maintained and reconstructed by the State. All unimproved sections, where no state and local funds have been expended, must be maintained by the Town or city in which they are located until improved to the satisfaction of the Highway Commissioner. All bridges improved to state standards with state-aid bridge funds are maintained by the State. All other bridges shall be maintained by the city or town until such improvement is made.
- Class III, Recreational Roads, consist of all such roads leading to, and within state reservations designated by the Legislature. The NH DOT assumes full control of reconstruction and maintenance of such roads.
- Class IV Highways, consist of all highways within the compact sections of cities and towns listed in RSA 229:5, V. The compact section of any such city or town shall be the territory within such city or town where the frontage on any highway, in the opinion of the Highway Commissioner, is mainly occupied by dwellings or buildings in which people live or business is conducted, throughout the year. No highway reclassification from Class I or II to Class IV shall take effect until all rehabilitation needed to return the highway surface to reputable condition has been completed by the State.
- Class V, Rural Highways, consist of all other traveled highways, which the town or city has the duty to maintain regularly.
- Class VI, Un-maintained Highways, consist of all other existing public ways, including highways subject to gates and bars, and highways not maintained in suitable condition for travel for five years or more.

The state aid classification road mileage in Mason is summarized in Table 1 and Map 1. There are Class I, II, V and VI type roads in the Town. There are no roads in Mason classified by the state as Class I

(primary state highway), Class III (recreational roads), or Class IV (compact section). Approximately, 16.871 of Class V roads are paved, and 22.771 of Class V roads are unpaved.

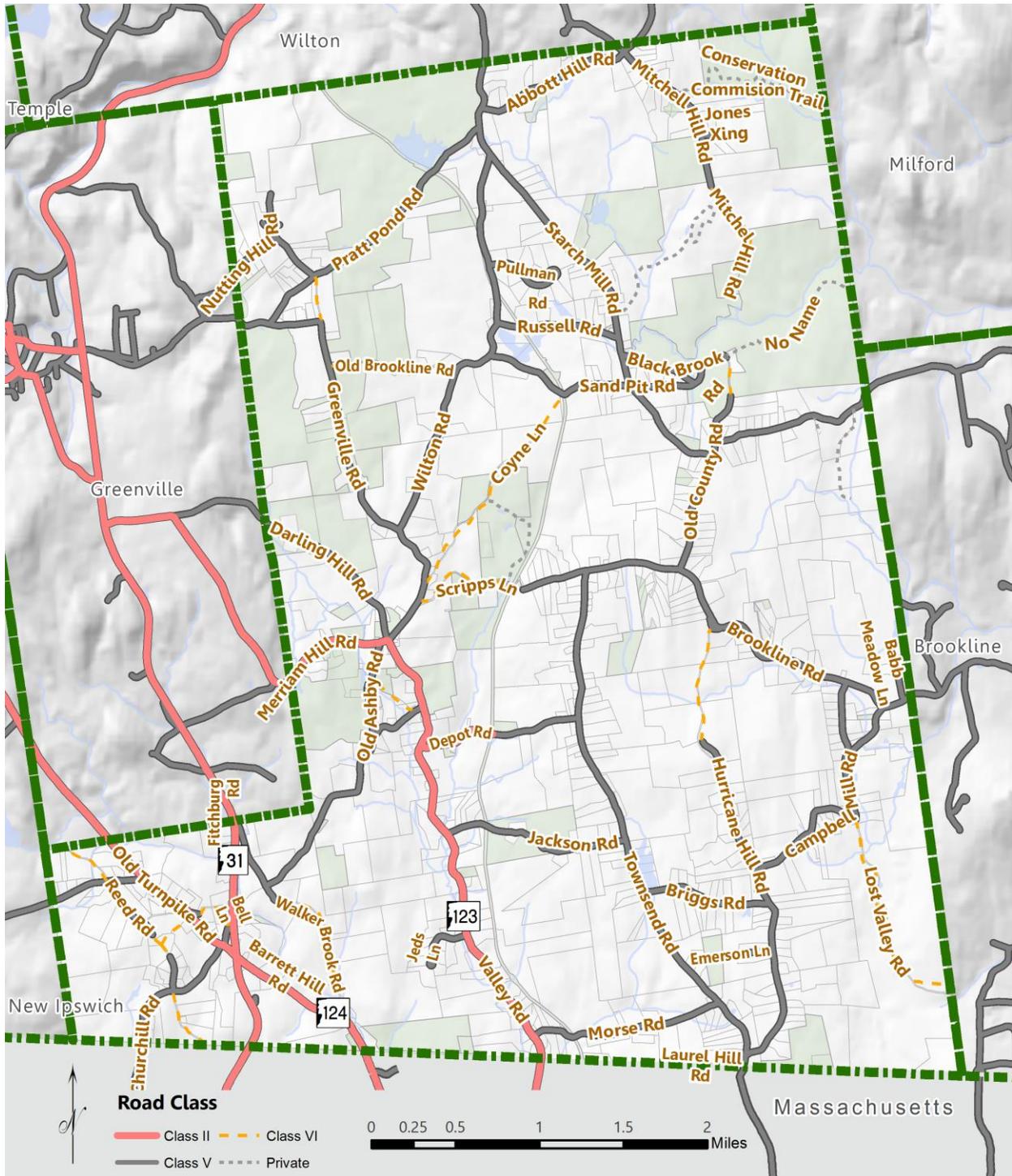
**Table IX-1. State Aid Classification Road Mileage**

State Class	Road Mileage	Percent of Total
Class 0 Private Roads	4.839	7.96%
Class I Primary State Highway	0	0%
Class II Secondary State Highway	7.407	12.19%
Class III Recreation Roads	0	0%
Class IV Compact Section	0	0%
Class V Rural Roads Local	39.642	65.25%
Class VI Un-maintained	8.87	14.60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60.758</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: NH Department of Transportation, 2018

As shown in Table 1, there is a total of 60.758 miles of roads in Mason. 39.642 miles are Town maintained and 7.407 miles are maintained by the State. Mason has 4.839 miles of private roads. As shown in Map 1, NH Routes 123, 124 and 31 pass through the southwest portion of Mason; these routes are classified as Secondary State Highway (Class II). Route 123 is comprised of Merriam Hill and Valley Roads (3.488 miles), Route 124 is comprised of Barrett Hill and Old Turnpike Roads (2.029 miles), and Route 31 is comprised of Fitchburg Road (1.385 miles). The western portion of Depot Road (0.462 miles; adjacent to Route 123) is also classified as Secondary State Highway (Class II).

Map IX-1. State Aid Classification



## Functional Classification

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) has defined a second tier for classification of roads in New Hampshire in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This scheme classifies roads and highways into different categories according to their functions as well as their source of funding. The Functional Classification scheme was developed to define eligibility for funds under federal programs. The major source of funding for maintenance of minor collector roads and local roads comes from the Town of Mason and the New Hampshire State block grant for roads. The following provides a description of the functional classification system characteristics of a road and highway network:

<u>Functional System</u>	<u>General Characteristics</u>
Principal Arterial	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Provides corridor movement suitable for substantial statewide or interstate travels and provides continuity for all rural arterials, which intercept the urban area.</li><li>2. Serves the major traffic movements within urbanized areas such as between central business districts and outlying residential areas, between major intercity communities, or between major suburban centers.</li><li>3. Serves a major portion of the trips entering and leaving the urban area, as well as the majority of the through traffic desiring to bypass the central city.</li></ol>
Minor arterial	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Serves trips of moderate length at a somewhat lower level of travel mobility than principal arterials.</li><li>2. Provides access to geographic areas smaller than those served by the higher system.</li><li>3. Provides intracommunity continuity but does not penetrate identifiable neighborhoods.</li></ol>
Collector	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Collects traffic from local roads and channel it into the arterial system.</li><li>2. Provides land access and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial area.</li></ol>
Local	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Comprises all facilities not on higher systems.</li><li>2. Provides access to land and higher systems.</li><li>3. Through traffic usage discouraged.</li></ol>

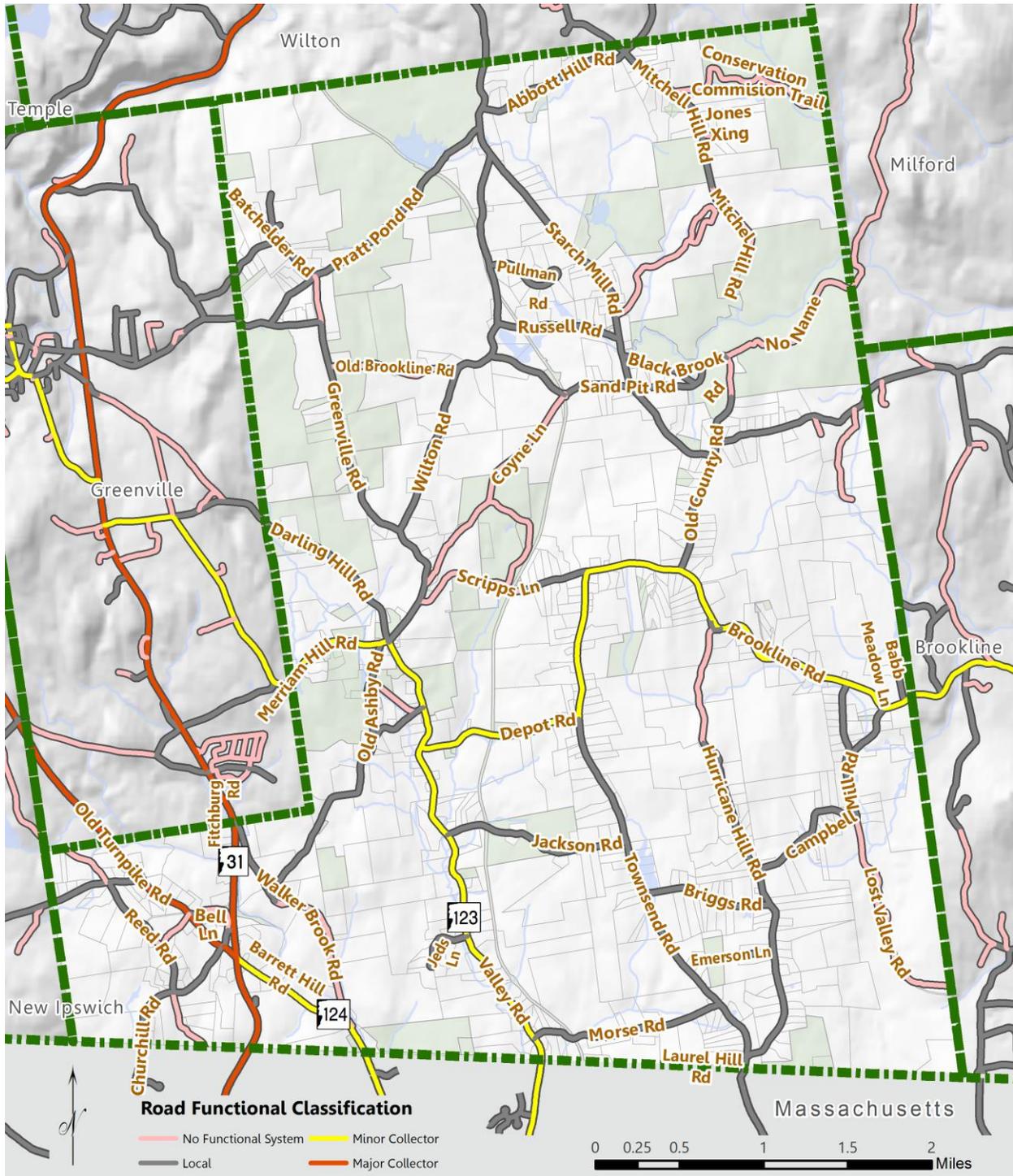
Table 2 provides a summary of the mileage for roads in the Town of Mason based on the NHDOT/FHWA assigned functional classifications, and Map 2 displays the functionally classed road network.

**Table IX-2. Functional Classification of Mason Roads**

State Functional Classification	State Aid Road Classification							
	Class 0 Mileage	Class I Mileage	Class II Mileage	Class III Mileage	Class IV Mileage	Class V Mileage	Class VI Mileage	Totals
No Functional Classification – Private	4.839	-	-	-	-	0.111	8.87	<b>13.82</b>
Principal Arterial - Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>0</b>
Minor Arterial	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>0</b>
Major Collector	-	-	2.474	-	-	-	-	<b>2.474</b>
Minor Collector	-	-	4.933	-	-	3.776	-	<b>8.709</b>
Local Roads	-	-	-	-	-	35.755	-	<b>35.755</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.839</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7.407</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>39.642</b>	<b>8.87</b>	<b>60.758</b>

Source: NH Department of Transportation, 2018

Map IX-2. Road Functional Classification



### Scenic Roads

Scenic Roads are special town designations of Class IV, V, and VI roads (per RSA 231:157 and RSA 231:158). The designation requires the municipality to obtain written permission of the planning board prior to any repair, maintenance, reconstruction or paving work on the road if such work requires damage or removal of trees, or the removal or destruction of stone walls. Likewise, any utility or other person who wishes to install or maintain poles, conduits, cables, wires, pipes or similar structures must obtain prior written consent of the planning board if the work involves tree cutting or removal of stone walls. Scenic road designation does not affect a municipality's eligibility to receive construction, maintenance or reconstruction aid.

**Table IX-3. Scenic Roads in Mason**

Name	Miles	Date of Designation
Coyne Lane	1.44	1972
Jackson Road	1.13	1992
Scripps Lane	0.40	1972

Source: Mason Town Reports (Years 1972 and 1992)

## IX Section C - Existing Transportation Network

### Traffic Volumes

Traffic data for the Town of Mason are compiled by both NH DOT and NRPC. NH DOT collects traffic counts in accordance with federal guidelines under the Federal Highway Performance Monitoring Program. The guidelines describe federal procedures for sampling highway and road volumes. These procedures provide FHWA with highway volumes for design standards and meet the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) requirements for estimating vehicular highway travel.

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) also maintains an ongoing traffic count program for validating the region's traffic model. NRPC provides these data to member communities upon request. The location of NRPC traffic counts in Mason are displayed in table 4 with their collection year and Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) Value or cars per day. These locations are displayed on Map 3.

Fitchburg Road (NH 31) is the most heavily traveled road in Mason. This road comprises 1.354 miles in the southwest portion of the town, between Greenville, NH and Townsend, MA. Barrett Hill Road and Old Turnpike Road also have significant traffic volumes; these roads comprise NH 124 (1.962 miles) as it passes through the southwest portion of Mason between Greenville, NH and Townsend, MA.

Per the Highway Performance Monitoring System Field Manual, traffic counts on local roads should be based on a six-year counting cycle. Table 4 summarizes both historical and current traffic counting data, and Map 3 illustrates the counting locations.

**Table IX-4. Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT), 2008-2016**

Traffic Count Location	2006	2019
<b>Brookline Rd at Brookline Town Line</b>	1515	1363
<b>Townsend Road North of Hurricane Hill Road</b>	371	253
<b>Greenville Rd at Greenville Town Line</b>	256	171
<b>Abbott Hill Rd at Wilton Town Line</b>	474	398
<b>Wilton Rd North of Pullman Rd</b>	-	148
<b>Starch Mill Rd North of Russell Rd</b>	-	169
<b>Hurricane Hill Rd North of Briggs Rd</b>	-	190

Source: Nashua Regional Planning Commission

It should be noted that Mason changed from the Mascenic Regional School District (New Ipswich) to the Milford School District effective in 2009. This change impacted existing travel patterns, especially in the northern area of the Town on roads such as Abbott Hill Road, Starch Mill Road, and Wilton Road.

As depicted in Table IX-4, traffic volumes have decreased at all counting locations from 2006 to 2019. There are many transportation influencing factors that could cause a decrease in traffic volumes. One possible explanation is that Mason has an aging population, which could mean that there are less people commuting to work. Behavioral changes, such as increasing popularity in carpooling or telecommuting, could also impact average annual daily traffic. Fluctuations in school enrollment numbers year to year will also impact traffic volumes. It is also important to note that counts in 2006 were conducted by the Southwest Region Planning Commission and not by the Nashua Regional Planning Commission, so there could be some minor discrepancies caused using different equipment. NRPC will continue to conduct traffic counts in the locations depicted in Table IX-4 in the future upon request of the Town of Mason to establish better trend data.

### Level of Service

Using the observed traffic count data, it is possible to evaluate the performance of highway facilities using a highway capacity analysis. The purpose of this analysis is: to estimate maximum traffic volumes that can be accommodated by a given facility, to provide tools for improving of existing facilities, and for planning and designing future facilities.

“Level of Service” (LOS) denotes the type of operating conditions on a roadway or at an intersection for a given period, generally a one-hour peak period. LOS is a quantitative measure that incorporates several operational factors including road geometry, travel delay, freedom to maneuver, and safety. Level of service categories for roadway segments and descriptions are explained below.

Level of Service “A” represents free flow. Individual users are virtually unaffected by the presence of others in the traffic stream.

Level of Service “B” is in the range of stable flow, but the presence of other users in the traffic stream begins to be noticeable. Freedom to select desired speeds is still relatively unaffected.

Level of Service “C” is in the range of stable flow but marks the beginning of the range of flow in which the operation of individual users becomes significantly affected by interactions with others in the traffic stream. Occasional backups occur behind turning vehicles.

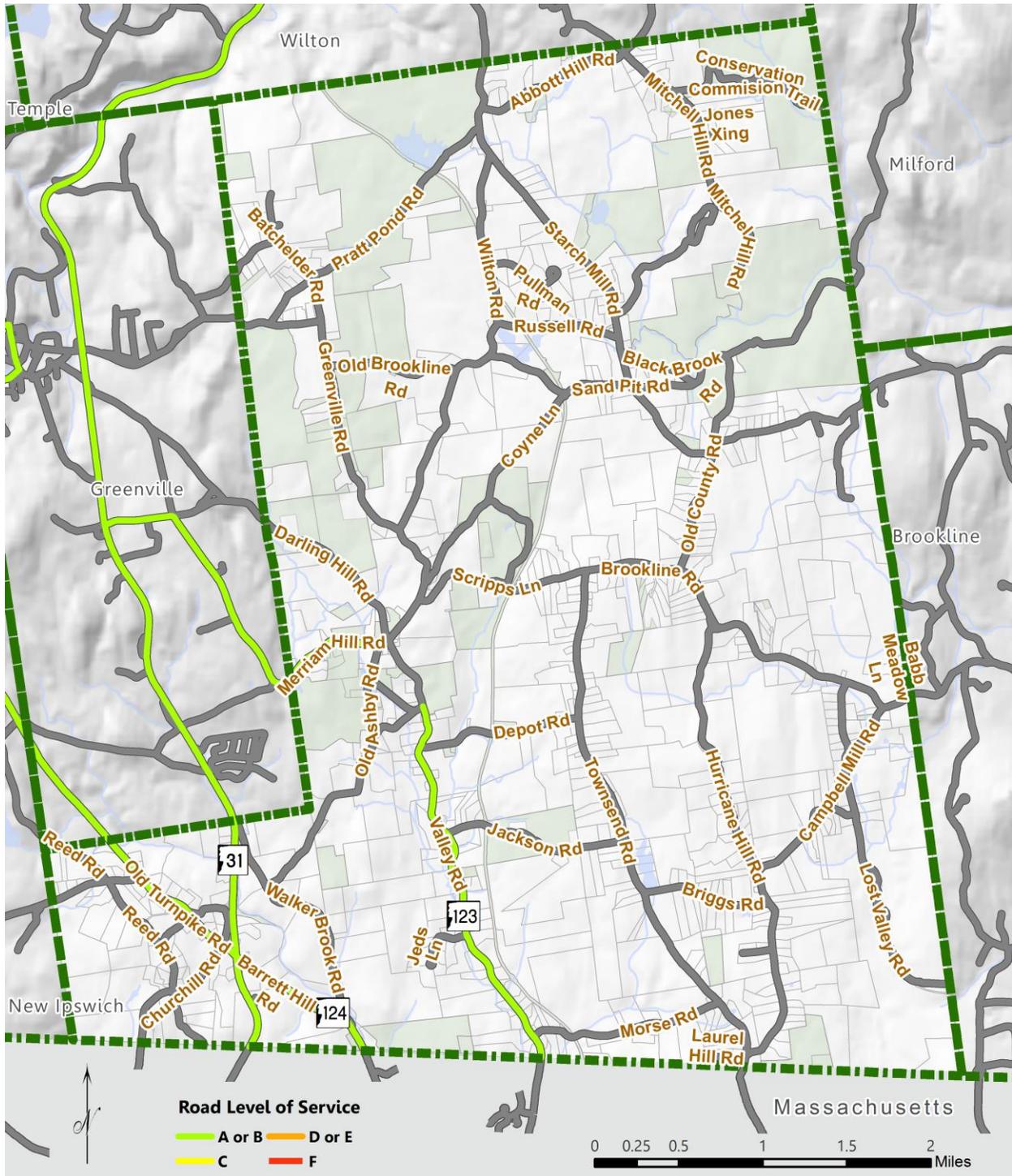
Level of Service “D” represents high-density, but stable, flow. Speed and freedom to maneuver are restricted, and the driver experiences a below average level of comfort and convenience. Small increases in traffic flow will generally cause operational problems at this level.

Level of Service “E” represents operating conditions at or near the capacity level. All speeds are reduced to a low, but relatively uniform level. Freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream is extremely difficult and is generally accomplished by forcing other vehicles to give way. Congestion levels and delay are very high.

Level of Service “F” is representative of forced or breakdown flow. This condition exists wherever the amount of traffic approaching a point exceeds the amount, which can traverse the point, resulting in lengthy queues.

Map 3 shows the level of service on state-maintained roadways in Mason. NH Routes 31, 24, and 123 are all rate A or B.

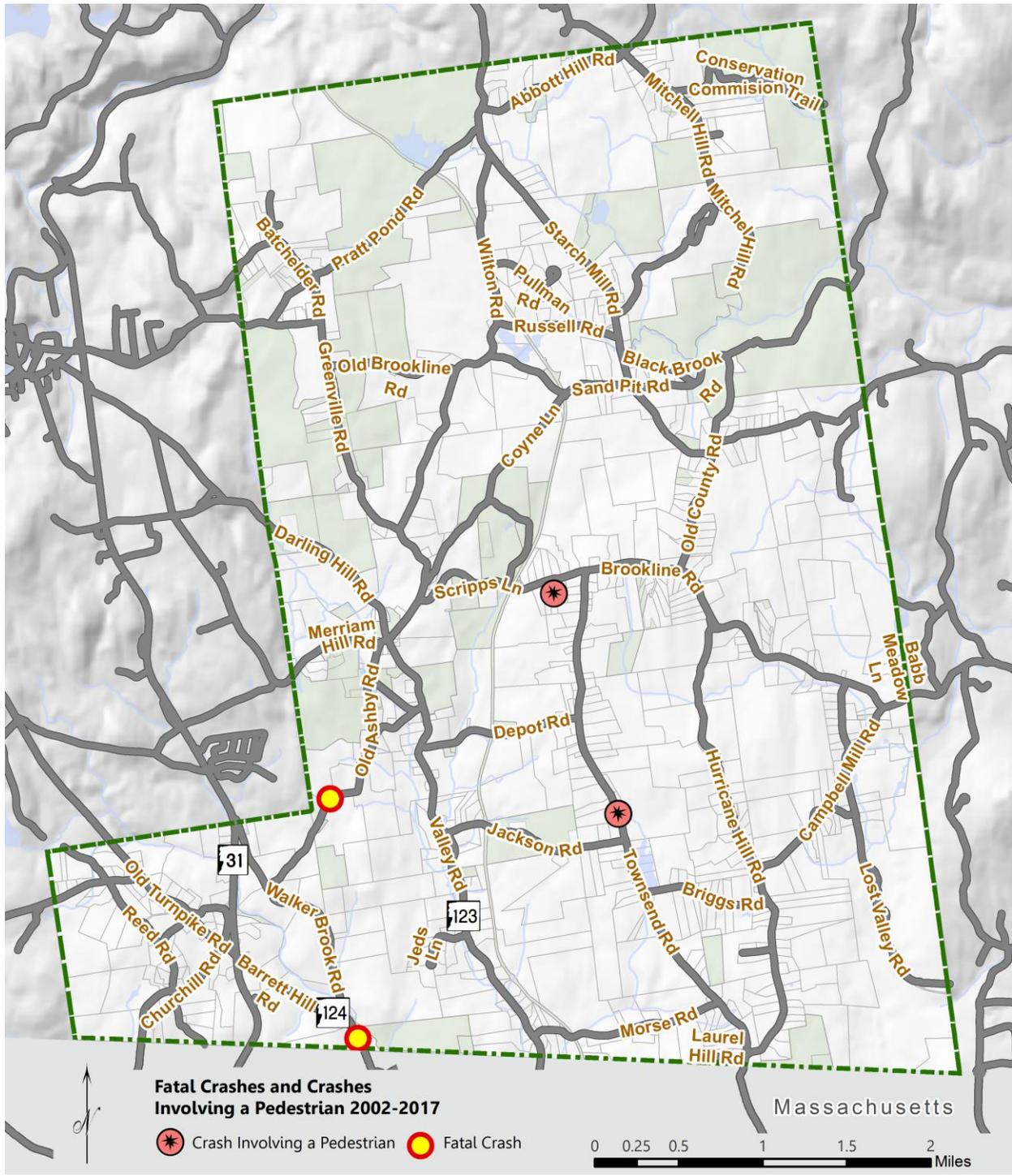
Map IX-3. Level of Service on State Maintained Roads



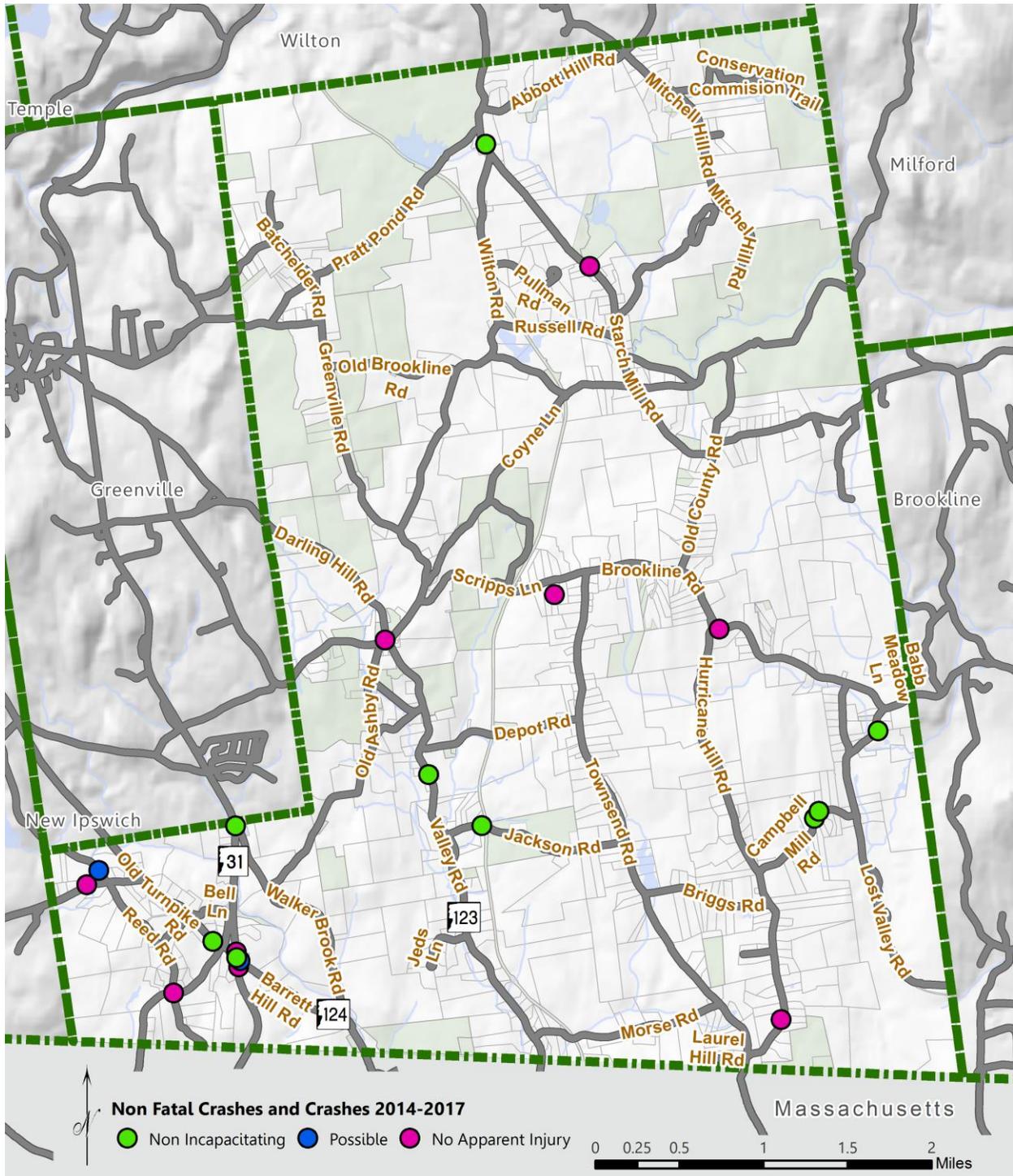
## **Crashes**

All locatable automobile crashes from 2002 to 2017 in the state of New Hampshire are compiled by the NH Division of Motor Vehicles based on local police reports. This database reveals that 167 occurred in Mason. Two crashes involved a fatality, six crashes resulted in an incapacitating injury, and two crashes involved a pedestrian. The primary cause of crashed in Mason was hitting a fixed object, followed by colliding with another vehicle. Map 4 shows the location of the two fatal crashes and the two crashes involving a pedestrian. Map 5 shows nonfatal crashes in Mason from 2014 to 2017 coded by their level of severity.

Map IX-4. Fatal Automobile Crashes and Crashes Involving a Pedestrian



Map IX-5. Non-Fatal Automobile Crashes 2014-2017



### Pavement Conditions

New Hampshire DOT collects information about paving condition using an advanced road condition survey vehicle. Some routes, like Interstates and those on the National Highway System are surveyed every year. Other routes are surveyed every other year with numbered routes collected during odd numbered calendar years and unnumbered collected during even numbered calendar years.

The condition of the road is determined by its roughness. The International Roughness Index measures the vertical movement, or bumpiness, that occurs along a route. It is an important value because it measures what the driver feels. As the road ages and distresses increase, the bumpiness and IRI increases.

Since roads are surveyed during the Spring/Summer/Fall months which coincides with the construction season, the data may not reflect all the paving that occurred each collection year thus the condition may not accurately reflect the current condition.

### Culvert Conditions

There are no bridges in Mason, however there are many culverts incorporated in the transportation network. In 2011 some local Eagle Scouts collaborated and surveyed all the culverts in the Town of Mason for a project. This ended up becoming a massive undertaking in which 283 separate culverts were located and identified. The scouts found that culverts overall were in good shape where only a few had significant structural damage. However, many were noted to be clogged with leaves and needed to be cleaned out.

In addition, the Mason road agent also stated that several culverts are prone to flooding. These include the Depot Road culvert at the fire station, the Wilton Road culvert at Sand Pit Road, the culvert at the Starch Mill Road and Abbott Hill Road intersection and the Townsend Road culvert near Jackson Road.

### Travel Patterns

In 2009, the Town of Mason formally changed school districts, from the Mascenic Regional School District based in New Ipswich, NH to the Milford School District based in Milford, NH. This change significantly impacted travel patterns. Prior to 2009, roads making a western connection to Greenville and beyond were heavily used by residents, especially State Route 123 (Merriam Hill Road), State Route 124 (Old Turnpike Road), State Route 31 (Fitchburg Road), and Greenville Road. After switching to the Milford School District, local roads in the northern part of Town began seeing heavier traffic, particularly Abbott Hill Road, Starch Mill Road, and Wilton Road.

### Aviation

The airspace in Mason is designated as a practice area for single engine planes by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The Town is home to two privately owned airfields. The Mason Airfield (NH76) is located off Old Ashby Road and has one paved runway. The Zim Airport (NH17) is located on Campbell Mill Road and has



one turf runway. Both airfields are short takeoff and landing (STL) and are visual flight rules (VFR) only. The above image is of an aeronautical chart showing the Mason Airfield and Zim Airport.

## **IX Section D - Regional Transportation Issues**

Mason is not part of the Nashua, NH--MA Urbanized area or the Boston Urbanized Area, so regional transportation matters do not have much of an impact on the Town. However, the Town of Mason is a member of the Nashua Regional Planning Commission, which is also a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). An MPO is a policy board designated by agreement between the governor and local governments for the purpose of executing the federal metropolitan transportation process. So, Mason is eligible for state funding from NRPC's Ten Year Plan (TYP) for any eligible transportation projects. Project application rounds occur in the fall of each year.

## **IX Section E - Alternate Modes of Transportation**

### **Public Transportation and Paratransit**

The Town of Mason has no public transportation network. However, Mason contracts with the Community Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC) for \$500.00 a year. CVTC provides free transportation to residents who do not have access to a car due to age, ability, economics, or other circumstances. Residents can also contact CVTC and become a volunteer driver. To get a ride or become a volunteer driver, call 1-877-428-2882, ext. 5.



## **IX Section F - Other Transportation Issues**

### **Unpaved Roads**

The life of a road depends on the number of vehicles as well as the weight of the vehicles that use it. There is a direct correlation between road life and average daily traffic volumes (ADT), as a road will generally deteriorate faster as the ADT increases. Typically, once ADT reaches 400-500 vehicles per day, the road should be considered for paving. The two tables below show hypothetical costs for maintenance of gravel roads and hypothetical costs for three common pavement options, put together by the Kentucky Transportation Center.

**Table IX-5. Cost of Maintenance for Gravel Roads over a 6-Year Period (Hypothetical)**

YEAR	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTALS
<b>GRADING</b>							
Equipment	270	280	290	300	310	320	1,770
Labor	90	100	110	120	130	140	690
<b>REGRAVEL</b>							
Materials	–	–	4,000	–	–	–	4,000
Equipment	–	–	2,500	–	–	–	2,500
Labor	–	–	2,300	–	–	–	2,300
<b>STABILIZATION/DUST CONTROL</b>							
Materials	800	900	1,200	920	950	975	5,745
Equipment	30	35	70	40	50	60	285
Labor	100	110	150	125	140	150	775
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,290</b>	<b>1,425</b>	<b>10,620</b>	<b>1,505</b>	<b>1,580</b>	<b>1,645</b>	<b>\$18,065</b>

Source: Gravel Roads: Kentucky Transportation Center, University of Kentucky at Lexington, KY. "Maintenance and Design Manual, Appendix D: When to Pave a Gravel Road." [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-10/documents/2003\\_07\\_24\\_nps\\_gravelroads\\_appd\\_0.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-10/documents/2003_07_24_nps_gravelroads_appd_0.pdf)

**Table IX: 6. Three Pavement Options: Estimated Costs and Lifespan (Hypothetical)**

Option	Life	Cost Per Mile	Cost/Mile Per Year	Calculations	Maintenance Per Mile/Year
Chip Seal-Double Surface Treatment	6 yrs.	\$20,533	\$3,422	Based on price of \$1.75 per sy; 20 ft. wide x 5,280 ft. = 105,600 sf 105,600 sf ÷ 9 = 11,733 sy \$1.75 = \$20,533	?
Bituminous Concrete-Hot Mix	12 yrs.	\$58,080	\$4,840	Based on estimated price of \$30 per ton; 1 sy of stone and hot mix/ cold mix 1" thick weighs about 110 lbs. Therefore 3" = 330 lbs. per sy. 11,733 sy (1 mile of pavement) ÷ 330 lbs. = 3,871,890 lbs. 3,871,890 lbs. = 1936T x \$30 = \$58,080	?
Cold Mix	8 yrs.	\$48,390	\$6,048	At \$30 per ton, using same formula as hot mix, 2 1/2" of cold mix equals 1,613T x \$30 = \$48,390	?
*These costs must be determined before any conclusions can be reached regarding the most cost-effective pavement method. The thinner the pavement, the greater the maintenance cost. Traffic, weather conditions, proper preparation before paving and many other factors can affect maintenance costs. No Kentucky data exists upon which to base estimates of maintenance costs on low volume roads of these paving options; and, therefore, we offer no conclusion as to the "best" way to pave.					

Source: Gravel Roads: Kentucky Transportation Center, University of Kentucky at Lexington, KY. "Maintenance and Design Manual, Appendix D: When to Pave a Gravel Road." [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-10/documents/2003\\_07\\_24\\_nps\\_gravelroads\\_appd\\_0.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-10/documents/2003_07_24_nps_gravelroads_appd_0.pdf)

Some additional maintenance costs per mile of paved road over a 6-year period could be<sup>1</sup>:

- Patching - \$1,800
- Striping - \$500
- Sealing - \$2,000

Out of Mason’s 60.76 miles of roads, 21.53 miles, (almost half) are unpaved. Historically, all dirt roads have been maintained as part of the Mason Town Budget. However, now that population has increased and local dirt roads are becoming more travelled, maintenance is becoming an issue. In addition, during the springtime the dirt roads become extremely muddy and soft with the snow thaw and spring rain. Some roads even become impassible.

In response to rising maintenance costs, the Mason Board of Selectmen are looking to create a Dirt Road Committee to investigate if the Town should simply allocate more funds for maintaining the existing dirt roads as is, use different materials for unpaved roads, or change tracts and work towards paving the dirt roads. Currently, the Board of Selectmen are seeking proposals regarding the Dirt Road Committee.

### **Areas of Concern**

The intersection of State Route 31 and State Route 124 statistically has the most accidents of all areas in the Mason road network. Town officials have been looking for funding to improve this intersection due to how dangerous it is with frequent recurring accidents.

### **IX Section G – Conclusion**

The transportation system has a significant impact on patterns of land development and the spatial layout of a community. The Town of Mason strongly identifies with its scenic and rural character, so it is crucial to balance any growth and improvement of transportation infrastructure with preservation moving forward.



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<sup>1</sup> Kentucky Transportation Center, “Gravel Roads: Maintenance and Design Manual, Appendix D: When to Pave a Gravel Road” (University of Kentucky at Lexington, KY, 2015), [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-10/documents/2003\\_07\\_24\\_nps\\_gravelroads\\_appd\\_0.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-10/documents/2003_07_24_nps_gravelroads_appd_0.pdf).

**APPENDIX A  
HISTORY OF MASON (IN FULL)**

## APPENDIX A HISTORY OF MASON (IN FULL)

The Town of Mason is characterized by its narrow valleys and rocky hills, a terrain that made the initial settlement of Mason a daunting task. The land area of Mason was originally known as Township Number One and had been given to New Hampshire upon its partition from the colony of Massachusetts under King George II in 1741. Land proprietors were granted title to the land by Colonel Joseph Blanchard in 1749, and they in turn gave the grant to a group of 33 men along with plans for the creation of a town. Very few of these men ever settled on those lands, either selling off their lots or giving them to sons or relatives. Enosh Lawrence is recognized as being the first settler in 1749 and by 1753 twenty-three settlers were listed in Township Number One. The first meeting house was built in 1753 in the first town center located just to the north and east of Mason's current town center. The initial site chosen for the town center proved to be a poor location due to its topography; and so, the center slowly shifted to its current location.

In 1768, the settlers of the Township petitioned Governor John Wentworth for a charter. Governor Wentworth chose the name Mason, likely in honor of Captain John Mason the founder of New Hampshire. The first Town Meeting was held in September of the same year. The first Mills were built in Mason in 1767, one year prior to the charter. They were built on the banks of the Souhegan River and Black Brook. The mills built on the river flourished as what eventually became a seemingly separate settlement from Mason Center. However, it was not until 1872, that this section of the town was partitioned and was incorporated as the Town of Greenville.

The connection between Mason and the church was very strong in the early years of settlement. Services took place in the first and second meeting house and eventually in the present-day Mason Congregational Church. The Greenville Federated Church was built in 1827 by the Baptists after a smaller church in Mason Center was never completed. A Christian ministry was invited to the town in 1834 and built the church that is presently used by Mason Public Schools.

Education in Mason was very informal, usually occurring in the kitchens of Town residents. The first record of public schooling dates back to 1771. As the school system evolved Mason was divided into nine school districts. After Greenville's partition, this number was reduced to six. After the consolidation of school districts into one larger regional school district in 1937, the school districts were disbanded and today, four of the original schools still stand.

The traditional industry in Mason was agriculture. Eventually, small home industries developed that included carving of wooden buttons, hat making, soap making and staving hoops for barrels. A starch factory operated in Town for several years leading to the growth of potatoes by local farmers for sale to the factory. For a short time, grapes became a flourishing crop until blight put an end to their continued production. With the development of the railroad in 1850, the market for Mason farmers grew to the Boston region as well as other large cities and towns, with shipments of milk, eggs and other products. Women also began to earn money shipping goods such as blueberries and Mayflowers.

Mason is also known for granite outcroppings that in the early years were used to build foundations for homes, barns and public structures. It was not until 1867 that granite quarrying began on a large scale with the purchase of the Mason, or Glen, Quarry by Alexander McDonald. The Fletcher Quarry became a

settlement of nearly 200 people that worked in the quarry, producing granite for various buildings and monuments throughout the country. Although Mr. McDonald's enterprise went bankrupt in 1893, granite production continued in a different location in Town.

Mason has had many nationally recognized residents over the years, the most famous of which consists of Samuel Wilson, the inspiration of Uncle Sam character. While Samuel Wilson lived in various places throughout his lifetime, his home in Mason is claimed to be the only one still in existence. Mason was also home to John Boynton, who provided the financial support to establish Worcester Polytechnic Institute. He also began a trust fund for the Mason School and donated a sizable sum of money to the Templeton, Massachusetts Library. The famous piano maker Jonas Chickering was born in Mason Village in 1798. George Germer, a well-known silversmith (jewelry, crosses, and many other works) came to Mason before World War I and remained until his death in 1936. C.W. Anderson, a famous lithographer, author, and children's book illustrator, also made his home in Mason for many years. Elizabeth Orton Jones, a children's book illustrator who won the Caldecott Medal for her illustration of *Prayer for a Child* in 1945, lived in Mason. She is also known for her illustration of *Little Red Riding Hood*, Golden Book edition printed from 1948 to 1979. She used her neighbor's farmhouse as inspiration for her illustrations and that building still stands today and is in use as a restaurant and retail shop.

Mason has many 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century homes that remain in use today. The town offices are presently located in the Captain Benjamin Mann house on Darling Hill Road, built in 1773. Captain Mann was a commanding officer at the Battle of Bunker Hill. The Uncle Sam house, the boyhood home of Samuel Wilson, on Valley Road, was built in 1780. Several of Mason's one room schoolhouses remain standing, and there is a very well-preserved Town Pound on Meetinghouse Hill Road. The 1840 Town Hall is still used for Town Meeting.

Mason is fortunate to have two very well written town histories: *History of the Town of Mason, NH From the First Grant in 1749, to the Year 1858*, by John B. Hill, published by Lucius A. Elliot & Co., Boston, 1858, and *Mason, New Hampshire 1768-1968*, edited by Elizabeth Orton Jones, c. 1968 by the Mason Historical Society. Both books may be found in the Mason Public Library.

Technological innovation in the field of transportation had a lasting impact on Mason. Agriculture diminished over time and Mason residents began to commute to neighboring towns for work. This has turned Mason into a bedroom community for those who work in nearby towns. Mason's community grew significantly in the 1980's and has also seen significant growth since 2000. The continued growth of the community makes it even more important to identify important historical sites and make recommendations for their continued preservation. Despite the characterization of Mason as a bedroom community there is still a strong connection with their agricultural past that is important to the culture of the Mason community. It is important that this past be recognized and used to enhance the current cultural identity of the community.

**APPENDIX B**  
**CONSERVATION COMMISSION ACHIEVEMENTS**

## APPENDIX B CONSERVATION COMMISSION ACHIEVEMENTS

Since the 2007 master plan was adopted, the Conservation Commission has achieved the following:

### Natural Resource Inventory

- Completed in 2012; updated in 2018
- 2,000 hours of volunteer work by the Conservation Commissioners. NRPC quoted \$25,000 to do the job.
- Natural Resource Inventory report and maps available on the Mason Town Website Conservation Commission page

### Land Protection Acquisition

2007 - Gift of 574 acres from Bronson Potter

2007 - Gift of 38 acres on Valley Road from Florence Roberts to remain a natural forest

2008 - Received conservation easement on 508-acre Fifield Tree Farm with LCHIP grant for a small part of its value, largely a gift. This private land in forest management is permanently protected from development with public access to trails.

2008 - Purchase of 286-acre Mitchell Brook Wilderness, assisted by land use change tax funds and trade of house with six acres from Bronson Potter bequest

2008 - Gift of 47 acres from Dr. Lipin and Dr. Ellis in honor of Bill Downs

2013 - Gift of 110 acres from George Schwenk and Dick Morley, Mason Quarry LLC, protected with conservation easement held by Society for the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF)

2014 - Three town-owned parcels totaling 97 acres around Mason Quarry protected with conservation easement held by SPNHF to create Mason's 207-acre Mason Quarry Conservation Area

2015 - Gift of 21 acres from French family in memory of Charles Crathern

2016 - Gift of 8 acres from George and Cathy Schwenk in Nose Meadow next to Bronson Potter's 1986 gift of 13 acres, completing the 21-acre Nose Meadow Conservation Land, headwaters of Mason Brook

2019 - Gift of 38 acres around Wolf Rock from Walter Valentine, which abuts Mason Quarry Conservation area

2020 - Acquisition of Nissitissit Headwaters by Piscataquog Land Conservancy with assistance of Mason Conservation Commission: 268 acres on Abbott Hill Road open to public recreation.

Source: Land Conservation in Mason (<http://masonnh.us/wp-content/uploads/LandConservationHistory.png>)

### **Stewardship and Management**

- Monitored each year four conservation easements as conditions of grant funding, and three conservation easements given to the town. Received annual payment for monitoring conservation easement acquired with LCHIP grant.
- Established and managed hay contract for Potter Greenville Road property
- Managed Potter A-frame rental on Old Ashby Road
- Held “yard sale” to dispose of Potter homestead content, razed the house and “hangar”, restored the site, and installed kiosk (thanks to Eagle Scout project) and gate to create public access point for the Potter Homestead.
- Replaced flood-damaged Black Brook Bridge on Rail Trail with Recreational Trails grant of \$19,864 from NH Trails Bureau. Came in under budget, used remainder of grant to clear RR Trail of ice storm damage 2008.
- Created a prioritized list of town owned tax title parcels for possible permanent conservation. (Town would still own parcels)
- Timber harvest at the Outlook on Greenville Rd. (Potter gift) to restore the view, generating \$6,986 of income.
- Restored Jackson Road trestle on Rail Trail with \$13,751 Recreational Trails grant from NH Trails Bureau 2012. Town match cost only \$1,578 thanks to over \$3,000 worth of volunteer labor and equipment time contributed.
- Thanks to gifts from Catherine Schwenk, New England Wildflower Society conducted Botanical Inventories at Mason Quarry Conservation Area (2013) and at Mason Brook Headwaters (2015)
- Repaired and upgraded emergency access road to Mason Quarry 2015.
- Developed parking area for Mason Quarry Conservation Land thanks to gift of easement from owners Tony Lombardo and Melissa Mudrick 2017.
- Timber harvest on Spaulding Pond Conservation Land, (55 acres on Mitchell Hill Rd.) yielding \$36,644 of income
- Successfully attacked Japanese knotweed infestation on southern part of Mason Rail Trail. Started attacking invasive plant infestations at Potter homestead site.
- Oversaw \$61,000 restoration of 6.7 mile Mason Rail Trail; funded by a \$40, 950 grant from former resident Ann Preston through Preston Family Trust and NH Charitable Trust; \$6,000 donation of labor and equipment from Amos White of Bentley Management; balance from Conservation Commission funds.

### **Community Outreach**

- Instrumental in opposing Northeast Energy Direct (NED) fracked gas pipeline planned to cut through Mason impacting numerous lands and people.
- Wide variety of wildlife and other environmental education programs for both adults and school children
- Information tables at voting, Old Home Days, 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration, Community Supper
- Drug Take Back Day in cooperation with Police Department and DEA

- Roadside Cleanup in cooperation with Highway Department

#### **Training for Conservation Commissioners**

- NH Association of Conservation Commissions annual conference and publications
- Regional Open Space Team (ROST) meetings and training in Milford
- Harris Center Workshops
- Nashua River and Nissitissit River Workshops
- Grant writing sessions by State agencies and Piscataquog Land Conservancy
- Consulting with regional, state, and federal departments and agencies

#### **Recognition**

Received Governor's Commendation in 2015 when the Executive Council met in Mason Town Hall with Governor Hassan.

**APPENDIX C**  
**MASON 2020 MASTER PLAN COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS**

# 2020 MASON MASTER PLAN SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

The master plan survey, hosted on PublicInput.com, ran from mid-February to the end of March. 280 Mason residents participated, which is approximately 20% of the Town's population<sup>1</sup>. The survey totaled 13,817 answered questions and 344 comments.

The survey is closed to new responses, but the questions and comments can still be viewed on the live site: <https://publicinput.com/R403>.

## General/Demographics

### Reasons for Living in Mason

43% of respondents answered "Other" for this question. Other popular answers included Outdoor recreational opportunities (24%), housing availability (19%), and proximity to employment (18%). Some common themes in the comments for reasons to live in Mason were the rural character, privacy, quiet, large lots, and a good horse environment.

### Demographics

- 51% of respondents were female, 43% male, 2% preferred not to answer and 1% other.
- Respondents were most commonly age 56-65 (27%) and "old as dirt" (22%). 19% of respondents were age 46-55, 16% of respondents were age 36-45, 13% were age 26-35, 1% of respondents were age 18-25, 1% of respondents were under age 18, and 1% of respondents preferred not to answer.
- 27% of respondents work in a surrounding town, 22% work out of state, and 20% work out of state. Other common answers included working in Mason (9%) and telecommuting (8%).

### Mason's Best Features

"Rural Character" was the most common choice at 79%. "Small Town Atmosphere" (70%) and "Natural Beauty" (65%) were also prominent choices. Other common choices were "Open Space/Natural Areas" (56%) and "Historic Charm" (31%).

### Residential Growth Rates

**Neutral – 37%**

Agree – 20%

Disagree – 16%

Strongly Agree – 14%

Strongly Disagree – 7%

No Opinion – 7%

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<sup>1</sup> The New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives estimated the population of Mason to be 1,421 in 2018.

### Commercial growth rates are too high

**Disagree – 31%**

Neutral – 29%

Strongly Disagree – 19%

Strongly Agree – 9%

Agree – 8%

No Opinion – 4%

### Housing Growth Rates

**Neutral – 38%**

Agree – 22%

Disagree – 18%

Strongly Agree – 12%

Strongly Disagree – 5%

No Opinion – 5%

### Tax rates are too high

**Neutral – 38%**

Agree – 31%

Strongly Agree – 21%

Disagree – 7%

No Opinion – 2%

Strongly Disagree – 1%

### Cost of town services are too high (Fire, Police, Highway)

**Neutral – 38%**

Disagree – 28%

Agree – 13%

Strongly Agree – 8%

Strongly Disagree – 7%

No Opinion – 5%

### Cost of school services are too high

**Neutral – 37%**

Disagree – 20%

Strongly Agree – 16%

Agree – 13%

No Opinion – 7%

Strongly Disagree – 6%

## Loss of Rural Character

**Disagree – 35%**

Strongly Agree – 19%

Neutral – 18%

Agree – 15%

Strongly Disagree – 10%

No Opinion – 3%

Section Comments: Many respondents commented about the lack of broadband, and how the need for useable, quick internet is significant especially with the Covid-19 pandemic and stay-at-home order. Another common theme was that taxes were too high for the services that are provided.

## Population, Housing, and Land Use

### Affordable Housing (Low Income)

**Not a Town Issue – 31%**

Maintain – 28%

Do More – 17%

Do Less – 16%

No Opinion – 8%

### Retirement Homes/Community

**Not a Town Issue – 34%**

Maintain – 28%

Do More – 14%

Do Less – 14%

No Opinion – 10%

### Consider the re-zoning area of Town for a great number of houses per acre

**Do Less – 51%**

Maintain – 23%

Do More – 11%

Not a Town Issue – 10%

No Opinion – 5%

### Would you favor policies to increase the availability of housing in Mason?

**No – 58%**

Maybe – 27%

Yes – 12%

No Opinion – 3%

Would you favor allowing duplex housing, where one structure contains two residences that can be individually owned or rented?

- No – 56%**
- Maybe – 27%
- Yes – 16%
- No Opinion – 0%

Would you favor allowing cluster housing, where smaller lot sizes are allowed on part of a tract of land and the remaining part becomes permanently protected open space?

- No – 60%**
- Maybe – 21%
- Yes – 18%
- No Opinion – 1%

Do you favor less restrictive regulation of minimum acreage (4 acres) and frontage (350 feet) to encourage the development of more housing for residential use?

- No – 71%**
- Maybe – 14%
- Yes – 14%
- No Opinion – 1%

I love mud season in Mason

- No – 45%**
- Yes – 29%
- Maybe – 14%
- No Opinion – 12%

Section Comments: Many comments were against cluster housing and zoning that would allow housing growth. There were also many comments about mud season; many respondents voiced displeasure with mud season, but many also stated that they liked mud season. Another common theme was that many respondents were not in favor of additional affordable housing.

## Community Services and Facilities

Should the town create/upgrade a recreation area on Pratt Pond?

- Maybe – 38%**
- No – 34%
- Yes – 24%
- No Opinion – 4%

### Should the town create a dog park?

- No – 73%**
- Maybe – 15%
- Yes – 10%
- No Opinion – 3%

### Do you feel police coverage is adequate in Mason?

- Yes – 51%**
- No – 25%
- Maybe – 19%
- No Opinion – 4%

### Do you feel the Beatles were the best band that ever lived?

- No – 49%**
- No Opinion – 22%
- Maybe – 15%
- Yes – 14%

Section Comments: Many comments were against creating a dog park and any alterations to Pratt Pond. Many respondents commented that the Town should maintain the rural character and open space. There were also some comments expressing concerns about a lack of police coverage.

The Beatles got some love in the comments, but the Grateful Dead and Led Zeppelin came up multiple times in the comments as well.

## Economic Development

### Increasing the tax base

- Maintain – 48%**
- Do More – 32%
- Do Less – 10%
- No Opinion – 7%
- Not a Town Issue – 3%

### Controlling residential development

- Maintain – 62%**
- Do More – 20%
- Do Less – 10%
- Not a Town Issue – 4%
- No Opinion – 4%

### Controlling commercial development

**Maintain – 46%**

Do More – 26%

Do Less – 20%

No Opinion – 5%

Not a Town Issue – 3%

### Improving communications infrastructure (fiber, wire and wireless)

**Do More – 90%**

Maintain – 8%

Not a Town Issue – 2%

Do Less – 0%

No Opinion 0%

### Developing private-public partnerships to promote economic development

**Do More – 31%**

Maintain – 27%

No Opinion – 18%

Do Less – 13%

Not a Town Issue – 10%

### Encourage businesses to move to Mason or start up in Mason

**Do More – 38%**

Maintain – 29%

Do Less – 18%

No Opinion – 9%

Not a Town Issue – 6%

### Would you favor the town creating a commercial/business zone as a means for generating more revenue?

**Maybe – 39%**

No – 31%

Yes – 29%

No Opinion – 1%

The Mason Broadband Committee has investigated options to create a public-private partnership in order to bring viable broadband internet access to home-based and commercial businesses. Would you support a plan to expand broadband service in Mason if it requires residents who 'opt in' to pay a surcharge on their internet utility cost?

**Yes – 61%**

Maybe – 23%

No – 13%

No Opinion – 2%

Section Comments: The comment section was dominated by comments regarding broadband in Mason. Respondents are highly in favor of bringing better internet to Town and supportive of the Broadband Committee. Commenters felt that “poor internet service is the biggest issue of [Mason].” One commenter stated that they currently did not have internet access at all. Another responder commented that reliable internet would be helpful for businesses and working from home.

In 1967 the Town of Mason established a Historic Preservation District, covering the town center, to preserve and protect the historical heritage of buildings and lands. It requires the existing colonial appearance be maintained in any alterations of buildings or construction of new buildings. Please select the following statement you most agree with.

- **The Historic Preservation District is an important part of Mason’s zoning and should be continued – 59%**
- I don’t know enough about the Historic Preservation District to answer this question – 27%
- The Mason Planning Ordinance should be amended to eliminate the Historic Preservation District and make the village center part of the Village Residential Zone – 12%
- All zoning in Mason should be repealed – 3%

Comments (for this question): Many comments were in favor of preserving the Town and its historic buildings. However, many respondents felt that taxpayer money should not be used for preservation efforts.

## Natural Resources, Conservation, and Energy

Please suggest areas of Mason to be Conserved

Common responses included:

- Land that connects with existing conservation land
- Waterways and wetlands
- The Town Quarry
- Rail Trail
- Pratt Pond

- Bronson Hill
- Greenville Road (lookout)
- Large forested tracts of land
- Large open areas
- Center of Town
- Class 6 roads
- Wildlife corridors and habitats
- Multi-use trails
- Ridgelines and steep slopes
- Wooded areas
- Existing conservation lands
- Valley Road

Mason needs to conserve more undeveloped lands and wildlife habitat

**Strongly Agree – 30%**

Agree – 27%

Neutral – 23%

Disagree – 14%

Strongly Disagree – 5%

No Opinion – 1%

Agriculture (hay, crops, grazing, etc.) should be allowed on town conservation land

**Agree – 41%**

Neutral – 25%

Strongly Agree – 16%

Disagree – 13%

Strongly Disagree – 3%

No Opinion – 3%

Forestry (managing forests for timber production) should be allowed on town conservation land

**Agree – 38%**

Disagree – 20%

Neutral – 19%

Strongly Agree – 15%

Strongly Disagree – 5%

No Opinion – 2%

More trails are needed for outdoor recreation activities such as hiking, horseback riding, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

**Agree – 26%**

Disagree – 25%

Neutral – 25%

Strongly Agree – 16%

Strongly Disagree – 5%

No Opinion – 3%

Mason Needs to increase protection of our wetlands and water bodies through conservation easements.

**Neutral – 35%**

Agree – 23%

Strongly Agree – 20%

Disagree – 12%

Strongly Disagree – 5%

No Opinion – 5%

The Town should invest in energy efficient measures for town buildings (heating, lighting, weatherization, and smart devices)

**Agree – 37%**

Strongly Agree – 27%

Neutral – 27%

Disagree – 6%

Strongly Disagree – 2%

No Opinion – 2%

The Town should consider sourcing its electricity from renewable sources

**Agree – 34%**

Neutral – 23%

Strongly Agree – 21%

Disagree – 16%

Strongly Disagree – 3%

No Opinion – 3%

The Town should create local requirements that exceed the state energy code, setting the standards for new structures higher than required by code.

**Neutral – 30%**

Disagree – 28%

Agree – 15%

Strongly Disagree – 14%

Strongly Disagree – 10%

No Opinion – 3%

The Town should encourage a no-idling policy for appropriate municipal vehicles.

**Agree – 27%**

Neutral – 25%

Disagree – 22%

Strongly Agree – 14%

Strongly – 8%

No Opinion – 5%

Encourage high speed internet to facilitate internet to promote working at home.

**Strongly Agree – 70%**

Agree – 20%

Neutral – 7%

Disagree – 3%

Strongly Disagree – 1%

No Opinion – 1%

## Traffic and Transportation

### Improving the Highway Department

**Do More – 59%**

Maintain – 34%

Do Less – 3%

Not a Town Issue – 2%

No Opinion – 2%

### Maintaining paved roads

**Maintain – 53%**

Do More – 43%

Do Less – 4%

Not a Town Issue – 1%

No Opinion – 0%

### Maintaining gravel roads

**Do More – 54%**

Maintain – 45%

Do Less – 1%

Not a Town Issue – 0%

No Opinion – 0%

### Pave more dirt roads

**Maintain – 35%**

Do More – 32%

Do Less – 29%

No Opinion – 3%

Not a Town Issue – 1%

Section Comments: Many responders expressed concern with how town roads are maintained, however a majority also commented that they did not want more paved roads.

### Should the Town increase the number of scenic roads?

**No – 53%**

Maybe – 27%

Yes – 12%

No Opinion – 8%

Comments (for this question): Some respondents were concerned that scenic roads would increase traffic from out of town. Another common theme was that respondents would like to have a vegetative buffer along road frontage.

### Should the Town establish carpool areas?

**No – 62%**

Maybe – 19%

No Opinion – 10%

Yes – 9%

Comments (for this question): Most commenters thought that carpool areas were unnecessary and that driveways could be used for carpooling.

### Should the Town install a stop light just so we can say that we have one?

**No – 94%**

No Opinion – 4%

Maybe – 1%

Yes - 0%

Comments (for this question): Everyone was pretty much in agreement in the comments that they do not want a stop light in Town. However, some commenters were concerned about the safety intersection of Route 124 and Route 31, as it came up multiple times in the comments.

**APPENDIX D**  
**MASON 2020 TOWN SERVICES SURVEY RESULTS**

# MASON TOWN SERVICES SURVEY RESULTS

## Zoning Board of Adjustment

**No Opinion – 37%**

Good – 29%

Fair – 21%

Excellent – 7%

Poor – 6%

Nasty – 1%

## Board of Selectmen

**Good – 36%**

Fair – 20%

No Opinion – 20%

Excellent – 13%

Poor – 8%

Nasty – 3%

## Conservation Commission

**Good – 35%**

Excellent – 28%

No Opinion – 19%

Fair – 10%

Poor – 4%

Nasty – 4%

## EMS/Ambulance

**Excellent – 35%**

**Good – 35%**

No Opinion – 22%

Fair – 7%

Poor – 2%

Nasty – 1%

## Fire Department

**Good – 43%**

Excellent – 36%

No Opinion – 14%

Fair – 7%

Poor – 1%

Nasty – 1%

## Highway Department

**Good – 38%**

Fair – 24%

Poor – 16%

Excellent – 15%

Nasty – 3%

No Opinion 3%

## Library

**Good – 41%**

Excellent – 32%

No Opinion – 14%

Fair – 10%

Poor – 2%

Nasty – 0%

## Planning Board

**Good – 37%**

No Opinion – 31%

Fair – 14%

Excellent – 13%

Poor – 5%

Nasty – 1%

## Police Department

**Good – 54%**

Excellent – 21%

Fair – 15%

Poor – 4%

No Opinion – 3%

Nasty – 2%

## Town Cemeteries

**Good – 43%**

No Opinion – 32%

Excellent – 21%

Fair – 5%

Poor – 0%

Nasty – 0%

## Town Clerk

**Excellent – 49%**

Good – 42%

Fair – 4%

No Opinion – 4%

Poor – 1%

Nasty – 0%

### Comments:

- Highway Dept does an excellent job considering the age of their equipment.
- I would like to see a green cemetery established in town. No concrete vaults, no embalming, let the worms do their thing.
- Most are great, Board of Selectmen needs changes.
- Deb is awesome. So is the conservation commission.
- I haven't lived in town long enough to have an informed opinion about many of the services. One thing I know is that this is a great little town filled with folks who care about it.
- Thanks for taking the time to ask our thoughts.
- Get rid of the police department. Let state police cover this area. The highway department needs to have competent leaders and workers to make the most out of our tax dollars.
- Set term limits for Selectmen - 2 terms then done. The highway department needs someone in charge who can lead and also hires workers who are qualified. Our dirt roads are horrible and need serious repair. Driving these roads cost money in car repairs, town vehicle abuse etc. We MUST look at paving more dirt roads for safety, elimination of toxic road dust, and vehicle abuse. We need competent leaders who can write and apply for grants to help offset the cost of road repairs.
- Voting for ALL elections should be 7 or 8am-7pm; town voting 11am-7pm is not adequate for folks commuting long distances
- Only put good because I don't work with those boards or know what they are working on
- Highway Department to be a real department with real budget for PAVING roads and road drainage etc.

- Excellent group of volunteer first responders. Score of fair given to the police because they didn't appear to want to enforce the ordinance regarding the Quarry, other than Officer Thompson who is no longer with us.
- Very happy to be living in Mason!
- In the short time I've live in Mason, EVERYONE - has been nothing short of welcoming, helpful, neighborly, and pleasant. So happy to be here!
- Very good for their budgets and the people who participate
- best most awesomest group of town volunteers ever assembled anywhere!
- Need changes to board of selectmen. Fresh ideas. It was ridiculous not to allow high speed internet when they had the chance. And it was ridiculous to allow loud music to be played at the driving range. The driving range should have been required to build a building to house bands so it wouldn't disturb people living and paying taxes around them.
- love our library!!
- Haven't visited the cemeteries before, hope to only visit them once.... I think the town does the best they can with what we have. If we got everything we wanted, we'd be called Brookline or Hollis or pick another developed town. Put your home in one of those said towns, then complain all day AND night about your "tax rate"
- I think everyone works hard to keep things running in Mason, sometimes as a small town budget constraints make doing the job more difficult.
- The people who work on our town services are all doing the best they can, many thanks for keeping up Mason.
- Town officials and volunteers deliver outstanding customer service without a lot of fuss or bureaucracy. One of main reasons I like Mason.
- Deb rocks. Police department is unnecessary.
- can't comment on which cemetery is better would not make a difference when I'm dead anyways
- I'll let you know about the cemeteries after I'm dead and buried there!