

Town of  
**MEREDITH**  
New Hampshire

**COMMUNITY PLAN**

2002





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Planning Board would like thank the many citizens of Meredith who participated in the community planning process. Specifically we wish to acknowledge the following volunteers for their contribution to the Community Plan.

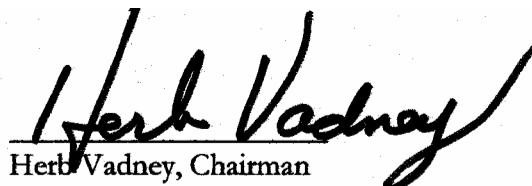
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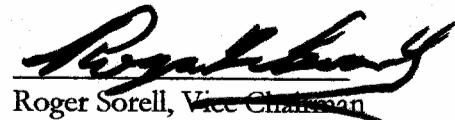
The Meredith Community Plan was written by Meredith Town Planner, John C. Edgar AICP. Technical assistance was provided by the Lakes Region Planning Commission and by Dr. Fred Hatch.

Certification of Adoption and Filing

In Accordance with New Hampshire RSA 674:4, Master Plan Adoption and Amendment and New Hampshire RSA 675:6, Method of Adoption, the Meredith, New Hampshire Planning Board conducted a public hearing on September 24, 2002. The Planning Board hereby adopts and certifies this Community Plan by an affirmative vote of the Board on November 12, 2002.



Herb Vadney  
Herb Vadney, Chairman



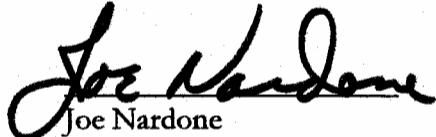
Roger Sorell  
Roger Sorell, Vice Chairman



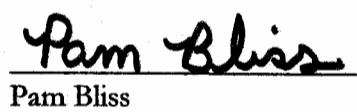
Bill Bayard  
Bill Bayard, Secretary



Robert C. Flanders  
Robert C. Flanders, Selectman



Joe Nardone  
Joe Nardone

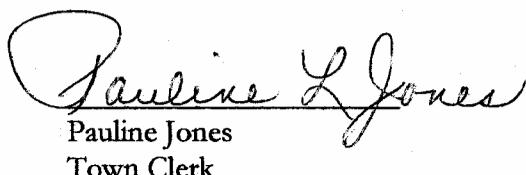


Pam Bliss  
Pam Bliss



Bill Finer  
Bill Finer

I do hereby certify that on Dec 3, 2002 the Meredith Community Plan with original signatures was filed with the Town Clerk, 41 Main Street, Meredith, New Hampshire.



Pauline L. Jones  
Pauline Jones  
Town Clerk

# MEREDITH COMMUNITY PLAN - 2002

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

### ***CHANGE IS INEVITABLE***

Communities respond to change in various ways. Some prefer to avoid change altogether, taking steps to isolate themselves from anything that may change the status quo. Others find themselves surprised by change, confronted with problems that could have been anticipated. Meredith recognizes that social and economic forces continually influence our community, and that our individual and collective interests are best served through understanding, preparedness, participation, and planning.

### ***PURPOSE OF THE PLAN***

The Master Plan, or “Community Plan” as we refer to it, is the foundation from which a community can guide growth and development. Meredith has embraced comprehensive community planning over the last thirty years, adopting plans in 1969, 1982, and 1989. A review of these plans demonstrates that planning has been put into practice in Meredith. Over the years the community has made significant strides to improve the environment in which we live, work, play, and invest. This Community Plan, building upon that practice, aims to increase understanding of our community and to provide guidance on improving our quality of life. In doing so, it provides a meaningful basis upon which future decisions can be made. This includes decisions made by public officials, which necessarily must balance the need to manage future growth with the rights of individual property owners. Just as important, the Community Plan provides a basis for the choices and decisions made by individuals, families and organizations, which can help improve the quality of life in our community.

### ***AUTHORITY***

The responsibility to prepare the Community Plan rests with the Planning Board, a seven member, volunteer board, appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The enabling legal authority for the Planning Board to prepare a “master plan” and the particular requirements for plan composition and method of adoption are set forth in New Hampshire RSA 674:1-4.

## ***PLAN PRINCIPLES***

The Community Plan is the result of a strategic approach to community planning structured around several basic principles:

1. The citizens of Meredith are best prepared to plan for and meet the challenges that face Meredith. Our community planning process has relied upon and benefited from extensive input and participation by our citizens;
2. Our value-based approach to community planning is both pragmatic and purposeful. Common values articulated by the citizens of Meredith underlie our priorities and have formed the basis of our vision for a desired future;
3. Our shared vision represents a flexible framework within which the determination of goals and implementation of specific strategies can occur;
4. The assessment of conditions, constraints, and opportunities facing the community has formed the basis of formulating more specific recommendations to achieve desired objectives and outcomes;
5. Our specific recommendations for action are intended to incrementally move the community from where we are today, to where we want to be in the future; and
6. The policies and strategies articulated in the plan have been integrated to realistically reflect the natural interrelationships between ideas, characteristics, and systems within our community. Careful consideration has been given to ensure that elements of the plan are presented in a coordinated and complementary fashion.
7. The Community Plan is a look in the year 2002 at a planned route from which excursions are expected and encouraged. The Plan serves as a baseline from which future adjustments can be clearly defined, planned, and executed. The plan is intended to be flexible and allow for modifications and adjustments as future circumstances may warrant.

## ***THE PLANNING PROCESS***

In the Fall of 1997, the Meredith Planning Board initiated the community planning process by establishing the Community Plan Coordinating Committee. This committee was comprised of ten volunteer members, four of whom served on the Planning Board. The committee was charged with the overall responsibility of project coordination including developing citizen participation, volunteer recruitment and communication strategies, budgeting, and final plan editing. In May of 1998, a public forum was held entitled "Values and Vision". This widely publicized event resulted in a diverse gathering of citizens participating in exercises designed to identify what people value most about Meredith's past, present, and future. Areas of broad consensus were identified which formed the basis of our "Shared Vision" for the future of Meredith. The Shared Vision has been articulated and can be found in Chapter III of this document. As a result of this forum, approximately fifty citizens volunteered to serve on five subcommittees to conduct analysis of existing conditions, identify key issues, and make recommendations. The subcommittees were organized by topic: Community Facilities and Human Resources, Community Economic Development, Conservation and Community Recreation, Transportation, and Housing and Utilities. Each subcommittee was charged with making a final report on its findings and recommendations.

Over the following several months, the subcommittees gathered specific information about Meredith to better understand the community and to identify issues that the plan should address. In August of 1998 a public forum entitled “Perspectives on Issues and Opportunities” was held to gather public input on the findings and the preliminary thinking and direction recommended by the subcommittees. The subcommittees resumed their work to refine the identification of issues and recommended actions. In May of 1999 the final public forum was held. “Implementing the Vision” was an opportunity for the subcommittees to receive input on their draft reports including goals, objectives, and recommended actions. Public participation and the work of the five subcommittees served as the basis for this Community Plan.

The planning process is not over. Planning is a continual process with success largely achieved through the implementation of the recommendations and strategies found in the Master Plan. The only way to measure the level of success is through a periodic review of the Plan to examine what you have achieved, and what still needs to be worked on. The Planning Board should review the plan yearly in order to develop an assessment of the success of the Plan measured by examining the *intent* of the Plan and the *reality* of implementation. Amendments to the plan can be made yearly by means of a progress report, and ideally, the Plan document itself should be updated in whole five years from now. Certainly, no more than ten years should pass before the Planning Board provides a full update of the Community Plan.

## ***PLAN ORGANIZATION***

The Community Plan has been organized to maximize readability and usefulness. The topical chapters are presented in a consistent, five-part format:

***Part 1. What the chapter covers.*** This is a brief description of the subject areas discussed in each section.

***Part 2. Existing Conditions and Issues.*** Before we can make recommendations, we need to identify and understand our starting point. Significant community issues identified during the planning process are discussed.

***Part 3. Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations.*** This part describes our long-term goals to achieve our shared vision and the shorter-term objectives that serve to organize and bring focus to our recommendations. Specific actions or tasks are identified in order to achieve the objectives and goals.

***Part 4. Relationships to Other Chapters.*** As you read each chapter of this plan, you will recognize that the chapters do not stand alone. This part identifies the principal relationships between plan components.

***Part 5. References.*** This part includes a list of reference documents which contain underlying data or technical information appropriate to the chapter.



## CHAPTER 2. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

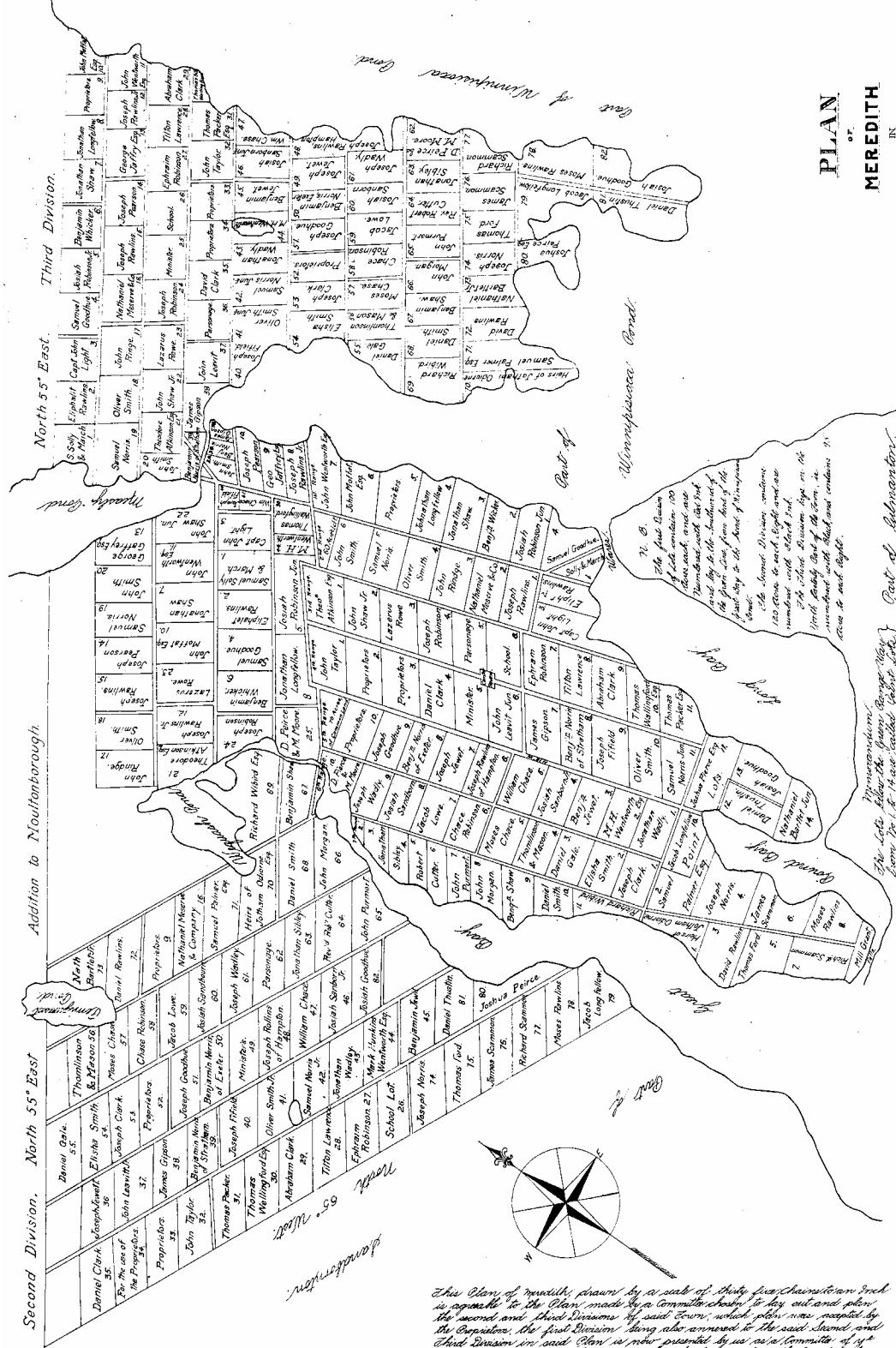
### ***THE FIRST PEOPLE***

Native Americans living in the Lake Winnipesaukee area belonged to the Western Abenaki Indian Tribe. The Western Abenaki inhabited the Vermont, New Hampshire, and Southern Quebec regions as early as 800 BC. The first half-century of European colonization was characterized by relatively peaceful coexistence. Relations deteriorated as settlement pressures forced the Native Americans from their homes and hunting grounds and subjected them to communicable diseases for which they had little or no immunity. The Abenaki retreated to their homeland, the Missisquoi Region of Vermont near Lake Champlain. It has been estimated that by 1760, the Native American population in New Hampshire had been reduced by 94% to a population of only 700.

### ***EARLY SETTLEMENT***

In 1748, forty-six seacoast proprietors were granted six square miles of land located north of the Winnipesaukee River in the Province of New Hampshire. The grant was made by a group of Portsmouth men who in 1746 had purchased John Tufton Mason's extensive early 17<sup>th</sup> century land grant. The new town was first known as Palmerstown, named after one of the proprietors and early surveyor, Samuel Palmer. The name would be changed to Salem, then to New Salem. Typical of the settlement period, proprietors would invest jointly in land that they had not seen. The land would be surveyed and divided into shares and lots. Incentives were provided to encourage settlement. The proprietors speculated that their frontier land would increase in value as settlement progressed. The origins of community planning in Meredith date back to the terms of the 1748 grant which stipulated that land be reserved for future, specific public purposes. By 1766, nine houses had been built and fifty acres had been cleared. Two years later, New Salem was formally incorporated as the Town of Meredith, named by Governor Wentworth after Sir William Meredith, a prominent member of the English Parliament. A "Plan of Meredith" prepared in 1770 depicts the entire Town as subdivided into divisions, ranges, lots, inter-connecting roads, and land dedicated for various public purposes including a public common. The town center was located on a high point of land, which in later years would be referred to as Meredith Parade. A copy of the 1770 plan is included as Map 2-1. Accessibility, communication, and frontier settlement were furthered by the completion in the middle to late 1770's of one of the most significant and controversial public works projects of its day, the first Province Road. The one hundred mile Province Road linked the seacoast markets to the fertile Connecticut River Valley while passing directly through Meredith's town center. By 1775, Meredith's population had reached approximately 259 people. The local economy was agrarian based, consisting of small, largely self-sufficient farms. Concentrations of settlement began to evolve around saw and grist mill sites located near reliable sources of water power, including Mill Brook at Meredith Center, Swasey's Canal at Meredith Village, and the Winnipesaukee River at Meredith Bridge.

Map 2-1. Plan of Meredith 1770



This Plan, of ~~meadows, prairies~~ by a scale of thirty-five ~~feet~~ <sup>feet</sup> to an Inch, is agreeable to the Plan made by a Committee chosen to lay out and plan the second and third Divisions of said Town, which plan was accepted by the Committee, the first Division being also annexed to the said Town, and Third Division in said Town is now presented by us as a Committee of <sup>the</sup> Committee, the trustees of said Township, to the Committee the trustees for the Corporation and proprietors at Portsmouth, <sup>on</sup> the day of December 1779, to <sup>be</sup> at their making then held.

Josiah Sandborn  
Elizur Smith } Committee.

Surveyed 1770.

- 2 -

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Surveyed 1770.

Act. 1907 of the Govt. of  
N.W.F.P. made from the copy  
sent by Mr. Abdur Rauf  
and made on 18/11/1911  
C. H. Bailey, C.E.

### ***A NEW MEREDITH IS DEFINED***

As the town progressed into the middle to late part of the nineteenth century, three distinct economic sectors emerged. Agriculture blossomed as the cultural and economic mainstay of the community. Subsistence level farming was replaced by production-scale farming which was the primary source of employment. Meredith, as a farming town, was surpassed by only a few other towns in the State. Concurrent with the marked rise in agriculture was the development of a manufacturing base in Meredith Bridge and Meredith Village. Sources of flowing water were again harnessed to power the mills, which incorporated the advances of early industrial technology. These two competing village centers complete with retail trade, lodging, and professional services, would develop around their industrial centers. The extension of the Boston, Concord, and Montreal Railroad to Meredith in 1848 dramatically improved accessibility, thereby solidifying the position of both villages in the region as centers for residential, commercial, and industrial development. Between 1775 and 1850, the population of Meredith had grown from 259 to 3,521.

In 1855, the southeasterly portion Meredith, including the original settlement area of Meredith Parade and industrial village center at Meredith Bridge, was separated by an act of the New Hampshire Legislature. The new town was incorporated as the Town of Laconia. Of the four adjustments to our political boundaries occurring between 1754 and 1873, this was by far the most significant. US Census data collected in 1860 indicates that after separation, Meredith's population decreased by 45% to 1944 residents.

### ***FROM INDUSTRY TO TOURISM***

During the latter part of the nineteenth-century and the beginning of the twentieth century, significant economic shifts would re-shape the nature of the local economy in Meredith. Agriculture, once the cornerstone of the rural landscape, would experience a gradual yet pronounced decline due to mostly external factors, including the inability to compete with the agricultural productivity of mid-western states. Meredith's manufacturing base would mature and remain prosperous into the middle of the twentieth-century. The availability of goods and services fostered Meredith Village's position as a regional commercial and trading center. However, during the fifty-year period from 1870 to 1920, Meredith's resident population experienced a decrease of 7 percent, as agriculture and manufacturing interests in New England were migrating to other regions of the country. It is during this period that two major changes in Meredith began to manifest themselves; (1) a pronounced shift toward the use of waterfront properties by non-residents for seasonal and recreational use; and (2) the emergence of tourism as a major component of the local service economy.

Following World War I, agriculture and manufacturing would continue to decline. The advent of the automobile would foster even greater accessibility to Meredith and the region as a whole. Advances in transportation technology, the desire for a quality of life associated with a small New England community, and Meredith's central geographic location all hastened the transition toward a local, service-orientated economy. Summer camps owned by seasonal residents and an expanding lodging industry (rental cabins and cottages, hotels, boarding houses, and youth camps) would characterize the shift towards hospitality services, recreation, and tourism. In 1930, the resident population was estimated at 1,902. The decades following World War II brought dramatic change

to both the demographic and the physical make-up of the community. The construction and realignment of modern highways in the late 1940's, followed by the completion of the Interstate system by the early 1960's, had a profound impact on the community. During the twenty-year period from 1960 to 1980, Meredith experienced an unparalleled explosion in residential population growth and second home waterfront development. Over that twenty-year period, the resident population increased by 91%. By 1990, the seasonal and second home market would account for 40% of the entire housing stock in Meredith.

### ***MEREDITH TODAY***

The closure of Amatex Mill and the ensuing construction of the Mills Falls Inn and Marketplace in 1983 signaled the century-old transformation of Meredith Village from a mill town to a visitor destination. Today's industries are no longer driven by waterpower, but by high technology. Working farms, once the mainstay of a rural economy and landscape, are today the exception not the standard. Natural resources such as soils, fields, and forests, once viewed in terms of commercial productivity, are today also revered for their scenic qualities, wildlife habitat, and recreation potential.

## CHAPTER 3. VALUES AND VISION

### ***OUR VALUES***

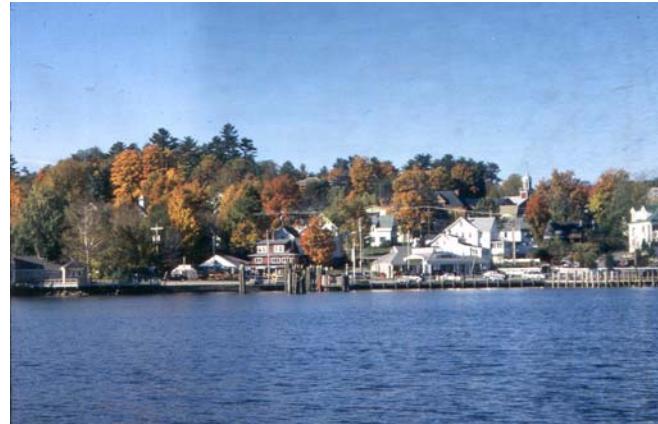
The preparation of the Community Plan involved the collection and analysis of a wide range of issues and information. However, our plan is much more than an assemblage of facts and figures. The Community Plan highlights our aspirations about the direction of future community development. Our vision for the future of Meredith necessarily builds upon community-held values. The values that we share form the foundation upon which we strive to maintain, protect and improve our quality of life.

The core of our community is our people; people who choose to connect with their community. Our citizens contribute to the community in countless ways, through participation in the political process, through partnerships and collaborative projects, as caring parents, through community service, through athletic instruction and accomplishment, as stewards of our architectural and natural treasures, and as volunteers. As members of the community we are the beneficiaries of these countless contributions. We enjoy a sense of pride about our community. We have safe streets and neighborhoods, stable property values, social and spiritual networks, cultural activities, opportunities to participate in community affairs, resulting in a safe and healthy environment in which to raise a family. As a community, we experience trust, comfort, compassion, acceptance, and leadership.



A source of community pride and a backdrop to our respective investment in the community is our unique historical and cultural heritage. Our small New England village and surrounding countryside are complete with a rich history, exemplary architecture, community facilities, cultural events, picturesque scenery and friendly atmosphere. This setting helps to define what Meredith is, and why it is so special to us. We are blessed by the location of our community. Our enviable location has been, and remains, integral to our way of life. As a destination we are readily accessible and surrounded with beautiful lakes and mountain vistas. From Meredith, we can readily access other regions as well. Conversely, our location also represents major challenges as we strive to protect and improve the very quality of life that defines Meredith.

The abundance and quality of our natural resources contributes to our quality of life in many different ways. Open spaces reinforce our rural, community character. Our lakes, ponds, and forests provide valuable wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. The pleasing, simple beauty of our views and vistas complement a chosen, more relaxed life style. The quality of the air we breathe and the water we drink contributes to the overall health of the community.



Transportation to, through and within our community is vital to our economic and personal well being. We value the necessity of managing vehicular traffic to the greatest level of community benefit. However, transportation is not limited to automobiles. Various alternative modes of transportation such as pedestrian, bicycle, bus, boat and rail all play a part in making Meredith an accessible community.

Investments in community facilities are statements about what we value. Our churches, the library, the park system, the recycling center, our schools, the community auditorium, waterfront access and a planned community center are all intended to meet the varied needs of our diverse population.

## ***OUR VISION***

Meredith will continue to grow and evolve in many different ways. We will choose to manage that growth in order to promote a healthy, prosperous and successful community that reflects our common values. We share, and will continue to share, a vision that reflects what we as a community are committed to achieve. When one experiences Meredith twenty years from now, the fruits of our labor will be obvious.

Our people will continue to be the very heart and soul of the community. Avenues of communication will be abundant. Collaboration will be the norm, not the exception. Personal growth, cooperation, trust and responsible political dialogue will prevail. Each and every citizen will want to connect with their community in some constructive fashion and be recognized for their contributions. We will maintain closeness with one another, demonstrating a strong sense of community well-being and spirit.

All members of the community will articulate a special awareness about our local culture and our unique New England heritage. Our small town character and village setting will be cherished and protected to a degree that is the envy of the region. Historical architecture will be well maintained and will encourage additional investment and serves as a guide for future development.

The long standing environmental preservation and conservation ethic within the community will progress to an unparalleled level. Critical natural resources such as significant wetlands, undeveloped shoreline areas, scenic vistas, wildlife corridors, groundwater supplies, large forested

areas, and agricultural soils will be conserved through a comprehensive open space strategy. Private landowners (old and new alike) will recognize and welcome their responsibility as land stewards. There will be a high level of participation in incentive programs, consistent offers of gifts of land to local conservation entities and broad support for local initiatives. Natural resource protection efforts will complement economic development and be considered by the public as critical to a balanced growth policy.



The town will continue to improve its leadership position in the regional economy as a visitor destination and as a recreation center. Our niche as a visitor destination will be further developed without compromising the quality of our physical, visual and natural environments. Residents will experience dramatically improved employment opportunities. Economic growth in the areas of professional services, telecommunications and compatible industry will stabilize the local economy and improve family income levels. The Main Street and Meredith Village area will continue to develop into a regional center of economic, cultural and social activity. Meredith will be considered a model for successful downtown revitalization. Increasing numbers of family owned businesses and cottage industries will start and prosper. Home based employment will be available to many families.

A comprehensive transportation management plan will be successfully developed and implemented to recognize the importance of all modes of transportation. Negative impacts associated with seasonal traffic congestion will be minimized while the positive aspects of high traffic volumes will be accentuated. The convenience and safety of pedestrians will be given high priority and a system of bike lanes and trails will offer greater opportunities for local travel throughout the town.



Investment in community facilities will keep pace with the varied demands of the citizenry with activities and facilities for residents of all ages provided. Our park system and recreational programs will be considered to be the finest in the region. The town will be recognized for its leadership in providing outstanding educational facilities and core municipal services.

As the town grows, so too will the demand for housing. Housing opportunities for all income levels will continue to improve. Senior housing, rental apartments and affordable single family homes will be developed. A resulting mix of housing types will meet the diverse needs of the community.

As the benefits of strategic community planning become more and more apparent, each student, resident, property owner, and business person will recognize that sound local and regional planning can improve the environment in which we live, grow, work and play. They will know that citizen participation, balanced public policies, planned growth, wise capital spending, and broad based community planning are fundamental to ensuring Meredith will be a wonderful place to live for many generations to come.



## CHAPTER 4. PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY

### ***PART 1. WHAT THIS SECTION COVERS***

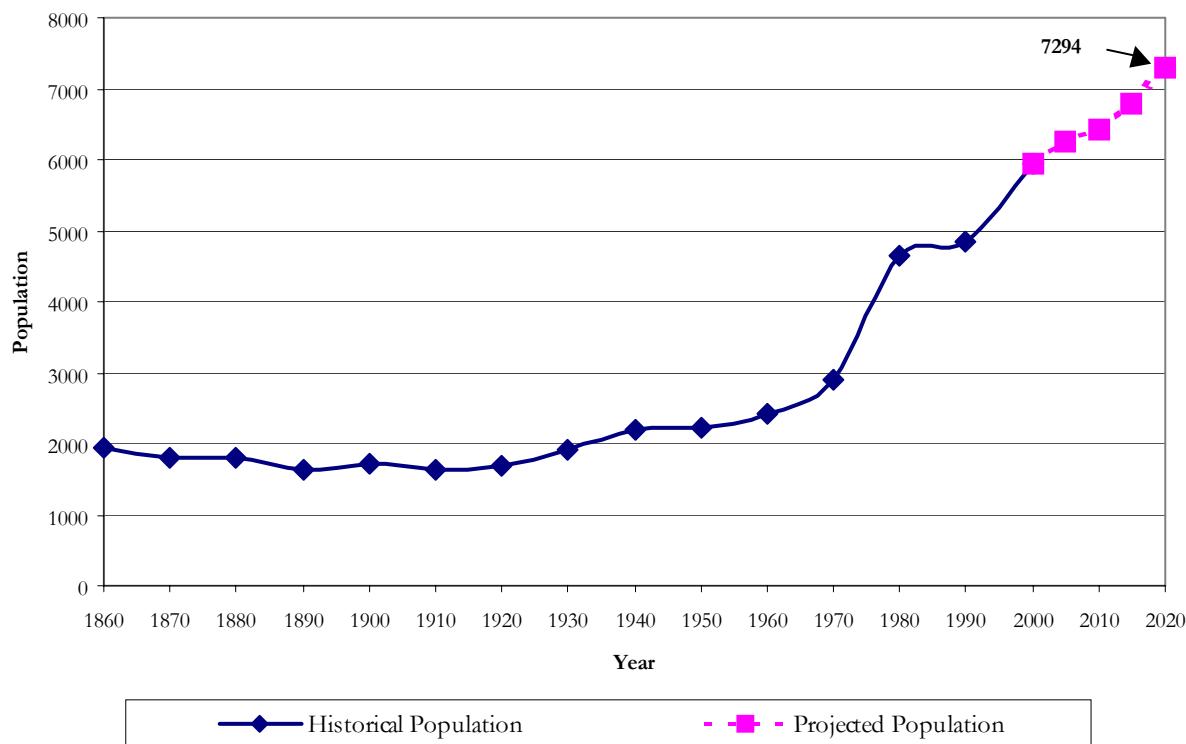
People are the core of our community. The success of our community is dependent upon the people who choose to live, work, play and invest here. We are community resources as much as we are beneficiaries of community life. This section examines our citizenry, from two very different perspectives; first, a demographic perspective on the make up of our community, and second, a social perspective on the role people play in contributing to Meredith's future.

### ***PART 2. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES***

**Population trends and projections.** The size and nature of our local population directly influence our sense of community and how our community functions. For example, the cultural attributes, socio-economic needs, and political dynamics of a small town are distinctly different than those of a city. This translates into a wide array of community planning considerations. Therefore it is helpful to assess our population growth from a historical perspective and to make generalized projections about future population characteristics. Population estimates are one of many tools that we will use in planning for the future of our community. Population projections by their nature are inexact as they must be based upon a number of variables and assumptions.

During the sixty years from 1860 to 1920, Meredith experienced a 14% decline in population. This may have been due to such factors as the Civil War and general migration to urban centers and the more fertile lands of the Midwest. In 1920 the population was 1,680. Ironically, this decline in population corresponded with a period of significant agricultural and manufacturing prosperity in Meredith. Following World War II, Meredith's population began to increase dramatically. Between 1950 and 1960, Meredith's population increased by only 9.5%, but from 1960 to 1970 it increased by 19.3%, followed by an astounding 60% increase a decade later. During the thirty-year period from 1950 to 1980, our resident population more than doubled! This major population increase can be attributed largely to greater regional accessibility (i.e. Interstate 93 opened in the 1960's), transformation of the local economy into a service-based economy, and the desire to experience the qualities of life that Meredith has to offer. Population growth stalled in the 1980's (4.1%), likely related to the un-sustainability of previous growth and an economic recession. The 1990's saw a resumption of fairly rapid growth (23%), most occurring during the later half of the decade. The US Census estimated our population for 2000 at 5,943. A continuation of significant, steady growth is anticipated in the future. By the year 2020, our total resident population is projected to increase by 1,351 people which represents 563 additional year round households. Population Trends and Population Projections are depicted in Figure 4-1.

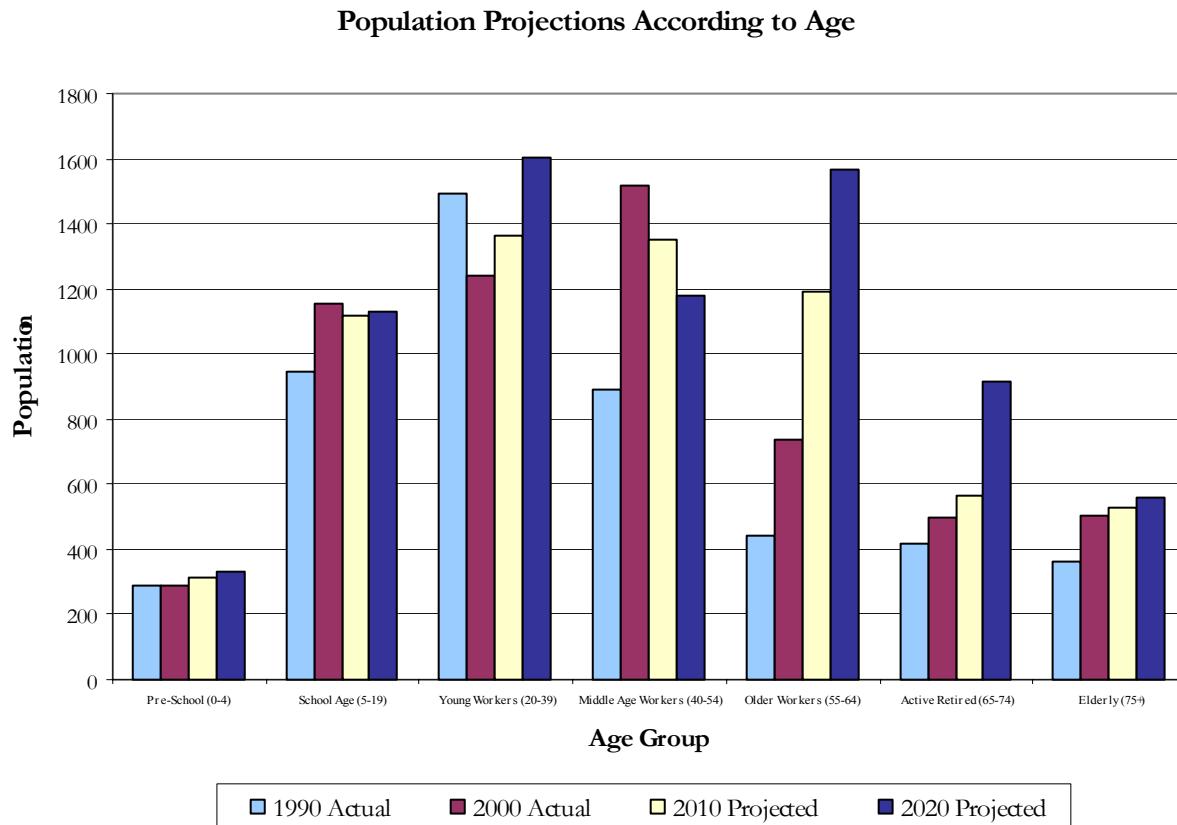
**Figure 4-1. Population Trends and Projections—Meredith, NH 1860-2020**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (Historical) and Dr. Fred Hatch (Projected)

**Age Distribution.** The population projections for the entire community have been broken down into age groups and are depicted in Figure 4-2. Future changes in the pre-school (0-4) and school age (5-19) populations are expected to be small with numbers relatively similar to 2000 actual levels. The workforce age group (20-64) will gradually increase and will represent the largest sector of the population (60%) by 2020. The projections suggest a progressive aging of the population that is consistent with state and national trends. Most notable is a marked increase in the 55 to 74 age groups. Those aged 65 years and older will constitute one-fifth of the resident population by 2020.

**Seasonal Population.** The seasonal population of Meredith has become an increasingly important part of the community since the 1940's. The number of seasonal homes, visitor accommodations, and summer camps determines the size of the seasonal population. The seasonal population, particularly during the summer months has pronounced impacts on the community that can be viewed as both positive and negative. For example, a tremendous amount of commercial activity occurs that is both directly and indirectly attributed to the influx of seasonal residents and visitors. The tax base expands and job opportunities increase. Furthermore, seasonal residents and transient visitors do not impact the local school system. On the other hand, with additional seasonal and transient visitors comes additional traffic and increased demand placed on municipal services and facilities. This is most evident in the areas of safety services, recreation and solid

**Figure 4-2. Population Trends and Projections by Age Group - Meredith, NH 1990-2020**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (Historical) and Dr. Fred Hatch (Projected)

The number of dwelling units used on a *seasonal* basis (seasonal, recreational, or occasional use) in Meredith increased significantly from 220 units in 1960 to 1611 units in 2000; a gain of 1391 units over forty years. In 2000, the 1611 seasonal units represented 38.4% of the entire housing stock. This rate is significantly higher than that for the Lakes Region (29.7 %), Belknap County (26.7%), and the State of New Hampshire (10.3%). Seasonal dwelling units represent the largest and most unpredictable variable of the seasonal population estimate. Additionally, each seasonal or second home unit has the potential of being used on a year round basis. As our seasonal residents approach retirement age, many may choose to retire in Meredith and become year round residents. New construction of seasonal units will likely continue. According to the Meredith Assessing Department, in 2001 there were 141 undeveloped waterfront properties, and 211 undeveloped properties with deeded waterfront access.

The number of persons-per-household (pph) in a seasonal unit (approximately 4-6 pph) is likely to be significantly greater than the corresponding occupancy rate for a year round home (2.4 pph). Assuming 5 pph, seasonal units accounted for approximately 8055 people in 2000.

Other contributors to the seasonal population influx include commercial campgrounds, lodging facilities and non-profit camps. A summary of estimated “transient” population for 2000 is as follows:

Four (4) Commercial Campgrounds (431 sites x 3 people /site):	1293
Thirteen (13) Lodging Establishments (191 rental units x 3 people /unit):	573
Four (4) Non-Profit Camps (528 total camper capacity):	<u>528</u>
	<b>2394</b>

The estimated seasonal peak population for Meredith is summarized in Table 4-1.

**Table 4-1. Estimated Peak Seasonal Population - Meredith, NH 2000**

Population Attributable to Seasonal Units	8,055
Estimated Transient Population	2,394
<b>Total Estimated Seasonal Population</b>	<b>10,449</b>
Total Estimated Seasonal Population	10,449
Resident Population (US Census)	5,943
<b>2000 Estimated Peak Seasonal Population</b>	<b>16,392</b>

**Community Life.** Our community is more than a place or destination. We are a mosaic of individuals, families, organizations and institutions that reach out to one another, lend a hand to those in need, and mobilize to advance the common good of the community. The resulting web of relationships creates the social fabric of our community. Like many New Hampshire communities, Meredith has a strong sense of community and a sense of pride in what distinguishes us from other communities.

Community life in Meredith will have a profound influence on the lives of our children. Many of our social values and human perspective is acquired during these early, formative years. Basic values such as honesty, kindness, respect, self-esteem, tolerance, and humility are *tools* that help children prepare for the challenges of the future. Although the responsibility for our children belongs first and foremost with parents, everyone can help transfer positive values to children. Our citizens, neighborhoods, schools, churches, and organizations can reinforce positive values, lead by example, and be supportive of parents and families. This supportive community environment is an essential ingredient towards creating productive citizens. Everyone has a stake in the development of our youth.

**Individuals.** Every individual in our community is a resource. Everyone, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender or income has some gift, skill or talent that can help add to the success of our community. It is our collective gifts, skills and talents that gives us the capacity to provide, maintain and improve our quality of life.

**Table 4-2. Local Organizations and Networks - Meredith, NH 2001****Community Service/Civic Organizations (16):**

Altrusa  
 Astra  
 American Legion Post # 33, including the Auxillary and SAL  
 Interlakes Alumni Association  
 Kiwanis  
 Latchkey Charities, Inc.  
 Meredith Lions Club  
 Meredith Historical Society  
 Meredith Garden Club  
 Meredith Volunteer Fire Department  
 Meredith Fire Department Auxiliary  
 Meredith Area Chamber of Commerce  
 Meredith Main Street Program  
 Meredith Rotary International Club  
 Wicwas Grange

**Religious (10):**

Meredith Calvary Bible Church (Advent Christian)  
 First Baptist Church of Meredith  
 First Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)  
 Meredith Center Baptist Church  
 Meredith Full Gospel Assembly  
 Saint Charles Church (Roman Catholic)  
 Union Church of Meredith Neck  
 Meredith Trinity Episcopal Church  
 Saint John's on the Lake (Bear Island)  
 Lakes Region Assembly of God

**Leisure/ Recreation (10):**

50 Plus Club  
 Meredith Duplicate Bridge Club  
 Meredith Senior Center  
 Meredith Public Library  
 Interlakes Arts & Crafts  
 Interlakes Youth Soccer League  
 Bill Lamper Youth Basketball League  
 Lakes Region Youth Baseball/ Softball League  
 Babe Ruth Baseball League  
 Sno-Streakers Snowmobile Club

**Youth Development (5):**

Boy Scouts Troop 55, Daniel Webster Council  
 Cub Scout Pack 55, Daniel Webster Council  
 Girl Scouts, Interlakes Service Unit, Swift Water Council  
 Explorer Post 132  
 Interlakes Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

**Neighborhood/ Homeowners Associations (30):**

Bear Island Association  
 Cygnet Shores Condominium Association  
 Colony Club  
 Deer Park Beach Association  
 East Bluff Highlands Association  
 East Bluff Village Association  
 Fish Cove Association  
 Grouse Point Association  
 Hemlock Glen Association  
 Hubbard Beach Association  
 Inter-lakes MHP Tenants Association  
 Loon Watch Condominium Association  
 Meredith Acres Beach Association  
 Meredith Center MHP Cooperative  
 Neal Shore Road Improvement Association  
 Needle Eye Road Association  
 Olde Colonial Manor Tenants Cooperative  
 Patricia Drive Association  
 Patrician Shores Association  
 Pine Island Association  
 Pine Hill Community Association  
 Sachem Cove Condominium Association  
 Sands of Brook Hurst Association  
 Spindle Point Civic Association  
 Sky Acres Association  
 Tall Pines Condominium Association  
 Waldron Bay Lot Owners Association  
 Waukewan Shore Owners Association  
 Winnipesaukee Habitat Association  
 Winona Forest Association

**Local Government:***Elected Officials:*

Town Moderator  
 Treasurer  
 Town Clerk  
 Board of Selectmen  
 Board of Library Trustees  
 Supervisors of the Checklist  
 Trustees of Trust Funds  
 Interlakes School Board

*Appointed Officials:*

Planning Board  
 Zoning Board of Adjustment  
 Conservation Commission  
 Recreation Commission

*Committees/ Task Forces/ Initiatives:*

Route 3 & 25 Citizens Advisory Task Force  
 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Advisory Committee  
 Prescott Park Planning Committee  
 Community Center Search Committee  
 Community Response Group (CORE)

**Organizations.** Meredith is blessed with a wide array of volunteer organizations and networks, which contribute to community life in different ways. Organizations and associations are a primary way in which talents are identified, shared, developed, and mobilized. Local organizations help communities define issues, solve problems and implement solutions. Relationships established within and between organizations advance shared purposes and build trust while making life's challenges a little easier to navigate. Many of our local organizations are listed in Table 4-2. In addition to these organizations, the Interlakes School District, regional organizations, and social service agencies also offer opportunities to Meredith citizens.

**Local Government.** Self-determination, local control, and participatory government are more than catch phrases. In New England it is tradition, it is part of our culture, it is expected. We elect the Board of Selectmen and the Interlakes School Board as our governing boards. Our elected officials in turn appoint professional public administrators (Town Manager, Superintendent of Schools) to administer the daily operations of government. The operations of government are largely dependent upon citizen volunteers appointed to serve on numerous boards, commissions, committees and task forces as indicated above. Annual Town and School District Meetings serve as the local legislative bodies. Each voter has a direct vote and the opportunity to speak to any matter before the body. Town and School District Meetings have the responsibility of raising and appropriating funds to meet the needs for the ensuing year. Participation in local political processes increases levels of accountability, efficiency and responsiveness.

In March, 2002, there were 3,242 registered voters in Meredith. Twenty three per cent of the registered voters (761) cast written ballots for the election of town officers and for consideration of zoning changes. Four per cent of the registered voters (142) participated at the deliberative session of Town Meeting where the annual budget was approved. Clearly there is a need to improve voter participation, especially during times lacking politically sensitive issues or controversy that may attract voters that otherwise might not participate.

The effectiveness of our local democracies, and ultimately our community well being, is dependant upon informed citizens choosing to participate. Our community will continue to grow and our individual lives likely will become more complicated. It will become increasingly important that we do not create an environment of apathy where citizens withdraw or disconnect from the institutions of community life. Rather, we must foster an environment where citizens connect with one another and contribute to the future of their community.

### ***PART 3. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

In order to achieve our vision for the future, we have identified the following goal:

**Future growth should be reasonable in relation to our community's ability to support and accommodate it. Community life is fostered through relationships, civic participation, a common future and a sense of loyalty to the community.**

To fulfill this goal, several objectives and recommendations have been developed to guide future initiatives:

**Objective A:** Use demographic analysis as a planning tool to facilitate a better understanding of community trends and related potential impacts to the community.

1. Update and evaluate population and age distribution projections as information becomes available.
2. Update and evaluate school enrollment data and enrollment projections annually.
3. Incorporate population trends and school enrollment projections into the Capital Improvement Program.
4. Recognize raw population estimates do not take into account land capability or land use regulation etc.
5. Determine the development potential of the community to help qualify population and household projections.
6. Investigate special demographic situations that may have an impact on the community such as the conversion rates of seasonal homes to year round occupancy.

**Objective B:** Successful community development acknowledges people as resources and promotes their development.

1. Encourage the development of programs to assist in continuing education and personal skills development.
2. In conjunction with the school district, develop a network for families throughout the community to help with parenting skills, childcare and other types of family support.
3. Encourage Meredith residents and businesses to participate in the Leadership Lakes Region training program.
4. Continue to provide technical and professional training for elected and appointed public officials.
5. Encourage public and private sector recognition and celebration of employee achievement and exemplary citizenship. Examples include the Beacon of Light Award sponsored by the Superintendent of Schools and the Citizen of the Year Award sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.
6. Encourage participation in continuing education programs.

**Objective C:** Improve opportunities for all residents, businesses and organizations to connect with their community.

1. Develop and maintain an inventory of civic organizations, clubs etc. to include their purpose, contact person and ongoing projects.
2. Improve community awareness about individual talents and gifts and how they may be matched with volunteer opportunities. Vehicles to promote greater lines of communication may include public access television, a community newsletter, periodic community forums and community web site.
3. Encourage employers to support and promote employee participation in community projects, activities and organizations that may be of particular interest to the employee.

#### **PART 4. RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER CHAPTERS**

**PEOPLE AND NATURAL RESOURCES.** People are ultimately responsible for natural resource conservation, whether as stewards of private property or as policy makers. Every citizen and visitor to Meredith should take an active role in ensuring that the natural resources are protected.

**PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES.** As the community grows demands placed upon community facilities will evolve and expand. Monitoring changes in demographics will enable Meredith to respond to the needs of a growing community.

**PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.** People are the foundation for successful community economic development. Continued investment in our people is essential to expanded economic opportunities.

**PEOPLE AND LAND USE.** Land use decisions about future development are made by local volunteers. Continued public involvement is critical to the successful implementation of this Community Plan.

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# CHAPTER 5. NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION

## ***PART 1. WHAT THIS SECTION COVERS***

Our natural resources are more than breathtaking; they are fundamental to our long term health and prosperity. The richness and diversity of our natural resources define our landscape character and compel us to live, work, recreate, and invest here. With these resources comes individual and collective responsibility to act as prudent stewards. This section discusses how we can manage, protect, and enjoy our resources for the present, while ensuring these resources are available to benefit future generations.

## ***PART 2. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES***

**The Consequences of Growth.** As indicated in Chapter 4, Meredith continues to experience significant population growth. Continued growth is projected for the future. As our population grows, our density (people per square mile) will increase. Over time, conversion of land to accommodate this growth (e.g. houses, septic systems, roads, wells etc.), will increase pressures on our natural resources. The effects of growth may include threats to water quality, fragmentation of wildlife habitat, loss of open spaces, and a gradual transformation of the visual landscape and character of the community.

**Water Quality.** The importance of protecting water quality cannot be overstated. Water quality is important to everyone.

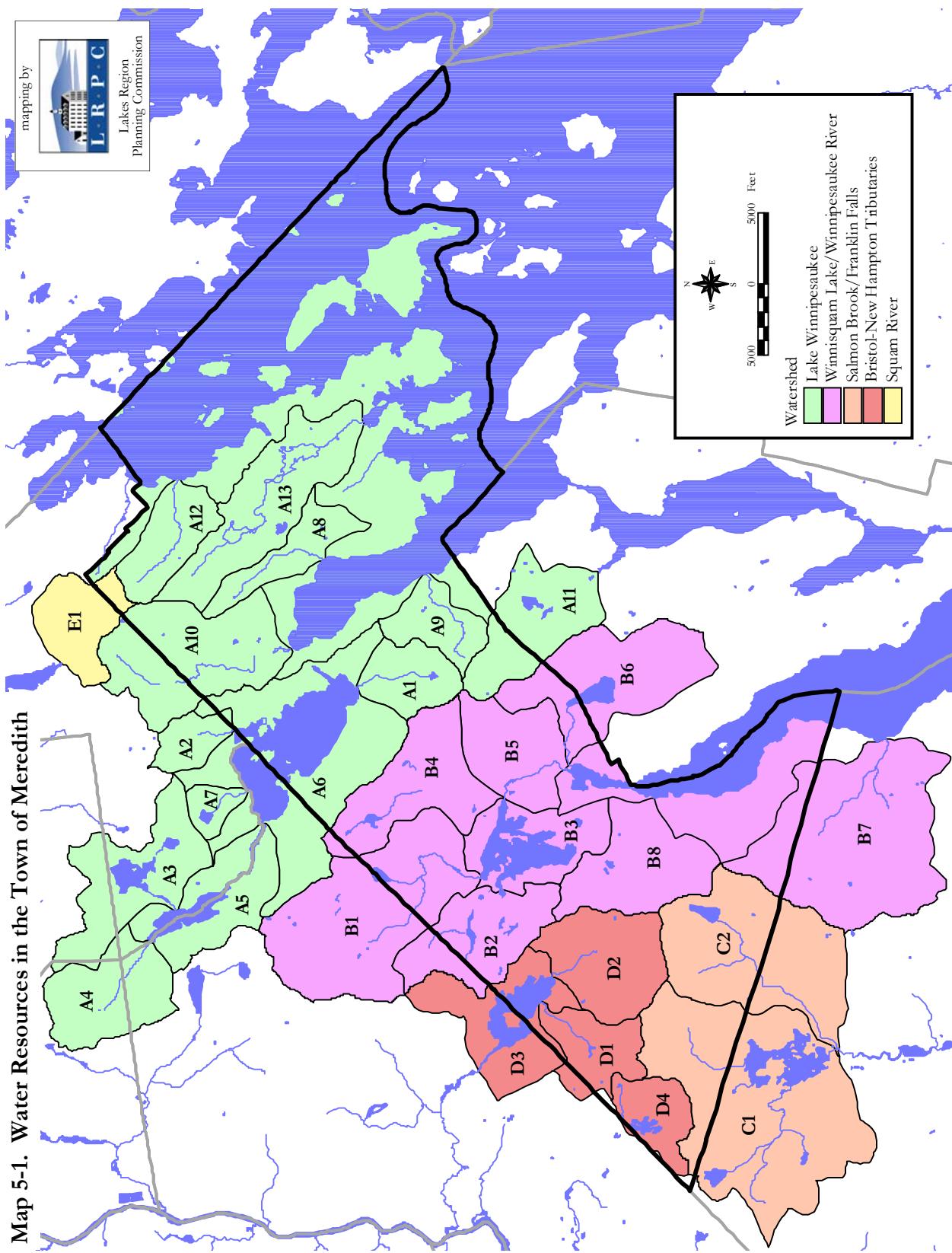
- Meredith's 13 lakes and ponds total 9,115 acres and account for 26% of our total area.
- Lake Waukewan is the source of the public water supply for Meredith serving approximately 45% of Meredith's resident population. Activities within five towns influence the water quality of Lake Waukewan.
- Approximately 55% of the population depends on mostly untreated groundwater for drinking water.
- There are 13 brooks and over 1,652 acres of wetlands that comprise important wildlife habitat. Seven major wetland systems totaling 1,198 acres have been designated as "prime" wetlands due to their environmental significance.
- Six public access points and three commercial marinas in Meredith are available to fishermen and recreational boaters. The recreation and tourism industries rely heavily on water based activities.
- Land values can be negatively impacted when surface or groundwater quality becomes degraded or contaminated.

Water resource management can be effective when practiced on a watershed level. Watershed management requires an integrated approach recognizing the relationships between brooks, wetlands, water bodies, soils, geology, surface cover, topography, and human activity. Potential sources of contaminants can include storm water runoff, septic systems, junkyards, construction activities, recreational boating, road maintenance, agriculture, timber harvesting, and fuel storage tanks. The primary watersheds and sub-watersheds located wholly or partially within the Town of Meredith are identified in Table 5-1. Watershed boundaries and Meredith's extensive water resources are depicted on Map 5-1. The watershed for the Town of Meredith's municipal water supply, Lake Waukewan, is depicted on Map 5-2. Note that the Lake Waukewan watershed consists of land in five (5) communities; Meredith, New Hampton, Center Harbor, Holderness, and Ashland. The multi-town nature of this watershed must be incorporated as a part of a comprehensive watershed management plan.

**Forests Fragmentation and Habitat Loss.** Forests in Meredith are the dominant land cover. It has been estimated that in 1992-93, approximately 80% of Meredith's land area was forested including 13 forest blocks greater than 500 acres in size. Large expanses of contiguous forests that include a mix of forest types, fields, wetlands, watercourses, and wildlife travel corridors represent significant wildlife habitat in the community. Roads with frequent traffic can have the effect of fragmenting wildlife habitat as they can act as barrier to wildlife movement, thereby decreasing habitat quality. Due to the large amount of forested acreage and a relatively low to moderate level of fragmentation, there are opportunities in Meredith to conserve significant wildlife habitat to a meaningful degree. Approximate locations of large, unfragmented forested lands are depicted on Map 5-3. It is important to note that this map is intended to be used for illustration purposes only and that further inventory and assessment will be necessary for management decision making.

**Open Space Conservation.** Prior master plans have not included an overall strategy for the conservation of important open spaces. Open spaces are resources throughout the town that help to define landscape and are worthy of conservation or protection. Open spaces include forests, farmland, wetland, scenic vistas, shoreline, recreational areas, historic sites, or multiple combinations of these resources. A multi-faceted open space plan that applies a holistic approach to natural resource conservation is needed. Four areas of emphasis should include: (1) resource inventory, (2) education and awareness, (3) permanent land protection; and (4) land use regulation.

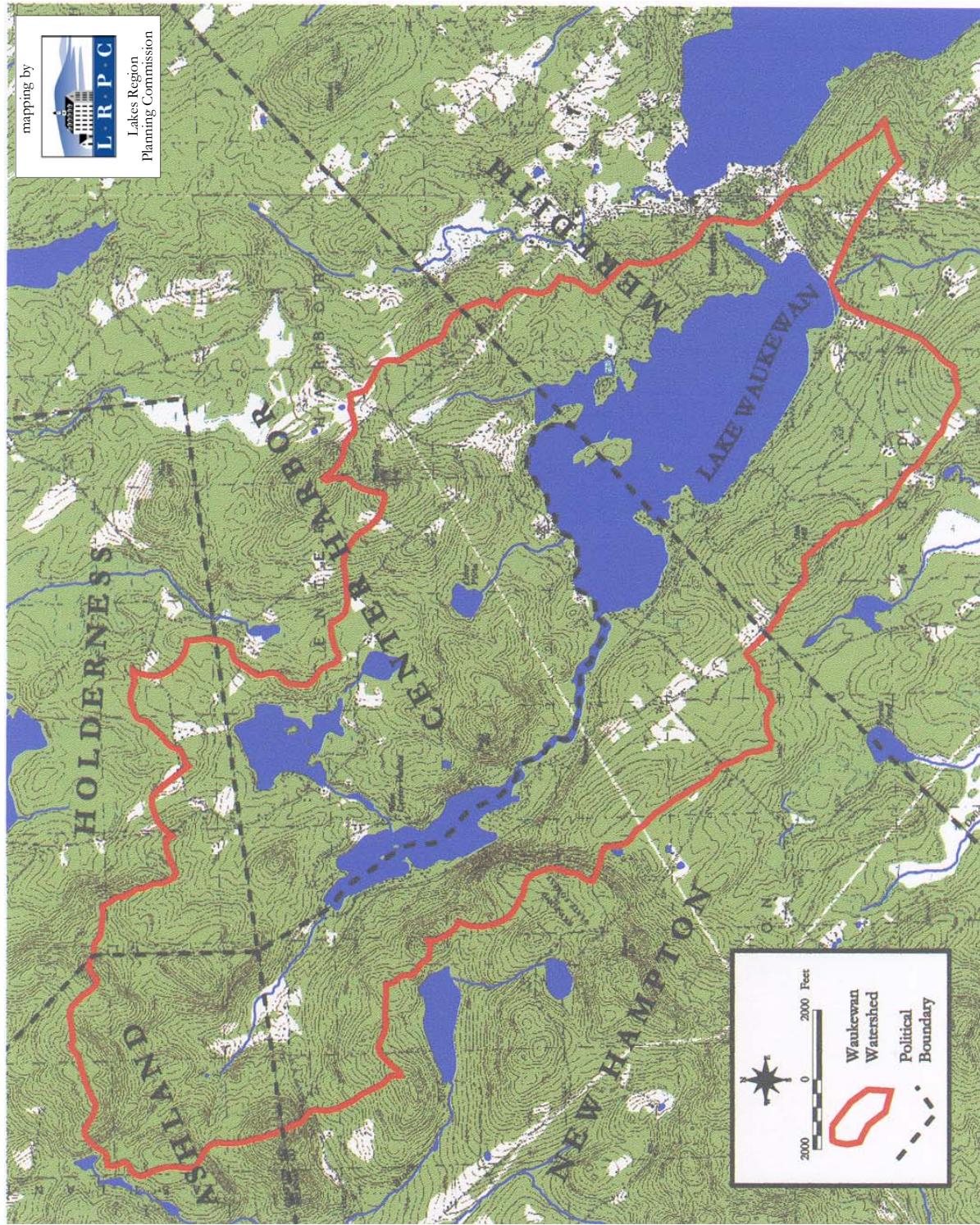
- A natural resource inventory is currently in progress at the direction of the Meredith Conservation Commission. The inventory will examine present conditions and form a basis for future conservation strategies and priorities.
- Educational programs and initiatives are needed to provide information about conservation issues and opportunities. Informed decision-making is fundamental to successful stewardship.
- Existing protected lands in Meredith are summarized in Table 5-2 and located on Map 5-4. Approximately 10% of Meredith's land area is protected. The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests has suggested that communities should strive to conserve at least 25% of its lands. Continued permanent protection of land is one of the most important outcomes of the open space plan.
- Land use regulations geared towards protecting specific natural resources have existed in Meredith since 1968. Regulations can be improved to guide development towards conserving open spaces.

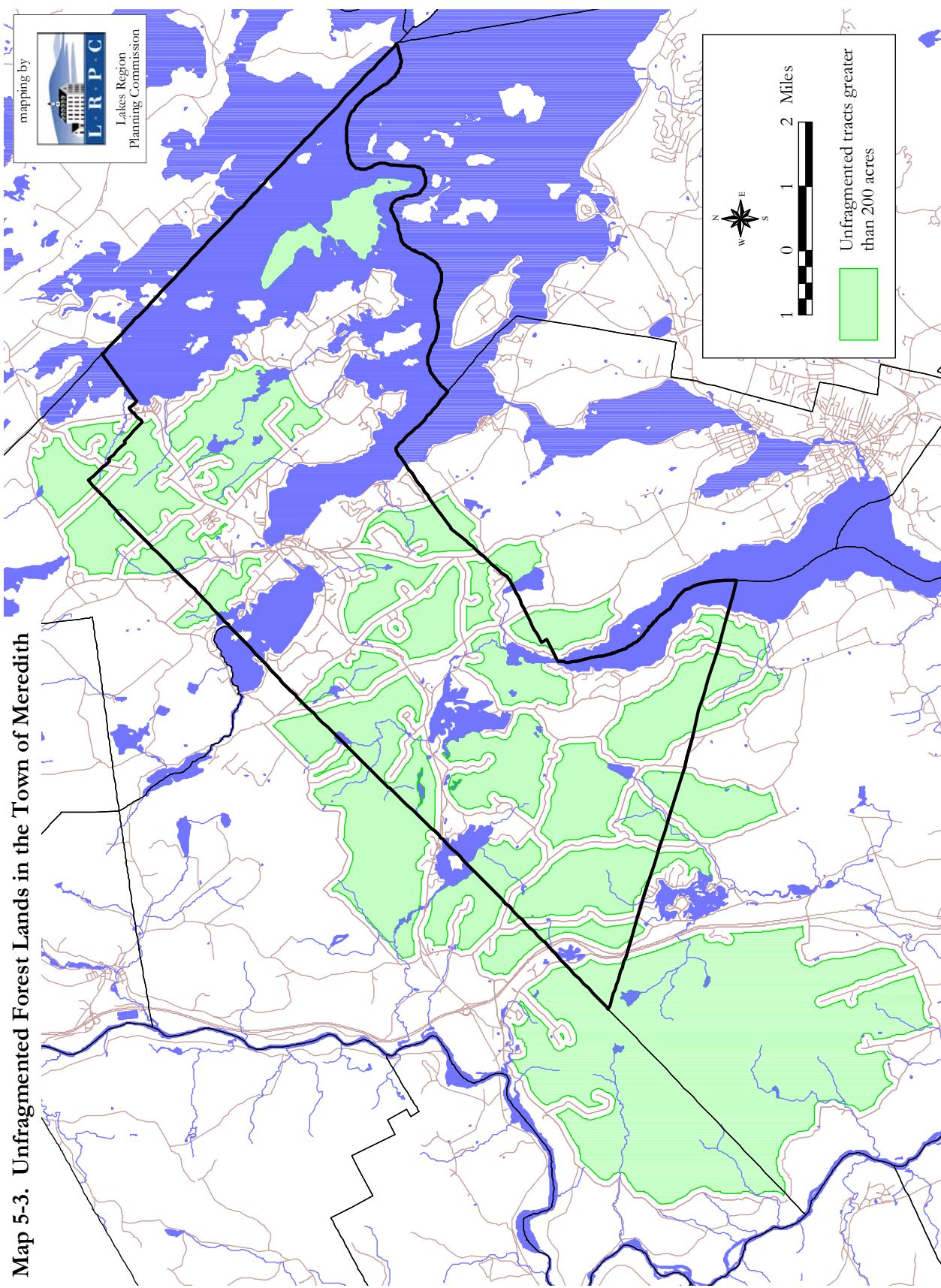


**Table 5-1. Watersheds and Sub-watersheds in Meredith**

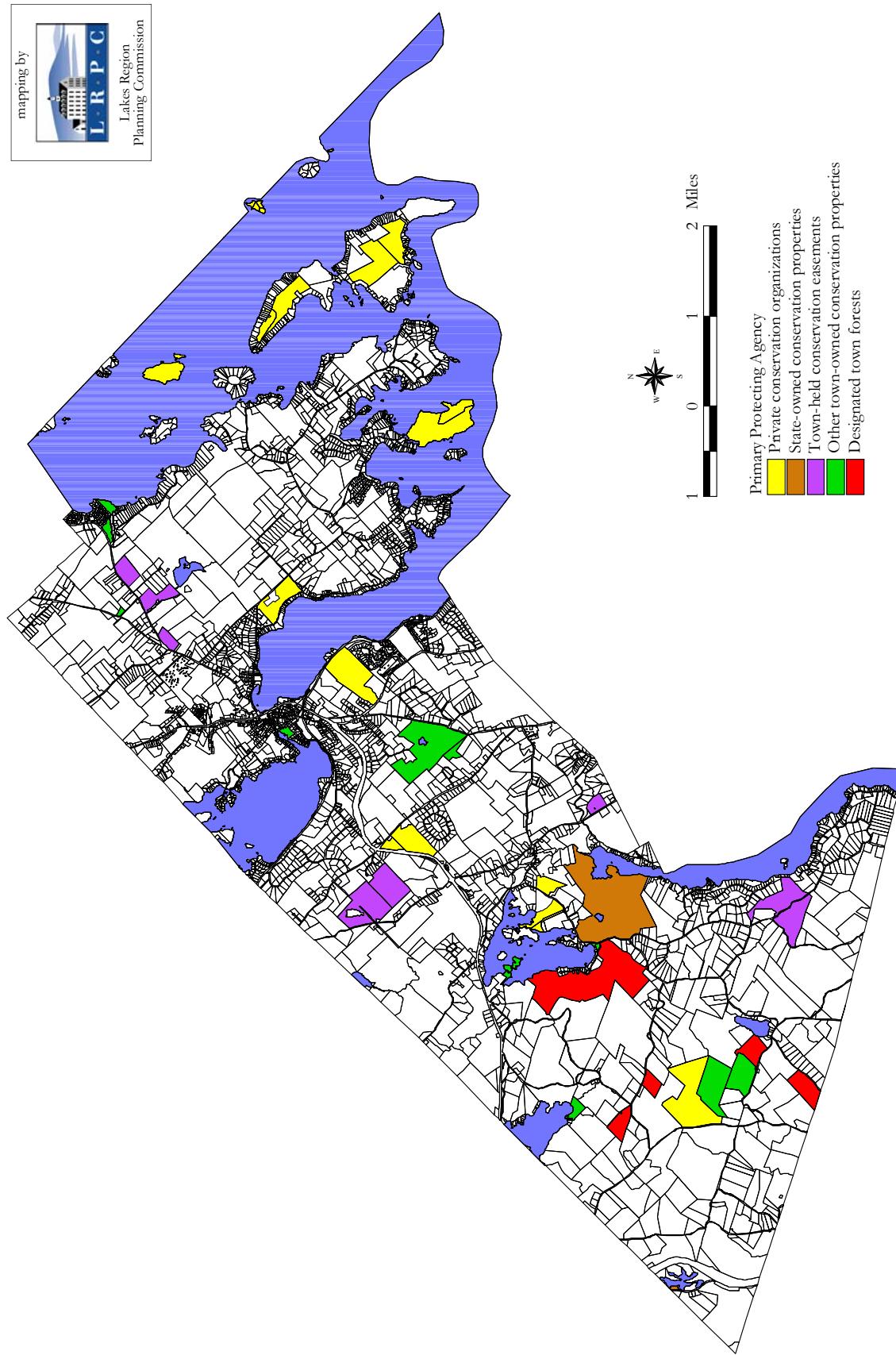
Primary Watershed	Sub-watershed	Acreage inside Meredith	Acreage outside Meredith	Total Acreage	Primary Tributary	Map ID
<b>Lake Winnepeaukee</b>	Lake Waukewan	656.5	0	66.5	Reservoir Brook	A1
	Lake Waukewan	16.3	368.5	384.8	Unnamed Brook	A2
	Lake Waukewan		1435.3	1435.3	Hawkins Pond	A3
	Lake Waukewan		1166.4	1166.4	Unnamed Brook	A4
	Lake Waukewan		1203.1	1203.2	Winona Lake	A5
	Lake Waukewan	2120.3	1199.5	3319.7	N/A	A6
	Lake Waukewan		240.9	240.9	Otter Pond	A7
	Meredith Bay	646.5	0	646.5	Unnamed Brook	A8
	Meredith Bay	614.3	0	614.3	Neal Brook	A9
	Meredith Bay	1222.6	667.9	1890.5	Hawkins Brook	A10
	Paugus Bay	383.8	863.6	1247.3	Pickeral Cove	A11
	Center Harbor	773.2	0	773.1	Bartlett Brook	A12
	Fish Cove	1710.1	0	1710.1	Page Brook	A13
<b>Lake Winnisquam/ Winnipesaukee River</b>	Lake Wicwas	881.3	1798.2	2679.5	Dollof Brook	B1
	Lake Wicwas	887.3	332.6	1219.9	Unnamed Brook	B2
	Lake Wicwas	1121.4	0	1121.4	Lake Wicwas	B3
	Lake Wicwas	1351.6	53.2	1404.8	Hatch Brook	B4
	Winnisquam	1058.3	0	1058.3	Mill Brook	B5
	Winnisquam	434.7	1307.3	1742.0	Collins Brook	B6
	Winnisquam	468.1	2592.7	3060.8	Black Brook	B7
	Winnisquam	1323.6	0	1323.6	Stoney Brook	B8
<b>Salmon Brook/ Franklin Falls</b>	Hermit Lake	1191.4	2852.9	3972.3	N/A	C1
	Hermit Lake	1350.9	1041.8	2392.7	Hermit Brook	C2
<b>Bristol-New Hampton Tributaries</b>	Pemigewasset Lake	647.2	77.4	724.6	Merrill Brook	D1
	Pemigewasset Lake	1243.7	0	1243.7	Unnamed Brook	D2
	Pemigewasset Lake	435.1	949.4	1384.6	N/A	D3
	Spectacle Pond	579.8	10.9	590.7	N/A	D4
<b>Squam River</b>	Squam Lake	96.5	708.5	805.0	N/A	E1
<b>TOTAL ACREAGE:</b>		<b>21142.8</b>	<b>18870.1</b>	<b>40012.8</b>		

Map 5-2. Lake Waukewan Watershed





Map 5-4. Conservation Lands in the Town of Meredith



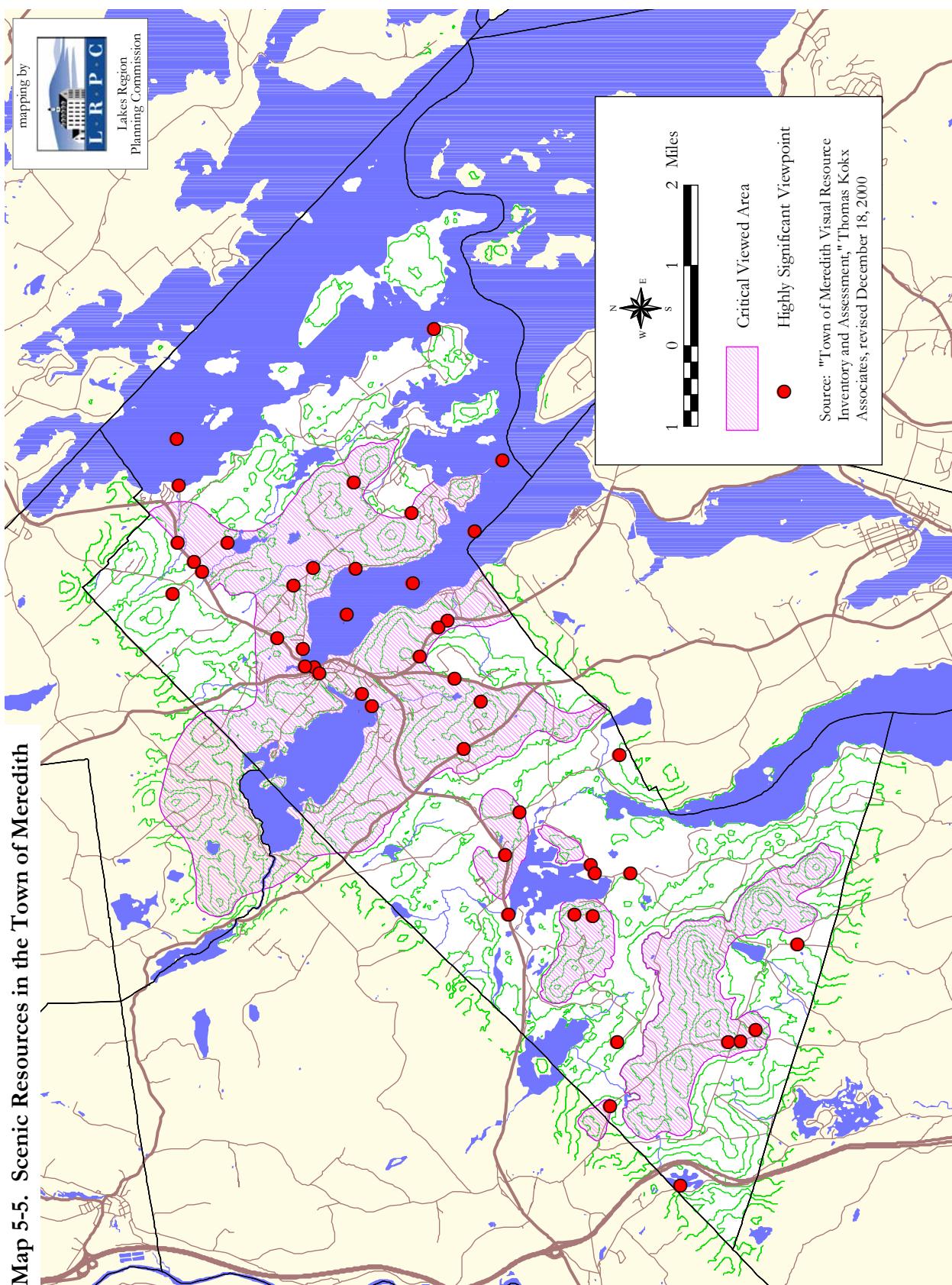
**Table 5-2. Summary of Protected Lands in Meredith**

Resource	Area (acres)
Designated Town Forests:	447
Other Town-owned Conservation Properties:	414
Town-held Conservation Easements:	433
State-owned Conservation Properties:	384
Privately-held by Conservation Organizations:	881
<b>TOTAL AREA PROTECTED:</b>	<b>2,559</b>
<b>TOTAL LAND AREA:</b>	<b>25,804</b>
<b>PERCENT OF LAND AREA PROTECTED:</b>	<b>10 %</b>

**Visual Landscape Character.** The visual landscape of Meredith consists of a unique combination of characteristics that make Meredith special among the towns in the Lakes Region. The distinct lakefront New England village together with the outlying rural areas offer numerous scenic qualities including distant mountain backdrops, an abundance of lakes, ponds, and wetlands, undisturbed wooded environments, prominent hillsides and ridgelines, open fields, and historic and cultural features. Ninety-two scenic views have been documented and evaluated throughout Meredith. Of these, 51 views are considered to be “highly significant” based on several criteria, including: the variety within the view, the integrity of the view, the presence of cultural or historical features, and the degree to which the view was representative of the character of the town’s landscape. Map 5-5 is a composite map showing viewpoint locations and the viewed areas associated with the “highly significant” viewpoints.

**Communication, Collaboration, and Awareness.** Greater community involvement in addressing important environmental issues (such as protecting water quality and conserving open spaces) is fundamentally important to the long-term success of the community. Individuals, families, businesses, civic organizations, and schools can all play important roles in protecting the environment. From backyard composting to volunteer water quality testing, involvement leads to understanding. Understanding promotes informed decision-making. Better decisions about how we manage our properties, neighborhoods, and watersheds, will help to protect our environment. In order to make meaningful improvements in the area of public awareness and participation, a concerted effort is needed.

### ***PART 3. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS***



In order to achieve our vision for the future, we have identified a general natural resource conservation goal:

**Conserve our natural resources through balanced, thoughtful, and respectful consideration without stifling human betterment.**

To fulfill this goal, objectives and recommendations have been developed to guide future planning policies and initiatives:

**Objective A. Protect water quality.**

1. Develop consensus based, watershed and sub-watershed management plans for priority areas within the community. Particular emphasis should be placed on developing a unified approach to the Lake Waukewan watershed involving the five towns that comprise it.
2. Consider developing watershed specific water quality objectives, particularly for Lake Waukewan.
3. Adopt Best Management Practices (BMP's) for hillside and ridgeline development as part of the Planning Board's project review process.
4. Increase participation in the Volunteer Lake Assessment and Monitoring Program (VLAP) to include sampling points in all lakes, ponds and streams. Use the VLAP reports as a tool for planning watershed activities.
5. Pursue opportunities to restore wetlands particularly in the Hawkins Brook watershed.
6. Consider measures to protect groundwater supplies such as incorporating Best Management Practices into local regulations.
7. Identify and support extensions of the municipal sewer system that will improve water quality without jeopardizing other natural resources.
8. Strengthen shoreline protection measures to help reduce pollution including shoreline and wetland restoration
9. Extend and improve local shorefront zoning to protect Meredith's smaller water bodies and islands, including Page Pond, Randlett Pond, Forest Pond, Spectacle Pond, etc..
10. Identify voluntary pollution prevention techniques that can be implemented by individual landowners.
11. Emphasize "water quality protection" as an important objective and benefit in the Open Space Conservation Plan.
12. Encourage activities that prevent, detect, control, and manage exotic aquatic plants and other invasive species.

**Objective B. Develop and implement a comprehensive open space strategy.**

1. Support the Conservation Commission's efforts to develop a Natural Resource Inventory (NRI). Adopt the NRI as a future supplement to the Community Plan to help further guide and refine local decision-making.
2. Develop useful inventory information in the areas of wildlife and forest resources as a component of the NRI.
3. Reinforce the multiple benefits associated with open space generally, and the specific benefits associated with a particular donation or acquisition. Assign higher conservation

priority to acquisitions that will result in multiple community benefits.

4. Integrate the NRI with the current efforts to improve mapping capabilities.
5. Develop outreach strategies to increase neighborhood involvement and support, to increase levels of forest management and to increase voluntary land protection. Provide information to landowners regarding voluntary mechanisms for land protection, estate planning issues, tax considerations, etc.
6. Set aside significant funds to acquire or otherwise conserve desirable tracts of land. Encourage multi-source funding where possible.
7. Revise existing Cluster zoning provisions to promote the conservation of open spaces.

**Objective C. Create greater environmental awareness and resource conservation through expanded opportunities for participation and collaboration.**

1. Improve working relationships between local boards and commissions.
2. Initiate dialogue with private organizations and home owner associations interested in natural resource conservation.
3. Work with the local schools to promote environmental education. Opportunities may include participation in the NH Envirothon, the Volunteer Lake Assessment Program, the Interactive Lake Ecology Program, Weed Watchers and integrating outdoor recreation programs with an outdoor education curriculum.
4. Support anti-litter and waste recycling initiatives.
5. Create greater awareness of the many conservation properties in Meredith.
6. Improve information exchange through the use of a town Web site, cable TV etc.
7. Collaborate with the Towns of Center Harbor, New Hampton, Ashland and Holderness to develop a joint watershed initiative for the Lake Waukewan Watershed. Work with other towns such as Laconia and Sanbornton on shared watershed issues.
8. Collaborate with the Planning Boards and Conservation Commissions from our neighboring communities in the development of the Natural Resource Inventory and further inventory of scenic resources.
9. Encourage public participation in the development of the Open Space Plan.
10. Designate a Natural Resource Coordinator to integrate and communicate information regarding conservation issues.

**PART 4. RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER CHAPTERS**

**NATURAL RESOURCES AND PEOPLE.** The natural environment supports and sustains our quality of life. As we continue to grow, the conservation of our natural resources and open spaces must remain a priority.

**NATURAL RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY RECREATION.** Natural resources are the basis of many outdoor recreation and leisure activities. Opportunities for outdoor recreation will be enhanced through the conservation of our natural resources.

**NATURAL RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.** Our natural resources help define our community. Many aspects of Meredith's economy are dependant upon the continued conservation of these resources.

**NATURAL RESOURCES AND LAND USE.** Natural resources are impacted by land use.

Having well defined conservation and open space priorities will help to further refine other land use objectives such as housing, industry, and commercial development.

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## CHAPTER 6. TRANSPORTATION

### ***PART 1. WHAT THIS SECTION COVERS***

The transportation system in Meredith consists of multiple networks designed to move goods, services, information, and people to, from, through, and within the community. The health of this system can have profound impacts on daily activities, economic opportunities, land use, and community character. This section discusses what Meredith needs to do to ensure that the transportation networks are responsive to the needs of our community.

### ***PART 2. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES***

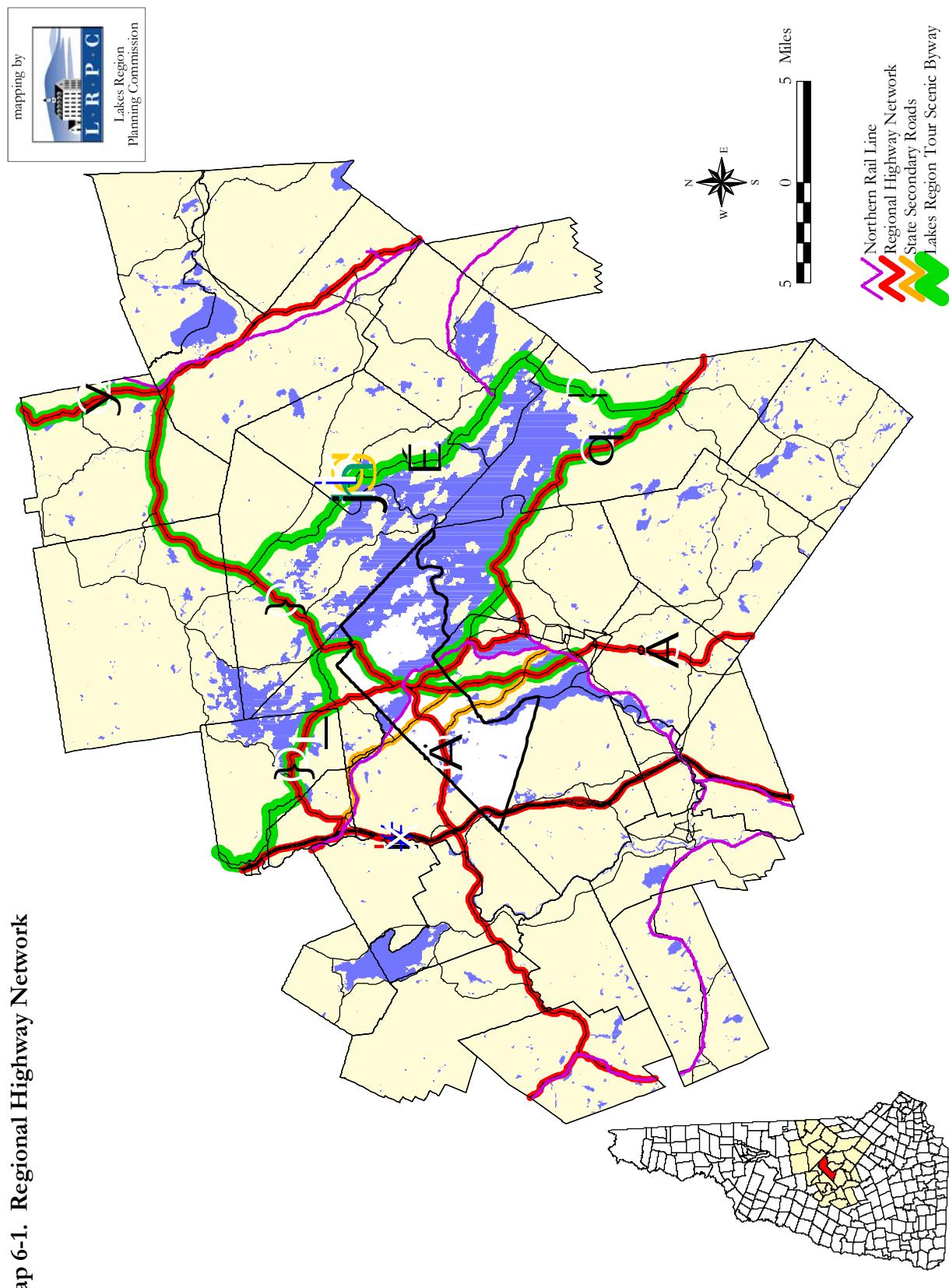
**The Regional Highway Network.** The principal component of Meredith's transportation system is the roadway network. Within Meredith there are segments of the State highway network that are important to interstate travel, travel between regions of the state, travel within the Lakes Region, and to access abutting properties. Interstate 93/Exit 23 (located 7 miles westerly of Meredith), NH Route 104, US Route 3, NH Route 25, and NH Route 106 comprise the primary elements of the regional highway network in Meredith. The state highway network also consists of secondary, un-numbered highways including Meredith Center Road which provides an important link between Laconia and Meredith and is used regularly by residents of Meredith Center and the Chemung area of town, as well as for travel to New Hampton, Bristol, and to connect with Interstate 93. Winona Road, another secondary state highway, provides a link through New Hampton to Ashland, while Pease Road connects NH Route 106 and NH Route 104. Meredith Neck Road is the primary access on and off Meredith Neck. The regional highway network is depicted on Map 6-1.

There have been several intersection improvements to the network over the last decade including:

- Signalization of the NH Route 104 and US 3 intersection;
- Realignment of the US Route 3 and Neal Shore Road intersection;
- Signalization of the NH Route 104/ Pease Road/Winona Road intersection; and
- Signalization of the NH Route 104 and Annalee Place (formerly Hemlock Drive) intersection.

Included in the NHDOT Ten-year Plan (2001-2010) are:

- Realignment/ Signalization of the US Route 3 and NH Route 106 intersection;
- Reconstruction of NH Route 25 from Meredith Village to Center Harbor; and
- Sidewalk reconstruction and beautification along Route 3 North.



Needed improvements to state roads not yet scheduled for funding include:

- Reconstruction of NH Route 106 from the Laconia line to US Route 3;
- Shoulder improvements to US Route 3 from NH Route 104 to the Laconia line;
- Reconstruction of Meredith Center Road including pedestrian safety improvements in the Meredith Center/Childs Park area;
- Intersection improvements to Meredith Neck Road; and
- Intersection improvements to NH Route 104 at Chase Road.

**Traffic Growth and Patterns.** The state highway network has experienced significant growth in traffic volumes. These traffic volumes are distinctly patterned. Data from a permanent traffic counter on NH Route 104 at Lake Wicwas (see Figure 6-1) shows actual recorded traffic counts from 1970 through to 2000 in the bold solid line. This historical trend shows growth of about 25% between 1990 and 2000. Growth in traffic volumes has been quite linear with peaks in growth occurring in 1978 and 1989. Fluctuations in traffic volume are likely reflections of fluctuations in the national economy.

The dotted line represents projected traffic volumes through the year 2025 based on a 30-year historical trend analysis. Trend analysis, when used to make traffic projections, assumes that the trend of traffic volume growth in the past will continue in a similar pattern in the future. Although peaks and dips may be prevalent over the next 25 years, if the growth in traffic volume continues in the same pattern as before, the average annual daily traffic (AADT) volume should approach 20,000 vehicles by the year 2025.

The curved line, labeled “NHDOT Projection” represents the projected growth in traffic developed by NHDOT and Storch Associates in 1991 in the Route 3/25 Traffic Study. In that study, the NHDOT assumed that traffic volumes would grow at a rate of 3.5% compounded yearly.

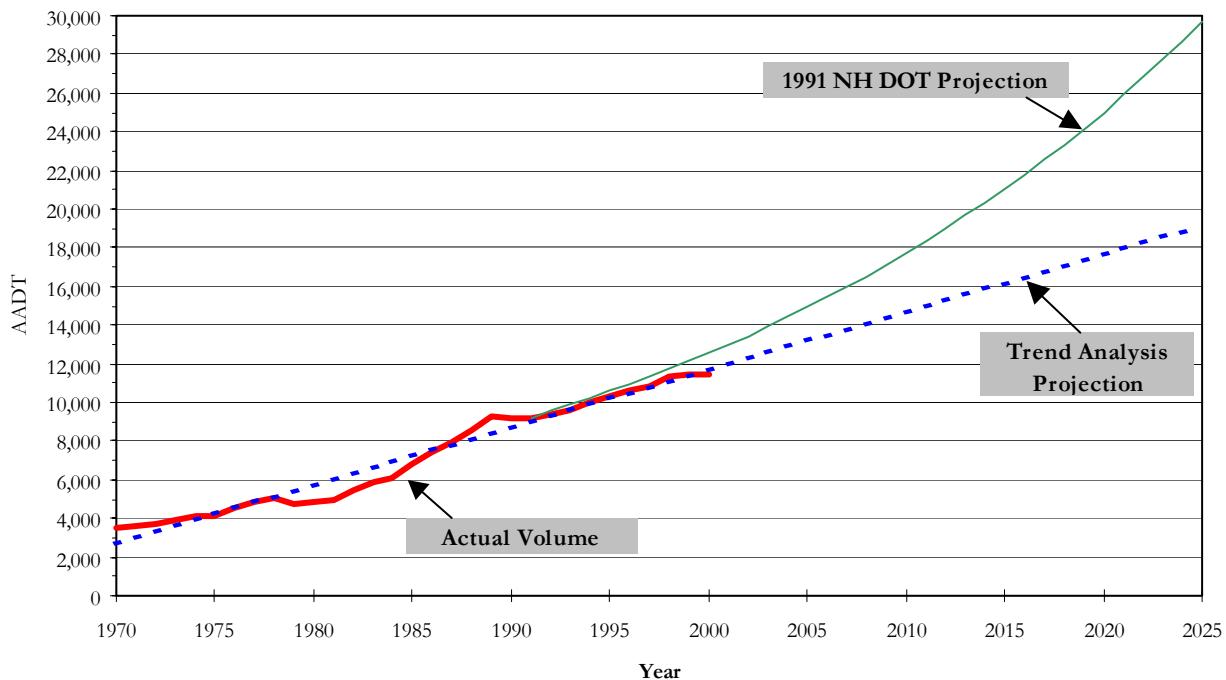
There are many factors that contribute to the growth in traffic and the traffic patterns experienced in Meredith, including:

- Growth in the local resident population;
- Growth in the regional resident population;
- Growth in the regional seasonal population and second home market;
- Growth in the regional economy;
- Increased commuting distances to and from work;
- Increases in the vehicle-miles traveled per household (the mobility explosion);
- Dependence upon the automobile as the primary means of travel;
- Lack of alternative East/West travel options across central New Hampshire forces regional traffic to pass through Meredith; and
- Development activity adjacent to highway corridors.

Figure 6-2 illustrates the pattern of traffic which occurs throughout the year. Summer traffic is about 33% higher than the average day of the year. Interestingly, the AADT pattern is virtually the same for both 1990 and 2000. This illustrates that the summer dominance of traffic, and thus precondition for congestion, remains a particular concern for the town and its people.

Figure 6-3 highlights seasonal trends in weekly traffic patterns. Regardless of the month or season, traffic volume on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays remains fairly stable, while there is generally an increase on Thursdays, and a dramatic increase on Fridays. July differs from the other months in that the Saturday and Sunday traffic remains relatively elevated due to summer and tourist populations in the area.

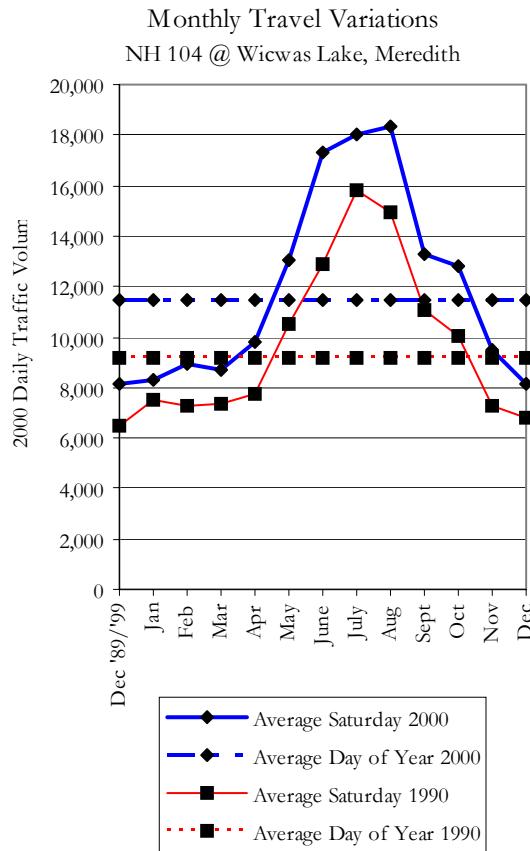
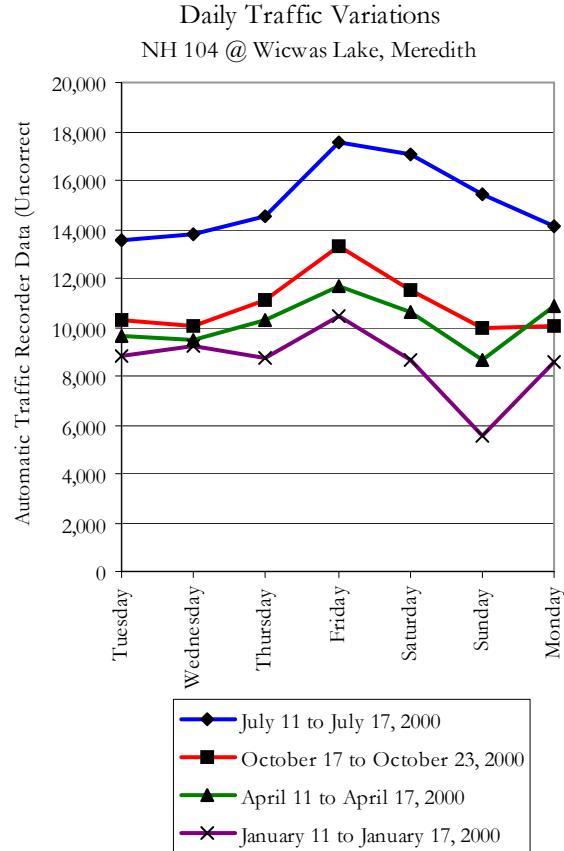
**Figure 6-1. Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT), NH 104 @ Wicwas Lake, Meredith**



**Highway Capacity and Congestion.** The capacity of the roadway network can be described generally as the maximum number of vehicles that can pass through a point during a specified period of time. It is a finite resource defined and limited by the physical configuration of the roadway and roadway intersections. Over time, capacity is “absorbed” by growth. Reduced network capacity also results from increases in things such as: the number and location of signalized intersections, interruptions in traffic flow attributable to turning movements, interruptions in traffic flow attributable to pedestrian crossings, and the physical condition of the road itself. The highway network in and around the junction of US Route 3 and NH Route 25 at times experiences congestion when the volume of users exceeds the capacity of the roadway. Congestion is, to a degree, relative to perceptions (i.e. someone used to congestion in Boston has a different perception of our traffic than someone familiar only with rural areas). However, regardless of perception, the effects of congestion in Meredith are noteworthy, and have several impacts on the transportation network:

- Increased time necessary for both regional and local travel;
- Increased “spill-over” or “bypass” traffic onto the local road network;
- Increased difficulty in making left turns to access the highway network;

- Increased difficulty in making left turns to access the highway network;
- Increased difficulty in making left turns to access properties along the highway network;
- Self-adjustments in human behavior to avoid predictable periods of congestion; and
- Decreased travel speeds through the transportation network.

**Figure 6-2. Monthly Travel Variation****Figure 6-3. Weekly Travel Variation**

In 1994 a local Citizens Advisory Task Force (CATF) was appointed by the Board of Selectmen in response to the NH Department of Transportation's plan to add capacity to the US Route 3 and NH Route 25 corridor through a major, on-corridor, widening project. Over four years of careful study, the CATF analyzed the pros and cons associated with various highway configurations. The CATF recognized the inevitability of continued traffic growth and the potential implications associated with increased traffic congestion. These realities were analyzed in the context of the fundamental importance of retaining community character. In 1998 the CATF came to the conclusions that:

1. The NHDOT proposed improvements resulted from a flawed, engineering-driven process which lacked sensitivity to the scale and character of the community;
2. Traffic would quickly expand to fill the projected available road space. The proposed improvements would result in a limited capacity benefit before the congestion would begin to reoccur. It is therefore important that our efforts deal with congestion not simply perpetuate it; and

3. There was no long term, broader strategy in place, or under consideration, to relieve the inevitable reoccurrence of congestion in Meredith.

Consequently, the CATF recommended against the State's plan, and the Board of Selectmen concurred. As a result of the process, three smaller "spot improvements" were identified where consensus might be achievable:

- Realign and signalize the US Route 3 and NH Route 106 (Parade Road) intersection;
- Add a truck climbing lane on NH Route 25 including possible signalization at Barnard Ridge Road; and
- Improve shoulders on NH Route 25 to the Center Harbor town line.

**The Local Roadway Network.** The Meredith roadway network (Map 6-2) is comprised of state, town, and private roads. Town roads include those that are maintained (referred to as Class 5 Roads) and those that are not maintained (referred to as Class 6 Roads).

Of the 87 miles of road maintained by the Town of Meredith, there are approximately 60 miles of paved surface and 30 miles of gravel surface. There are portions of thirteen roads, consisting of approximately 12.3 miles, that have been locally designated as Scenic Roads pursuant to RSA 231:157-158 (see Map 6-2).

In 1999 the Planning Board adopted a Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Major road improvements are programmed through the Meredith Capital Improvement Program.

**Table 6-1. Summary of Road Mileage**

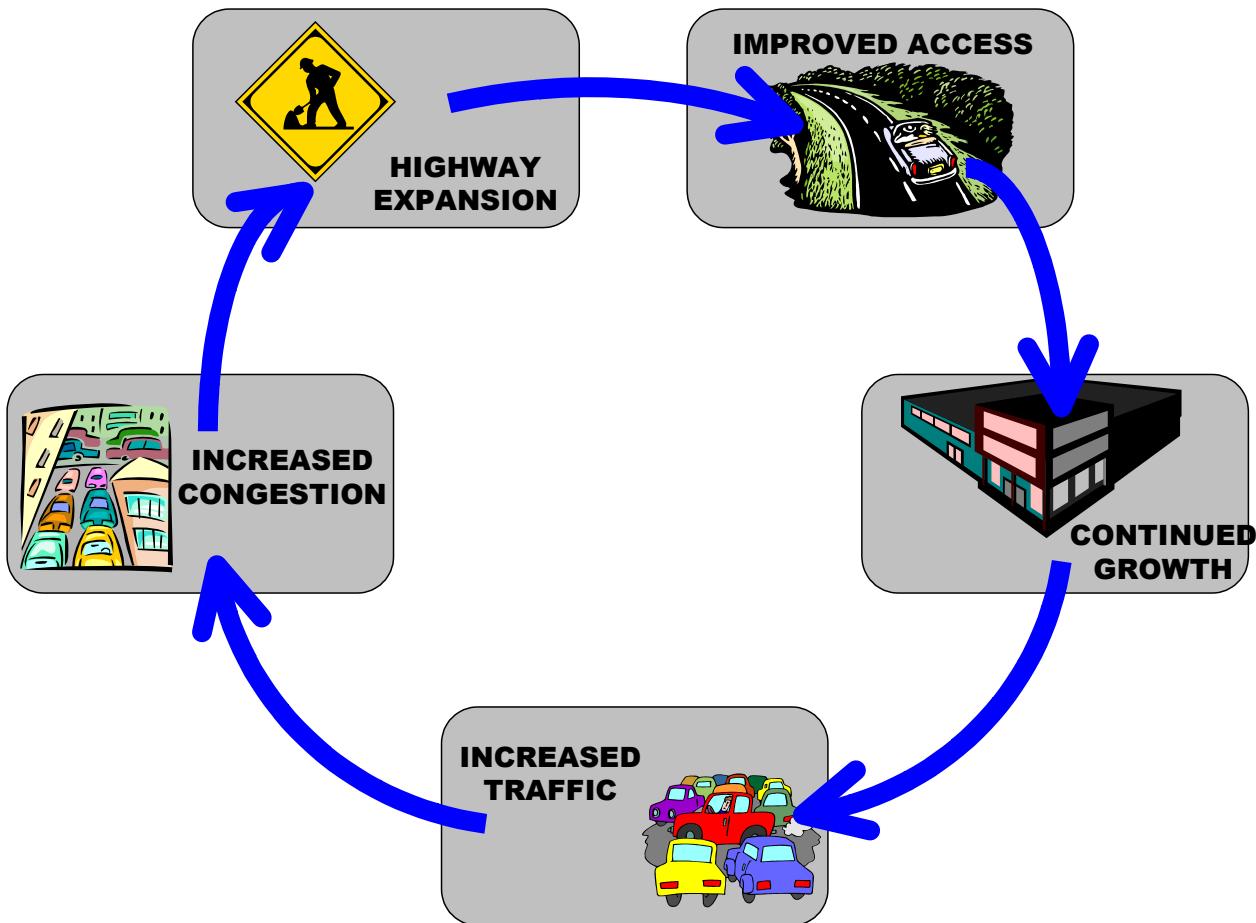
Description	Class	Miles
State Maintained Interstate	I	2.48
State Maintained Primary System	I	7.75
State Maintained Secondary System	II	19.69
Town Maintained Roads	V	87.34
Not Maintained Town Roads	VI	7.37
Private Roads	N/A	18.10

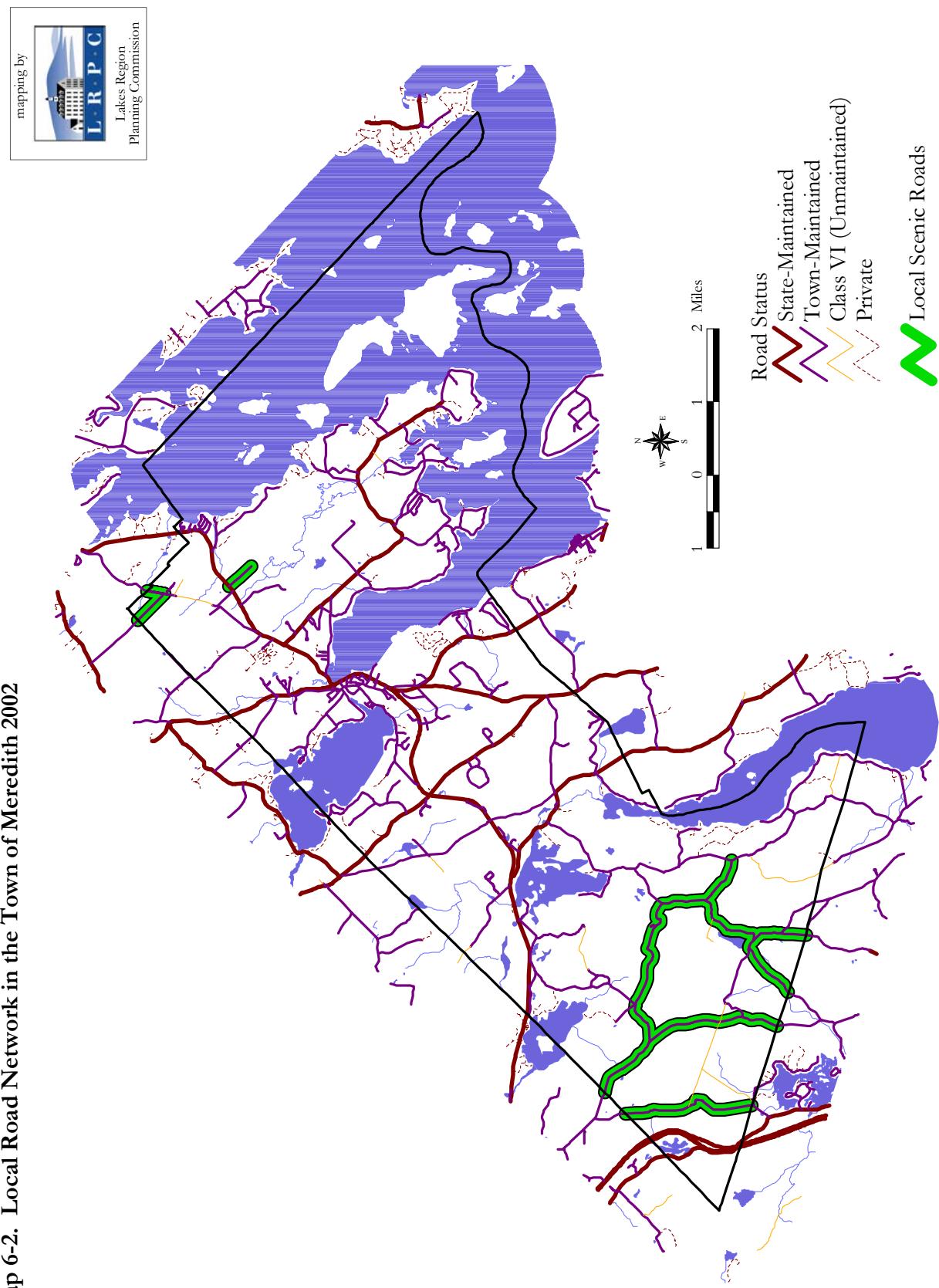
**Scenic Byway Designation.** In 2000 at the request of the Town of Meredith, portions of US Route 3, NH Route 25 and NH Route 106 were designated by the State of New Hampshire as part of the Lakes Tour Scenic Byway. This Byway, one of several statewide, extends for one hundred eight (108) miles around Lake Winnipesaukee through thirteen Lakes Region communities. The designation recognizes the significance of intrinsic qualities of our highway surroundings, including scenic beauty, natural resources, historic landscapes, cultural features and recreational opportunities. Several properties have been identified for their value as "gateways" into the community or as being important to the overall landscape character of the community, and thereby contributing to the quality of the regional byway. Key properties include the Bickford Farm on NH Route 25, the Bushnell Fields and Moulton Farm on NH Route 25, the Robertson Farm on US Route 3 and NH Route 106, and the Longridge Farm on US Route 3. Much of the scenic byway in Meredith is zoned commercial. This presents a risk as well as an important opportunity regarding our desire to balance commercial development and resource conservation. The extent of the Lakes Tour Scenic Byway is depicted on Map 6-1.

**Land Use and Transportation Planning.** Much traffic growth and the resulting congestion is attributable to circumstances **not** within the influence of local decision-making. It is therefore important that we focus our energies on what we can influence directly such as local land use policy. Local land use is the most basic influence on traffic along transportation corridors such as US Route 3, NH Route 25, and NH Route 104. Meredith's land use policies (i.e. the nature, location and density of development) must manage growth in ways that help, not hinder, the transportation system. For example, land use policies that increase the number of turning movements can significantly impair traffic flow. It is therefore extremely important to avoid inefficient, sprawling development patterns, and to better manage how future growth will access the highway network. However, land use is also influenced by transportation policies and projects. Highway improvements can have the effect of stimulating development, both commercial and residential.

The land use and transportation cycle (Figure 6-4) continues until the cost of constructing more lanes becomes socially or economically unacceptable. New approaches in transportation planning, including access management and context sensitive highway design, can preserve both highway capacity and community character, effectively slowing down or halting the cycle.

**Figure 6-4. The Land Use and Transportation Cycle**





**Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel.** Traveling by foot or by bicycle are the most basic, universal modes of transportation in Meredith's overall transportation system. These modes of travel are of particular importance in the downtown area due to the close proximity of residential neighborhoods, public facilities, and business establishments. Connectivity between facilities, activity centers, lakes, public waterfront, parks, and neighborhoods is also important in other areas of town, such as Meredith Center and Meredith Neck. These modes provide inexpensive, environment-friendly, alternatives to motorized transportation and offer a pleasant way for residents and visitors to experience the community. Walking and bicycling are not only transportation modes, they are also important leisure and fitness activities for people of all ages.

Pedestrian and bicycle travel are based primarily on convenience. Pedestrian trips are relatively short in length, generally under a mile. Bicyclists on the other hand, may be willing to travel 5-10 miles to a destination, conditions permitting. The frequency with which bicycle or pedestrian activity occurs is influenced by several elements such as: facility maintenance, climate, weather, traffic, congestion, safety, crime, cross walks, signal phasing, the presence of a network and the availability of support facilities.

Although pedestrian and bicycle travel have their limitations, the importance of these alternatives to motorized transportation is considerable. In light of our historical traffic growth history, traffic congestion, and desire for leisure activity, these modes of travel can play an increasingly important role in the future.

Three new sidewalks have recently been completed: Waukewan Street from Wall Street to NH Route 104, Pleasant Street from NH Route 25 to Barnard Ridge Road, and Lower Ladd Hill from Main Street to Hillrise Lane. The reconstruction of Plymouth Street including the sidewalk has been approved and is slated for construction in 2002-03. Reconstruction of the sidewalk on US Route 3 from the public parking lot northerly to Jenness Hill Road is currently in the preliminary design phase under the NHDOT's Transportation Enhancement Program. The Meredith Center Road/Childs Park area has been identified as an opportunity for improved pedestrian and bicycle safety. These improvements must not be considered enough. Other possible improvements for future consideration may include:

- Multi-purpose path connecting Meredith Village to Leavitt Beach;
- Multi-purpose path connecting Meredith Neck to Meredith Village;
- Multi-purpose path connecting Weirs Beach to Meredith Village;
- Extension of public walkway along Meredith Bay under NH Route 3 to Maple Street;
- New connection along the railroad connecting Main Street to Waukewan Street (Lake Waukewan);
- Improved access to Swazey Park at High Street and at Canal Street;
- Connect Waukewan Street sidewalk from Town Beach to Wall Street;
- Connect Winona Shores Road to Waukewan Street via Wall Street;
- Connect Hillrise Lane to Foundry Avenue;
- Sidewalk extension from Pleasant Street along Barnard Ridge Road to NH Route 25;
- Sidewalk extension on south side of NH Route 25 in Meredith Village;
- Wetland boardwalk from NH Route 25 to Prescott Park; and
- Pedestrian underpass on NH Route 3 South.

Pedestrian and bicycle traffic must be considered as a necessary condition whenever transportation and land use decisions are made. All future road work and other improvements should include provisions for enhanced pedestrian and bicycle access and safety.

**Bus/Transit.** Two transit operators provide service to Meredith; Concord Trailways and the Greater Laconia Transit Agency (GLTA). Concord Trailways, a private for-profit business, provides a scheduled route from Berlin, through Meredith to Laconia, to Concord, Manchester, Boston, and Logan Airport with stops in Meredith two times per day, each direction.

The Greater Laconia Transit Agency (GLTA), a locally based, non-profit corporation, was founded in 1994 - principally to provide transportation services for people with disabilities or handicaps. Today the service has expanded significantly to include both on-demand service and scheduled routes including service to Manchester Airport and a scheduled Plymouth to Laconia route that passes through Meredith. GLTA also operates a seasonal trolley service with several stops around the Lake Winnipesaukee area including stops in Meredith. The seasonal trolley is primarily geared towards tourism.

**Rail.** The Concord to Lincoln rail line dates back to 1848, and has been owned by NHDOT since 1975. Limited freight service was provided up to 1986. The line and rail yard in Meredith are leased by the state to Winnipesaukee Railroad Incorporated, which operates a seasonal, scenic passenger train service between Tilton, downtown Laconia, Weirs Beach, Meredith and Lincoln. In the winter months, the rail line functions as a major snowmobile corridor. The future of rail in relation to our overall transportation system in Meredith is unclear. However it is important to keep the line active and the right-of-way accessible to the public so that future options are preserved. Similarly, public access to the line via the rail yard (former train station site) should also be maintained.

### ***PART 3. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

In order to achieve our vision for the future, we have identified the following general transportation goal:

**Promote a safe, integrated transportation system that effectively moves goods and people while balancing the needs of transportation users with the values of the community.**

To fulfill this goal, several objectives and recommendations have been developed to guide future planning policies and initiatives:

#### **Objective A. Improve traffic flow, efficiency, and safety throughout the highway networks.**

1. Support the Meredith Citizens Advisory Task Force (CATF) regarding corridor improvements currently in the NHDOT Ten Year Program.
2. Identify smaller, limited improvements that may improve traffic flow and circulation within the village area.
3. Advance transportation improvement projects where a need has been identified, with particular emphasis on projects previously submitted as part of the Lakes Region

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

4. Continue to pursue regional solutions to the congestion experienced in Meredith, including a comprehensive transportation planning analysis involving multiple planning regions and the NHDOT. Encourage the CATF to remain actively involved and to continue to work with NHDOT to implement planning recommendations.
5. Work with New Hampton to preserve the capacity of the Exit 23/NH Route 104 corridor.
6. Develop an access management strategy to help maximize and preserve the capacity of the existing highway network. Elements of the strategy should be incorporated into the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and site plan review regulations. Consider a Memorandum of Agreement whereby the Planning Board and the NHDOT agree to cooperate in the implementation of the access management plan through the project review and driveway permitting processes.
7. Encourage innovative approaches to regional congestion issues including the use of technology to advise travelers of traffic situations (i.e. congestion, accidents, weather, etc.) and to explore opportunities to better manage the demand side of highway capacity.
8. Complete a comprehensive inventory and develop management systems for the local road network including recommendations by priority, for each road. Use the inventory and improvement priorities as a tool to support recommendations for inclusion in the Capital Improvements Program.

**Objective B. Provide a safe and comfortable network for pedestrian and bicycle travel.**

1. Develop a bicycle and pedestrian plan to supplement the Community Plan. The plan should: (1) inventory all existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities, (2) inventory activity centers or neighborhoods that ought to be connected, (3) identify specific areas where networks can be expanded or improved, (4) identify needed support facilities (i.e., restrooms, drinking water, bike racks, benches, parking areas, etc.), (5) include an education and awareness component to encourage greater utilization and to reduce the exposure to the risks associated with these forms of travel. The plan should be considered in the scoping of all public and private development projects.
2. Provide a network of multi-purpose facilities to improve travel opportunities to, from, through, and within Meredith.
3. Work with interested parties to improve connections between the village core and: (1) neighboring towns; (2) outlying neighborhoods; and (3) public facilities.
4. Consider expanding the public waterfront around Meredith Bay including a connecting loop through Lake Shore Drive, under US Route 3 to Maple Street, and on to Main Street.
5. Consider paths, lanes, shoulders, trails, and sidewalks as part of new construction.
6. Incorporate bicycle and pedestrian access into land use regulatory processes.
7. Maintain existing, designated cross walks and related signage. Consider new crosswalks where necessary, such as at Prescott Park.
8. Consider pilot projects to demonstrate traffic calming measures to reduce vehicle speeds, improve safety, and improve the quality of travel for pedestrians and cyclists.

**Objective C. Encourage alternatives to reduce the reliance on cars and trucks.**

1. Recognize that technological advances in communication systems such as cable TV, fiber optic telephone lines, wireless telecommunications, video conferencing, and the internet are

all forms of “transporting” information and as such can reduce the need for conventional motorized travel.

2. Promote access to Meredith Village by boat.
3. Facilitate the parking needs of bus tours to the village area.
4. Support efforts to expand and improve public transit service in the Meredith area.
5. Document the existing snowmobile trail network and explore whether or not there is multi-use potential.
6. Ensure that access to the rail yard and rail lines are maintained so that future rail opportunities are not diminished.

**Objective D. Enhance the quality of travel by enhancing the quality of the area traveled.**

1. Ensure improvements to the state highway network are context sensitive (i.e. that they are of a scale and design that complement the character of the community, not detract from it).
2. Ensure improvements to the state highway network result from a highly participatory, interdisciplinary approach to project development.
3. Revisit land use regulations to ensure that economic and conservation objectives are carefully balanced, including considerations for hillside and ridgeline development.
4. Seek funding for transportation enhancements such as billboard acquisition and removal, scenic easements, water quality improvements, pedestrian facilities, etc.
5. Adopt local road standards that encourage context sensitivity.

**Objective E. Encourage land use practices that prevent sprawl, conserve highway capacity, and protect the visual qualities of the community.**

1. When public centers such as the town hall or post office are under consideration for relocation, identify the benefits of such facilities remaining in the village core. Such benefits may include maintaining the traditional character of the village, encouraging a mix of activities within walking distance of each other, and helping to promote an active and viable downtown environment.
2. Continue to encourage higher densities, mixed uses, and redevelopment in and around the village core.
3. Concentrate other commercial development along the Route 3 corridor while discouraging commercial development along the NH Route 104 and NH Route 25 corridors.
4. Consider nodes or breaks to the linear zoning district boundaries to avoid commercial strip patterns of development.
5. Incorporate access management techniques as part of subdivision and site plan review regulations. Use shared driveways where possible to reduce curb cuts and highway access points.

**Objective F. Improve awareness of, and participation in, transportation issues affecting Meredith.**

1. Continue participation on the Lakes Region Planning Commission Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Planning Board representation on the Commission.
2. Initiate communications to keep the general public, Boards, and Commissions informed on

the status of proposed or pending transportation projects including both print and electronic media.

3. Maintain an effective working relationship with NH DOT District 3 regarding highway maintenance, driveway permitting, and district-level projects.
4. Encourage public participation in the Lakes Region Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Meredith Capital Improvement Program (CIP) processes.
5. Build working relationships with neighboring communities and encourage the involvement of other communities in regional transportation planning.

#### ***PART 4. RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER CHAPTERS***

**TRANSPORTATION AND PEOPLE.** The transportation system should be designed to meet the varied needs of the community. Citizen participation should be encouraged at all levels of the decision-making process.

**TRANSPORTATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES.** The transportation system exists within the context of the natural environment. Transportation-related decisions need to reflect a sensitivity towards Meredith's conservation priorities.

**TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNITY RECREATION.** The transportation system can provide access to, and opportunities for, recreation. Recreation and leisure opportunities can be enhanced through transportation improvements and policies.

**TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**

Community economic opportunities are in part dependent on a safe and accessible transportation system. Improvements to the transportation system can facilitate additional economic opportunity.

**TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE.** A transportation network connects people to their needs. Improvements to the network may result in additional development pressure that may or may not be intended. Decisions affecting our transportation facilities need to consider the consequences they have on influencing the nature and location of future land use and the preservation of community character as expressed in Chapter 3: Values and Vision.

#### ***PART 5. REFERENCES***

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# CHAPTER 7. UTILITIES

## ***PART 1. WHAT THIS SECTION COVERS***

The availability of utilities in Meredith can have a major influence on the nature, location, and intensity of future growth. The utility system includes conventional utilities such as municipal sewer, municipal water, and electricity. Also included are communications-related utilities such as telephone, cable television, and wireless telecommunications.

## ***PART 2. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES***

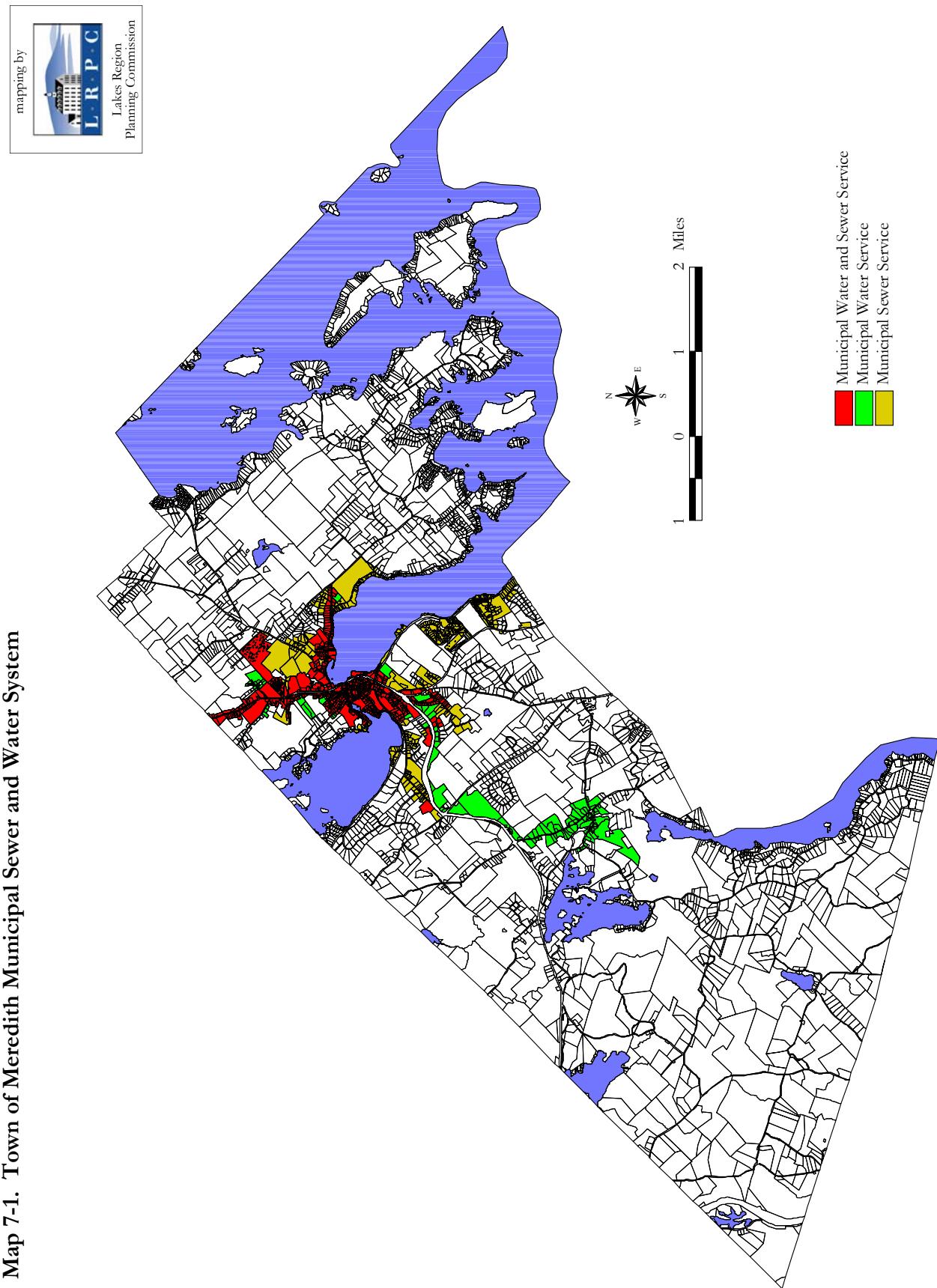
**Wastewater Collection System.** Meredith is served by a regional sewer system known as the Winnipesaukee River Basin Program (WRBP). Wastewater is collected from ten Lakes Region communities and is transported via an interceptor sewer and a series of pump stations to a treatment plant located in Franklin, NH. The local collection system consists of approximately fourteen (14) miles of sewer mains and five pump stations. Over the last ten years the collection system has been extended significantly. These extensions include:

- Westbury Road
- Philbrook Avenue
- Wagon Wheel Trail
- Reservoir Road
- Cataldo Road
- Waukewan Street from Pollard Shores Road to NH Route 104
- East Bluff Highlands
- The Grouse Point Club
- Neal Shore Road to US Route 3
- St. James Street (reconstruction)
- Pleasant Street (reconstruction)

Reconstruction of the sewer on Plymouth Street and the extension of sewer northerly on NH Route 3 to the Center Harbor town line has been approved by Town Meeting. Construction will begin in 2002.

The area currently serviced by the wastewater collection system is depicted on Map 7-1.

**Water Distribution System.** Approximately 45 % of Meredith's resident population is serviced by the municipal water system. The water supply for this system is Lake Waukewan. The watershed of this 912 acre lake extends into the towns of New Hampton, Center Harbor, Ashland,



**Table 7-1. Community Benefits of Potential Sewer and Water Improvements**

Project	Water Quality	Economic Development	Affordable Housing	Ratepayer Base	Fire Fighting	Low-Moderate Income Families	Property Values	System Efficiencies
NH Route 3 North Sewer and Water Main Replacement	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
High Street Sewer and Water Main Replacement	x				x			x
Colby Street Sewer Replacement	x							x
Massachusetts Avenue to Water Plant Loop	x				x			x
Stevens Avenue Water Main Replacement					x			x
Needle Eye Road Sewer Extension	x	x		x			x	
NH Route 3 South Sewer Extension	x	x		x			x	
Hillrise Lane/Foundry Avenue Water Main Loop		x						x
Mile Point Sewer Extension	x			x			x	
NH Route 104 Sewer Extension		x	x	x	x		x	x
Patrician Shores Sewer Collection System	x			x			x	
Boynton Road Sewer Extension	x		x	x		x	x	
Prescott Park/NH Route 25 Water Main Loop	x				x			x
Pinnacle Park Road Sewer Extension	x			x			x	
Jenness Hill Road Sewer Extension	x	x	x	x		x	x	
Barnard Ridge Road Water Main Extension				x	x			x
Hemlock Drive/Reservoir Road Water Extension	x	x		x	x		x	x

and Holderness. Treatment of the lake water occurs at a modern filtration plant having a capacity of 1 million gallons per day. The plant produces approximately 600,000 gallons per day of treated water during the summer peak season. The water is treated to eliminate turbidity, to adjust PH, and to disinfect. The treated water is stored in a 1.5 million gallon water tower which pressurizes the water distribution system. There are approximately 14 miles of water main in Meredith. Over the last ten years, several extensions and other improvements have been made including:

- Extension of municipal water service to Meredith Center
- Increase in capacity of the Treatment Plant to 1.0 million gallons per day
- Reconstruction of the water main on St. James Street
- Extension of a water main along Philbrook Avenue
- Connection of the Interlakes Mobile Home Park to the municipal system
- Extension of the water main under NH Route 104 to Enterprise Court
- Reconstruction of the water main on Pleasant Street
- Extension of the water main under NH Route 104 to the upper end of Waukewan Street
- Construction of a booster pump station off NH Route 104 to improve service pressure

Town Meeting has approved reconstruction of the water main on Plymouth Street. Construction

began in 2002.

The area currently serviced by the municipal water system is depicted on Map 7-1.

Sewer and water infrastructure in Meredith supports the community in many different ways. Benefits associated with these systems include: the protection of public health, improved land capability, water quality protection, expanded economic opportunities, expanded affordable housing opportunities, improved fire-fighting capabilities, direct benefits for existing low to moderate income families, improved property values, improved utility system efficiencies, and expanded rate-payer base. Table 7-1 identifies several projects that may come under consideration in the future and illustrates potential benefits to the community.

**Telecommunications.** In recent years we have witnessed dramatic improvements in communication and information systems technology. Today, fiber optic networks, satellite-based capabilities, and wireless cellular telephone and personal communication services are commonplace. Virtually all of Meredith's households, businesses, and consumers have the potential to locally access the Internet through one technology or another. In many ways, our daily lives will become increasingly reliant upon access to information through advanced telecommunication systems. For example:

- Businesses base decisions to expand or relocate influenced by the availability of high-speed Internet access.
- Telecommuting allows residents to work virtually anywhere in the world without physically leaving the home environment.
- Advanced sensing and communication technologies offer new opportunities in the area of traffic management and personal navigation.
- Schools use the Internet for educational purposes.
- Public safety improvements can be made through enhanced, high-speed communications including wireless technologies.
- Through the Internet, consumers conveniently buy, sell, trade, or inquire about almost anything from travel accommodations to bank statements.
- Options for personal communications are enhanced through wireless cell phones, electronic mail, fax machines, web sites etc.

Recently, several local advances have been made regarding telecommunications infrastructure including:

- The telephone utility has installed significant amounts fiber optic cable lines.
- The cable utility has upgraded its capabilities to provide Internet access, public access television, and the potential for two-way, interactive communication.
- Wireless cellular service is being deployed throughout the region including the completion of one tower in Meredith and with a second tower project in the regulatory review process.
- The Meredith Public Library is connected to the Internet for general public use.
- The Interlakes School District is connected to the Internet for use as an educational tool.
- Town facilities have been linked through fiber optic cable to improve information sharing locally and communication between facilities.
- In 1999 a special revenue fund was established dedicating cable franchise fees towards

cable-related improvements.

- Town maps and property information have been converted to a digital format in anticipation of implementing a system that allows users to collect, manage, analyze, manipulate, and display geographic information.

However, in spite of these significant changes, there remain several challenges associated with our rural, low-density demographics. Lower population densities translate into a smaller consumer base. This in turn may have a negative effect on a utility's investment in infrastructure thereby affecting the rate and extent to which infrastructure is deployed. For example, the wireless cellular industry has been slow to deploy north of Concord, NH. High band widths with high security (such as T-1 Circuits deployed by the telephone utility in more urban areas) are desired by many businesses, but are not available in our area. Here in Meredith there are numerous roads in the outer lying area of Chemung that do not have cable access due to a lack of residential density sufficient to justify the investment necessary to provide the service.

### ***PART 3. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

In order to achieve our vision for the future, we have identified the following general utilities goal:

**Maintain and expand utility infrastructure in a planned, efficient and coordinated manner.**

To fulfill this goal, several objectives and recommendations have been developed to guide future planning policies and initiative:

**Objective A. Maintain as a high local utility priority, the replacement and/or upgrade of our aging sewer and water infrastructure.**

1. Needed replacements should include water and sewer mains on High Street and Waukewan Avenue, sewer main replacement on Colby Street, water main replacement on Stevens Avenue, and sewer and water main replacements on Main Street.
2. Utilize the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to forecast, prioritize, estimate costs, and schedule projects.

**Objective B. Provide for improved water distribution system efficiencies and system redundancy.**

1. Coordinate projects located in town right-of-way with the Department of Public Works to the greatest extent possible. Water system projects should also be coordinated with the Fire Department so that fire fighting and fire suppression capabilities can be maximized.
2. Provide water line loops to improve water quality and to allow system repairs without disruption of service. Examples where this could be accomplished include Mass Avenue to the treatment plant, Mass Avenue to Hillrise Lane and Water Street to Avery Street.
3. Implement backup power generation for all five sewer pump stations.

**Objective C. Identify areas where utility extensions would be needed to support desirable**

**residential and commercial growth. Utility extensions driven primarily by development proposals should be funded primarily by the private entities creating the need and receiving a direct benefit.**

1. Incorporate utility planning and capacity analysis as part of the overall community planning process.
2. Anticipate where growth may precipitate expanded or improved municipal utility services. Potential growth areas include the Route 3 corridor, Route 104/ Business Industry District area, and the Meredith Village area.
3. Create a map, which illustrates schematically how the sewer and water systems could be further expanded including alternatives (potential service areas).

**Objective D. Identify areas where public utility improvements would benefit low to moderate-income families.**

1. Utilities are necessary for higher dwelling unit densities necessary to support affordable housing.
2. Develop resident surveys or other mechanisms to determine need and the level of potential income eligibility for funding assistance. Neighborhood areas may include but are not necessarily limited to Boynton Road, Jenness Hill Road and the six (6) manufactured housing parks.

**Objective E. Pursue state and federal funding sources, innovative funding mechanisms such as betterment assessments and public/ private partnerships to help offset the tax burden on property owners.**

1. Continue to pursue state and federal funding available from entities such as the Community Development Block Grant Program, the Rural Development Administration and the NH Community Development Finance Authority.
2. Encourage betterment assessment financing to fund neighborhood improvement projects. Examples of sewer projects funded via this method include Wagon Wheel Trail, Westbury Road and Neal Shore Road.
3. Explore innovative funding mechanisms and public/ private partnerships. Successful projects that involved public/ private partnerships include the extension of sewer to Reservoir Road (Annalee Dolls), the Extension of Sewer to Waukewan and NH Route 104 (Vutek), and the NH Route 104 booster pump station (Vutek).

**Objective F. Encourage efforts to attract advanced telecommunications infrastructure investment in our area.**

1. Support the use of economic development funding to stimulate private investment in broadband infrastructure.
2. Implement public sector improvements to enhance communications between the local government and its customers.

***PART 4. RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER CHAPTERS***

**UTILITIES AND PEOPLE.** As growth occurs there will be increased demands on the utility infrastructure. Meeting those demands through carefully planned infrastructure improvements can enhance the public's health, safety, and well-being.

**UTILITIES AND HOUSING.** The provision of utility infrastructure can support various housing objectives. The location and type of housing is partially determined by the availability of public utilities.

**UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.** Utilities such as sewer, water, and telecommunications can impact future opportunities for economic development. Decisions to provide new or expanded utilities should take into consideration community economic development objectives.

**UTILITIES AND LAND USE.** New or expanded utility infrastructure may result in additional development pressure that may or may not be intended. Decisions affecting our utilities need to consider the consequences they have on influencing the nature and location of future land use.

## ***PART 5. REFERENCES***

Town of Meredith Planning Board. 2002. *Meredith Capital Improvements Program 2003-2008*. Meredith, NH.

*Re: Areas of Deployment in Meredith.* Personal Correspondence between Mr. Terry Hicks, Vice-President/General Manager Metrocast Cablevision and Mr. John Edgar, Meredith Town Planner. August 13, 2001.

*Re: Telecommunications Infrastructure..* Personal Correspondence between Mr. Alan MacRae, Telecommunications Consultant and Mr. John Edgar, Meredith Town Planner. August 7, 2001.



# CHAPTER 8. HOUSING

## ***PART 1. WHAT THIS SECTION COVERS***

Everyone needs a place to live regardless of one's station in life. Housing is more than a type of land use. Housing is a central element of community vitality and economic health. This chapter examines existing conditions and trends and establishes a framework in which the public, private and non-profit sectors can effectively respond to the diverse housing needs of the community.

## ***PART 2. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES***

Housing in Meredith exists within a broader, regional economic context extending well beyond the confines of Meredith's political boundaries. Housing and economic markets are highly interdependent. For example, according to the 1990 census, approximately 48 % of working, Meredith residents commuted out of town to their place of employment. Conversely, approximately 53% of the Meredith workforce commuted into town from residences outside of Meredith.

### **HOUSING IN BELKNAP COUNTY**

**Housing Supply.** The NH Office of State Planning has estimated that in 1999, total housing units in Belknap County consisted of the following:

Single Family	22662	(69%)
Multi Family	6776	(21%)
<u>Manufactured Housing</u>	3593	(11%)
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>33031</b>	<b>100%</b>

Included in the 6776 units of multi family housing are 789 rent assisted units. Of these, 456 or 58% are reserved for the elderly. These units serve low and moderate-income households, which are defined as being less than 80% of the median area income. In 2000, the median area income for Belknap County was \$41,500

There are three trends that when viewed together, raise concern regarding the overall rental-housing situation in Belknap County. These trends include; rental costs, rental availability and construction activity.

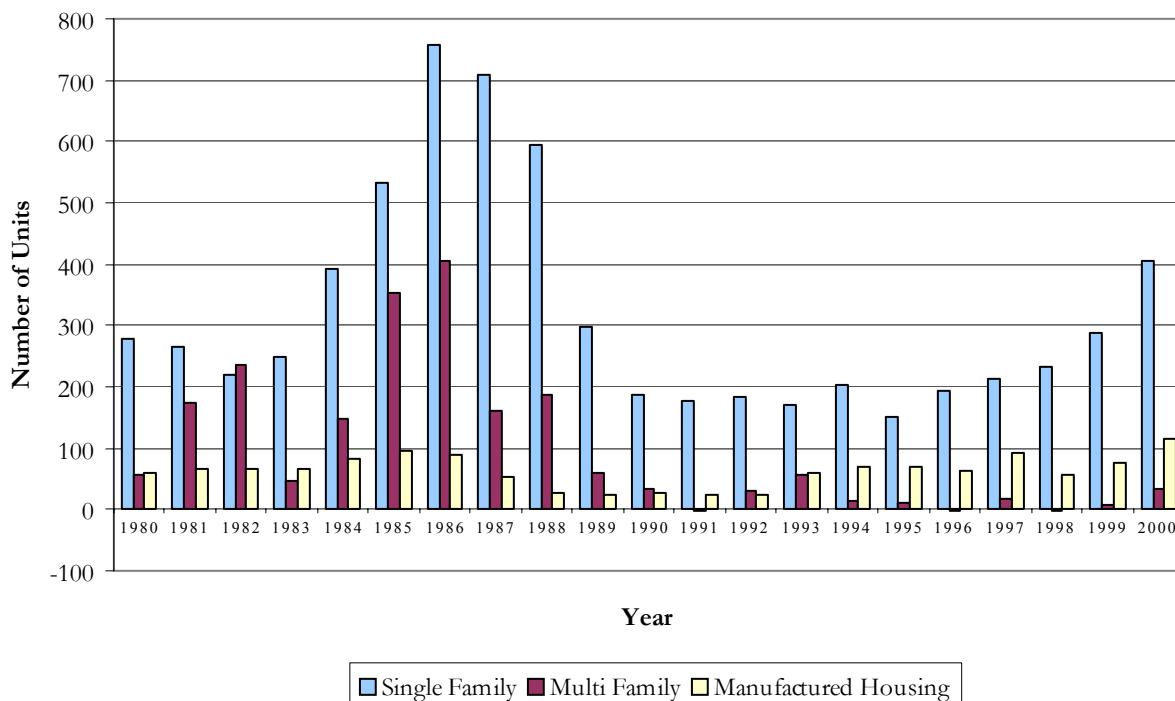
**Rental Costs and Vacancy Rates.** Since 1990, Belknap County has experienced a deep recession followed by a sustained period of significant economic growth. During the recession, demand for

housing decreased resulting in lower rental costs and greater unit availability. Conversely, the prolonged period of economic growth following the recession increased the demand for rental housing, which resulted in increased rental costs and extremely low vacancy rates.

**Construction Trends.** The factors of cost and availability are further influenced by the type and quantity of new construction within the housing market area. Figure 8-1 represents the net change in housing units authorized by building permit in Belknap County from 1980 to 1999. The data displayed below shows housing activity within the context of the real estate boom in the late 1980's, the following recession and the period of strong economic growth in the mid to late 1990's. Since 1991, construction has been predominately single-family homes. The construction of multifamily units has virtually stagnated while the resident population and total employment levels have continued to increase.

The combination of increasing rents, low vacancy rates and minimal new rental construction can combine to place significant stress on renter households. Some renters are forced to pay rents that exceed 30% of their household income thereby compromising their ability to secure other life necessities such as nutrition, health and dental care, childcare etc. In addition, renters may be faced with no choice other than to accept substandard living conditions. From an employer's perspective, these same housing variables compound an already difficult workforce situation. A lack of housing can inhibit the expansion of the workforce. As a result, start up businesses, the expansion of existing businesses and the relocation of new businesses to our area can be negatively impacted.

**Figure 8-1. Housing Units Authorized by Permit - Belknap County 1980-2000**



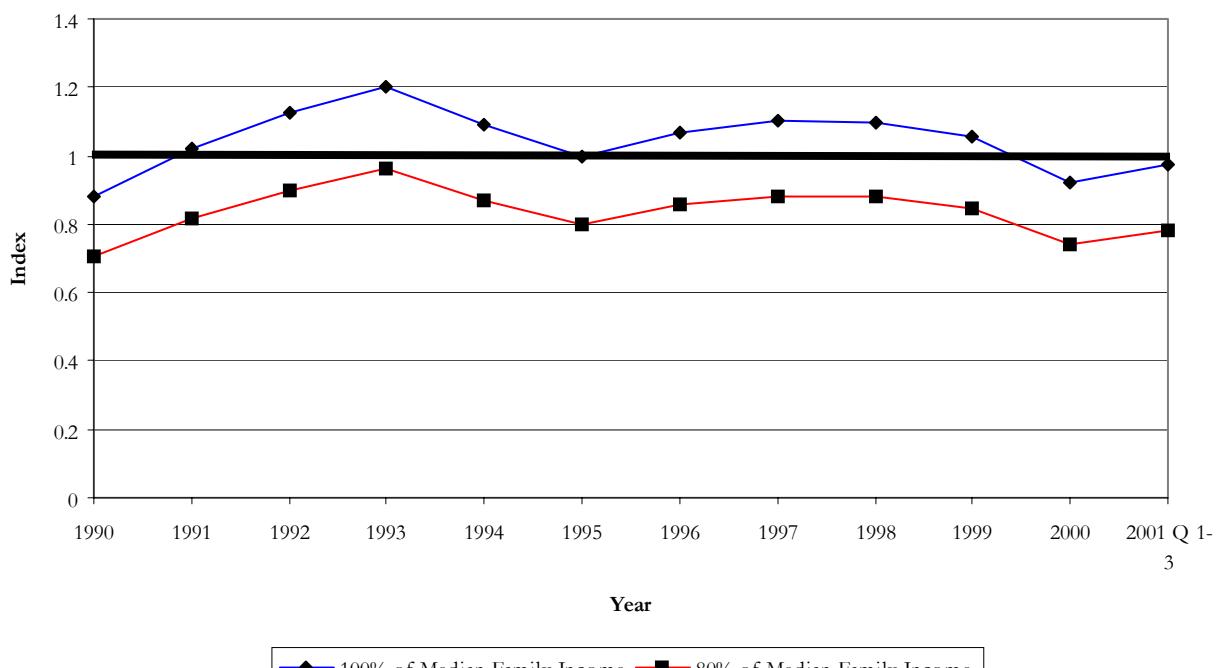
Source: New Hampshire Office of State Planning

## Owner -Occupied Housing

During the 1980's real estate prices were high and then dropped as a result of the economic recession. As a result, purchase prices became more affordable, especially for those with incomes at or above the median. As incomes and employment growth began to rise in the early to mid 1990's, purchase prices also began to climb. An analysis prepared by New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority (NHHFA) of home purchase affordability in Belknap County suggests that affordability peaked in 1993. As the availability of housing decreased due to the prosperous economy, housing prices were pushed higher resulting in a downward trend in affordability since 1997-98.

The Index of Home Purchase Affordability is a ratio of an affordable monthly payment to a monthly payment necessary to purchase a median priced home. In the year 2000, a family with an income at 100% of the median could not afford to purchase the median priced home. In spite of the economic gains over the last several years, home purchase affordability remains a significant issue in Belknap County.

**Figure 8-2. Index of Home Purchase Affordability - Belknap County, NH 1990-2001 (3rd Quarter)**



Source: New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority

## HOUSING IN MEREDITH

**Housing Supply.** The NH Office of State Planning has estimated that in 1999, total housing units (including seasonal units) in the Town of Meredith consisted of the following:

Single Family	3222	(78%)
Multi Family	514	(13%)
<u>Manufactured Housing</u>	373	(9%)
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>4109</b>	<b>100%</b>

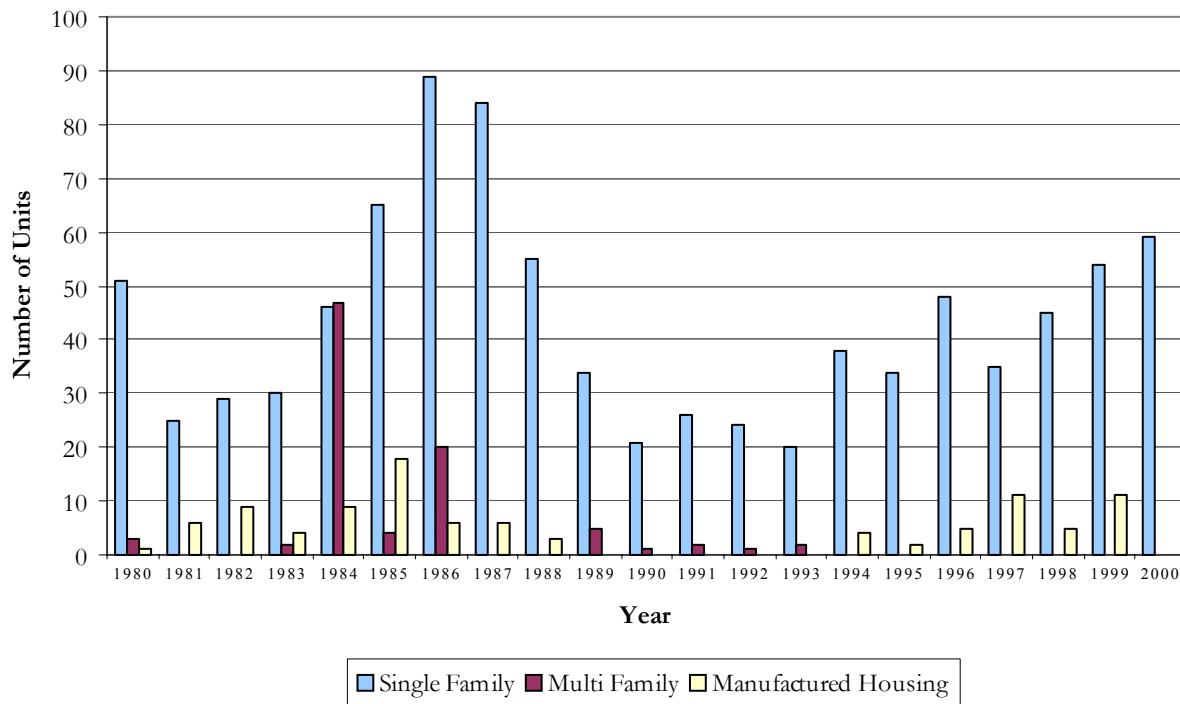
In addition, the housing market in Meredith has the following characteristics:

- Approximately 38% of the total housing stock is used on a seasonal, recreational, or occasional basis.
- Approximately 27% of the total housing stock is greater than fifty years old. Poor quality housing due to age related deterioration or neglect can impact an entire street, a neighborhood and the community as a whole.
- There are ten multi-family facilities with five or more units per facility.
- There are three, rent assisted facilities in Meredith totaling 107 units, 50 of which are reserved for elderly. The most recent of these was constructed in 1984.
- There are six (6) mobile home parks accounting for approximately 68% of the mobile homes in the community. Two of the mobile home parks are owned as tenant cooperatives.

**Construction Activity.** Figure 8-3 represents the net change in housing units authorized by building permit in the Town of Meredith from 1980 to 1999. Both during the recession and the period of strong economic growth, construction has been limited almost exclusively to single-family homes.

**Population.** Meredith's total population increased 23 % over the last ten years (1990-2000). It is anticipated that our population will continue to increase at a modest rate. As the baby-boom generation continues to age, we can expect senior citizens (65 years or older) to represent an increasingly greater percent of our total local population. Senior citizens are often the most vulnerable in terms of lack of income growth and extensive medically related needs associated with longer life spans. As a result, there will likely be a gradually increasing demand for all forms of elderly housing including rent-assisted apartments, market-rate apartments, retirement communities, assisted living facilities, etc.

**Existing zoning.** The existing zoning ordinance permits a diversity of housing opportunities. Dwelling units densities range from one unit per 10,000 square feet where municipal utilities are available, to one unit per 40,000 sq. ft. with on site utilities in residential areas subject to environmental lot sizing criteria) and up to one unit per three to ten acres in our rural residential and forestry conservation areas. A mix of housing types are allowed in the various zoning districts including single-family homes, duplexes, mobile home subdivisions and parks, multifamily dwellings and accessory apartments, nursing and convalescent homes, group homes and cluster subdivisions. Mixed uses are encouraged in our three commercial districts including Meredith Village.

**Figure 8-3. Housing Units Authorized by Permit - Town of Meredith, NH 1980-2000**

Source: New Hampshire Office of State Planning

### **Housing Development and Community Character.**

Residential development and neighborhood design, whether in a historical or contemporary context, contributes significantly to the quality of the built environment in Meredith. The built environment is an important element of our overall landscape character and ultimately our quality of life.

### ***PART 3. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

In order to achieve our vision for the future, we have identified the following housing goal:

**Encourage a variety of housing types, densities, and locations that expand choice and price range. This will consist of primarily single-family homes supplemented by other forms of housing that provide opportunities for persons of all ages and incomes.**

To fulfill this goal, several objectives and recommendations have been developed to guide future planning policy and initiative:

#### **Objective A. Improve affordable home purchase opportunities.**

1. Support mortgage subsidy programs targeted towards first time homebuyers.

2. Encourage private sector development of retirement and starter home developments.
3. Partner with NH Habitat for Humanity to develop housing in Meredith.

**Objective B. Improve rental conditions and opportunities.**

1. Work with non-profit organizations such as the Laconia Area Community Land Trust or the Belknap-Community Action Program to rehabilitate existing housing as a means to increase the number of affordable housing units and to improve the quality of older housing stock.
2. Work with the owners of the three existing, rent-assisted facilities to ensure that they are not converted to market rate housing and to encourage improvements that maintain decent and affordable housing quality.
3. Encourage the construction of rent-assisted units and market- rate rental units for the elderly.
4. Examine the feasibility of developing town owned land and/or privately owned properties that may help meet community housing needs.
5. Support funding for national and state rent and capital subsidy programs.

**Objective C. Work with interested parties to help advance Meredith's housing goal and objectives:**

1. Seek partnerships and collaborative opportunities between local government, non-profit housing providers (such as the Laconia Are Community Land Trust) and the private sector in order to advance local housing objectives.
2. Pursue funding opportunities for infrastructure and housing from organizations such as NH Office of State Planning Community Development Block Grant Program, the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority and the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority.
3. Participate in regional forums concerning housing and economic development in the Lakes Region.

**Objective D. Ensure an inclusive regulatory environment that provides for a variety of reasonable housing development opportunities.**

1. Periodically review local ordinances and regulations to ensure that barriers do not exist that would prohibit or exclude reasonable housing opportunities.
2. Periodically evaluate the development review process to ensure fairness, consistency and predictability.
3. Examine the feasibility of zoning changes as a means to advance housing policy objectives.

**Objective E. Balance the need for additional housing opportunities with other identified community objectives.**

1. Encourage housing rehabilitation and redevelopment in effort to promote greater economic vitality in the downtown area.
2. Ensure that housing development does not place an undue burden on Meredith's natural

resources. Develop land use regulations that apply conservation design principles to new development. These principles are often referred to as open space subdivision, cluster subdivision, or conservation subdivision.

3. Encourage building architecture that complements the architectural history of the community.
4. Encourage greater pedestrian opportunities within and between residential subdivisions.
5. Ensure the scale and location of future residential development is manageable and can be absorbed without requiring an excessive expenditure of public funds.

#### ***PART 4. RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER CHAPTERS***

**HOUSING AND PEOPLE.** Housing is a basic need of every person. Housing strategies need to respond to an aging population and the economic diversity of the community. Failure to meet existing housing needs, particularly those of older citizens, may cause some residents to relocate elsewhere.

**HOUSING AND NATURAL RESOURCES.** Housing development can have an impact on our natural resources. Future housing development and neighborhood design should include the conservation of our environmental assets.

**HOUSING AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.** Housing supply can support or inhibit community economic development. A mix of housing opportunities is important to allow for long term economic growth in Meredith.

**HOUSING AND LAND USE.** Residential development has the potential to dramatically affect the overall land use patterns of a community. The location and density of future housing must be coordinated with overall land use objectives.

#### ***PART 5. REFERENCES***

Lakes Region Community Development Clearinghouse. 1999. *Affordable Housing a Decade Later-Belknap County*. Laconia, NH.

Lakes Region Planning Commission. 1992. *Barriers to Affordability in Residential Development*. Meredith, NH.

Lakes Region Planning Commission. 1994. *Regional Housing Needs Update*. Meredith, NH.

New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority. *State of New Hampshire Consolidated Plan- 2001-2005*. Concord, NH.

New Hampshire Office of State Planning. 2000. *Current Estimates and Trends in New Hampshire's Housing Supply, Update: 1999*. Concord, NH.



## CHAPTER 9. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### ***PART 1. WHAT THIS SECTION COVERS***

Providing community facilities and services to promote public health, safety, and well-being is a primary responsibility of local government. This section will provide an overview of existing governmental facilities including Town of Meredith municipal facilities, Interlakes School District facilities and the Meredith Post Office. Recommendations follow which address the future needs of our diverse and growing population. (See also Chapter 10-Community Recreation and Chapter 7-Utilities for other facility information.)

### ***PART 2. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES***

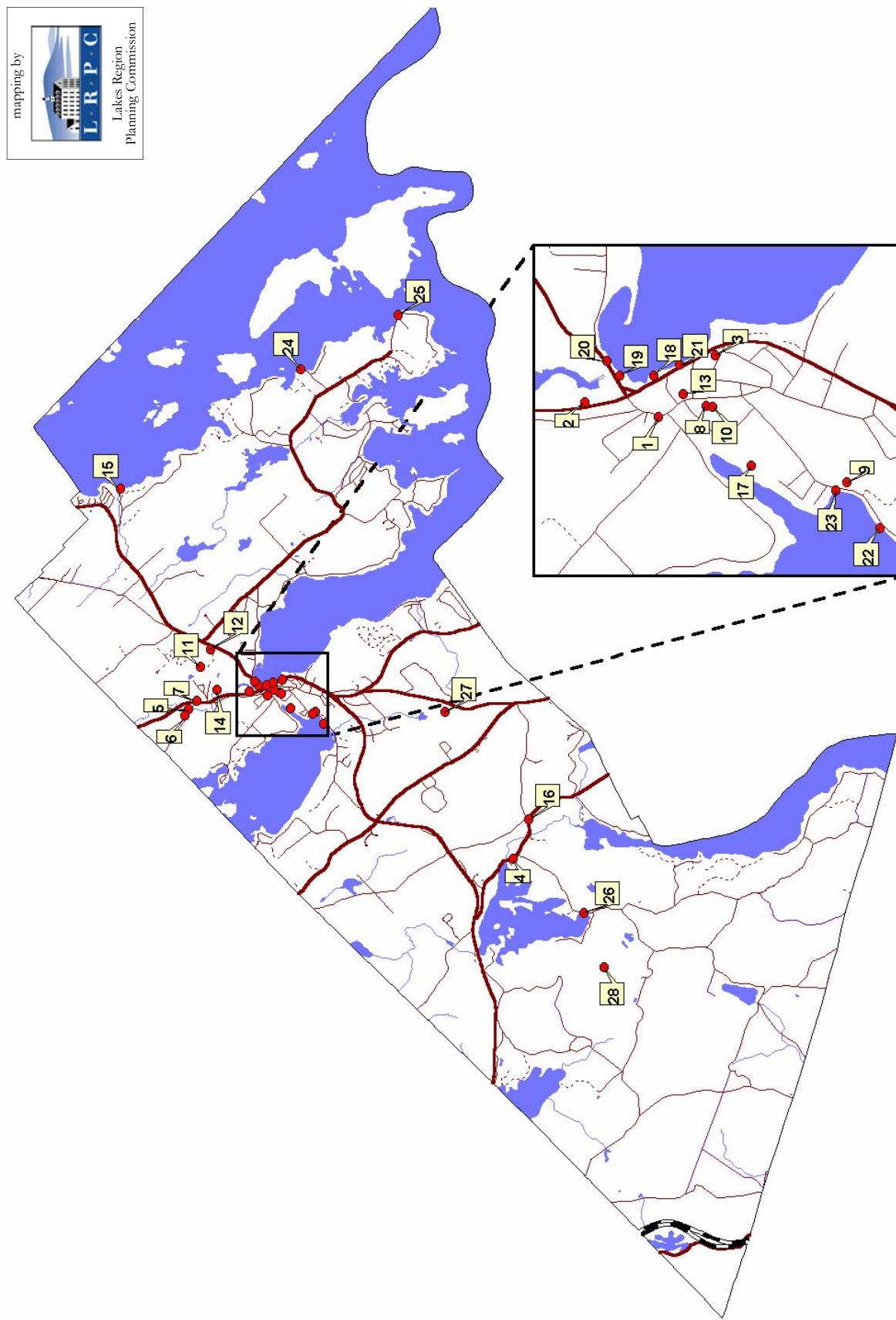
As Meredith continues to grow the demand for services will also increase. As demand increases the available capacity of a facility to accommodate additional growth decreases. Facility deficiencies and limitations are noted that may need to be addressed in the future or that may impact the ability of a facility to accommodate future growth. All community facilities discussed are located on Map 9-1.

#### **TOWN OF MEREDITH FACILITIES**

**Town Hall (Map ID # 1).** The Meredith Town Hall located on Main Street in the heart of Meredith Village was originally constructed in 1915 as a bank. Acquired in 1958 for purposes of a Town Hall, the building includes the offices of the Town Manager, Board of Selectmen, Finance Director, Tax Collector, Town Clerk, Assessor, Recreation Director, Town Planner and Code Administrator. Deficiencies of the facility include lack of capacity for future growth, lack of storage space, lack of parking, limited handicap accessibility, lack of meeting room space and the overall age and condition of the building. An Expendable Trust Fund was established in 1996 for the purpose of funding major improvements to the existing facility and/or acquiring or constructing a new facility.

**Police Station (Map ID # 2).** The Meredith Police Station located on US Route 3 North was constructed in 1985. The 3,600 square foot, single story facility includes a lobby with public restrooms, a public meeting room with a seating capacity for approximately 50 people. The meeting room is used by local boards, and commissions and the Laconia District Court. The secure portion of the facility includes dispatch, staff offices, a small kitchen/ break area, small training area, lockers, an interview room, booking area and storage areas for records, evidence and weapons. There are 25 on-site parking spaces. Deficiencies include limited ability to expand due to proximity to the Hawkins Brook prime wetland, general space limitations, occasional limited

Map 9-1. Town of Meredith Community Facilities



parking and seating for public meetings, and the lack of a secure area to transport prisoners from police cruisers to the booking area.

**Central Fire Station (Map ID # 3).** The Central Fire Station located on U.S. Route 3 and Oak Street was constructed in 1951. The facility includes five apparatus bays, a small radio room and a meeting/ training room with a kitchen and bathroom. There is a small office for the Fire Chief, the Department's only employee. This facility is designated under the Emergency Management Plan as an emergency housing shelter. Backup power generation was installed in 2001. The facility meets the current needs of the Department. However these needs may change as the town continues to grow. The primary limitations or deficiencies of the existing station are the small parcel, proximity to U.S. Route 3 and energy inefficiency.

**Meredith Center Fire Station ( Map ID # 4).** The Meredith Center Fire Station located on Meredith Center Road was constructed in 1990. The facility includes two double length apparatus bays capable of housing four pieces of equipment. It also includes two offices, storage space, a radio room and a handicap accessible conference room. The Public Works Department shares the site for winter sand storage.

**Public Works Garage (Map ID # 5).** The Public Works Garage located on Jenness Hill Road was constructed in 1965. The facility includes 5 equipment bays including a vehicle maintenance area, storage space, two offices, a lunchroom and a bathroom. There have been no major expansions or structural improvements to the facility since its construction however improvements have been made to interior lighting, heating and ventilation. The facility also serves as a designated Household Hazardous Waste Collection Site as part of Lakes Region Planning Commission's Annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day. Apart from the garage itself, the public works facility includes underground fuel tanks, a pole barn, a sign shop, outside equipment and material storage areas, and a sand/salt/equipment shed constructed in 2000.

**Transfer Station/ Recycling Center (Map ID # 6).** The Solid Waste Facility located on Jenness Hill Road includes the transfer station and scales constructed in 1988, the former incinerator building refurbished into the recycling center in 1988, and two storage buildings to house recyclable materials. The facility also includes outside storage areas for compost, scrap metal, stumps, etc. and an inactive landfill. The permit to formally close the landfill is pending before the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. Closure is expected to be completed in 2002.

**Cemetery (Map ID # 7).** The Town of Meredith owns and maintains the Meredith Village Cemetery located on U.S. Route 3 North and Boynton Road. The 18 acre site includes a small maintenance building constructed in 1997. The maintenance building includes a public rest room, one equipment bay and an office for the Cemetery Sexton. In addition to the Meredith Village Cemetery, the Town of Meredith provides periodic maintenance of approximately 89 small cemeteries located throughout the community.

**Meredith Public Library (Map ID # 8).** The Meredith Public Library located on Main Street in Meredith Village was constructed in 1901 and is included on the National Register of Historic Places. The library operates under the auspices of the Board of Library Trustees. In 1988 the facility underwent a major, multi-phased expansion and renovation. The 9,800 square foot facility includes a children's reading room, a fiction room, a nonfiction room/ reference room, an audio/

visual room, a room for new acquisitions, periodicals and newspapers, offices, rest rooms and a function room with seating capacity for approximately 75 people. There are 10 on-site parking spaces which do not fully accommodate the joint use of the library and its function room.

**Water Treatment Plant (Map ID # 9).** The Water Treatment Plant located on Waukewan Street was constructed in 1987. In 1992 treatment capacity was expanded to 1 million gallons per day. The facility includes six pumps, four filter beds, two double equipment bays, chemical storage areas, and an office. Treated water is stored in a 1.5 million gallon tank located off Sunset Hill Road.

**Municipal Parking.** In addition to on-street parking there are four (4) municipally owned parking lots in the downtown area. They are located at High Street, Water Street, U.S. Route 3 North and at U.S. Route 3 and the Town Docks. The Water Street lot was expanded as part of the recent Community Park project on Main Street. In 2001 a bridge was constructed connecting the Water Street and High Street parking lots. There are also two lots for which the town has shared-use lease agreements; the Congregational Church on Highland Street and the Cavalry Bible Church on the corner of Main and Saint James Streets. In 1999 an Expendable Trust Fund was established to fund the acquisition and/or construction of additional parking for the downtown area. Additionally there are two public lots on Meredith Neck used primarily by island residents or visitors. These are located at Love Joy Sands and Cattle Landing Roads.

**Meredith Post Office (Map ID # 13).** The Meredith Post Office located on Main Street in Meredith Village was constructed in 1936. The Post Office is a full service, delivery and sorting facility serving the Town of Meredith and outlying postal zone areas. Recent improvements include a handicap access ramp and entrance. The facility includes 1262 postal boxes and 9 on-site parking spaces for employees. The available capacity of the Post Office may be insufficient to meet the projected growth of the year-round and seasonal populations.

**Meredith Community Center (proposed).** The only new facility included in the Meredith Capital Improvements Program 2002-2007 is the Meredith Community Center. An Expendable Trust Fund was established in 2000 to set aside funds towards the construction or acquisition of a Community Center. The Community Center Committee was reconstituted in 2002 and it is expected that a proposal will be brought before a future Town Meeting for consideration.

## **INTERLAKES SCHOOL DISTRICT FACILITIES**

The Town of Meredith is a member of the three-town Interlakes School District. The District also includes the towns of Center Harbor and Sandwich. Meredith students comprise approximately 73 percent of district enrollment. Administrative support services are provided to the District by School Administrative Unit # 2 (SAU # 2). SAU # 2 also provides services to the Ashland School District.

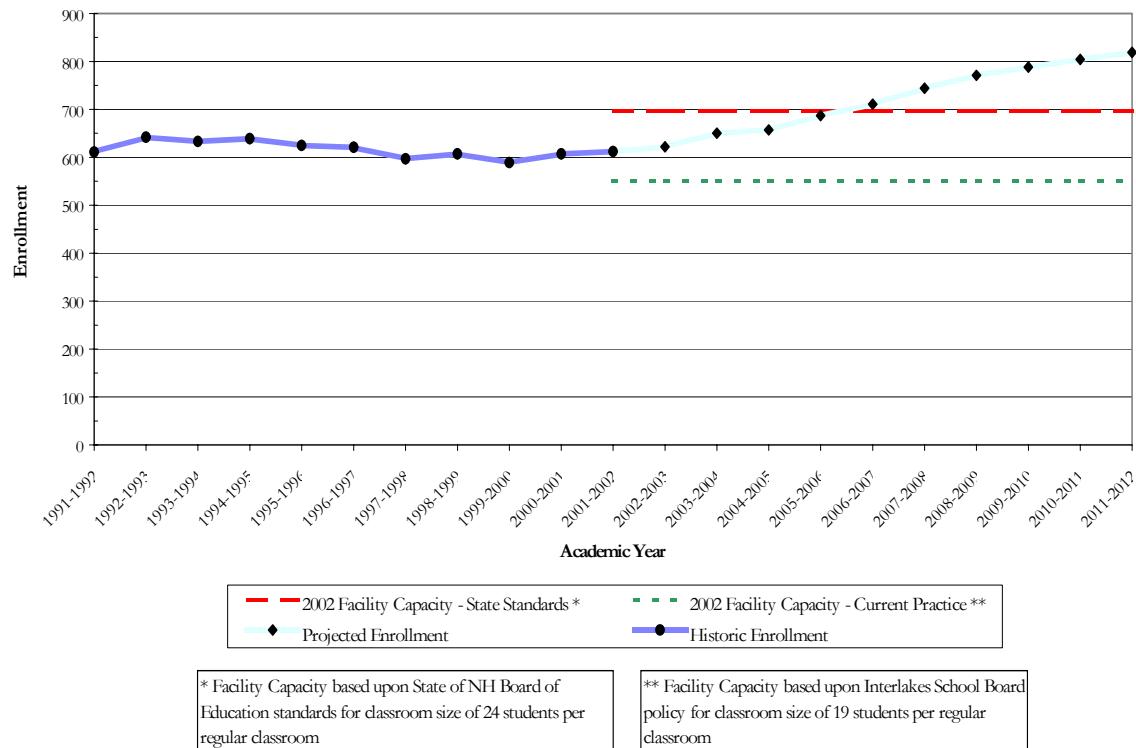
As far as community facilities are concerned, school facilities represent the single greatest tax payer investment. In 2000 an expendable trust fund was established for improvements to facilities within the district. This investment is most pronounced when there is need for new or expanded facilities. The school enrollment projections and capacity information referenced in the following pages has been provided by the Interlakes School District. Enrollment projections are not exact but are

intended to provide a means to forecast future needs. Student capacities represented below are approximate, and are determined primarily by the amount of physical space available for instruction. However, other variables such as the number of students per classroom, teacher/student ratios, course offerings, support services, mandates etc. also influence student capacity.

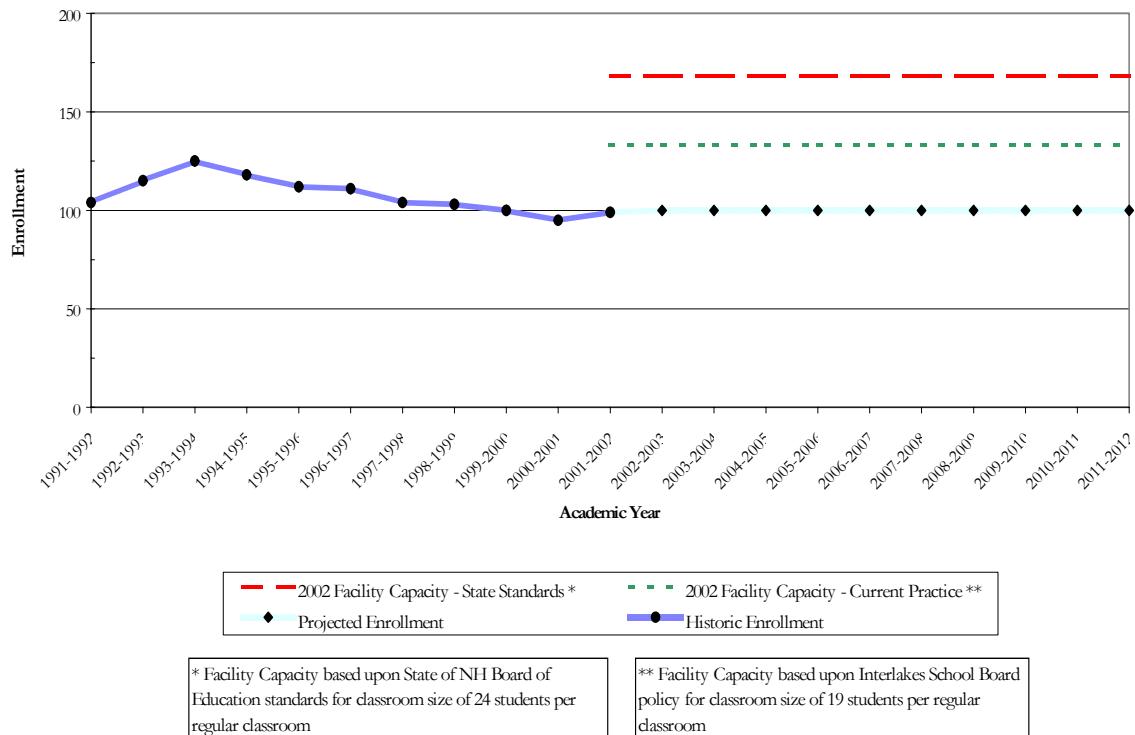
In terms of student capacity, two sources of capacity levels were identified by the Superintendent of Schools as acceptable measures of capacity. By using these two sources, a capacity range can be developed for each school facility. The low-end of the range is based on current Interlakes School Board policy for classroom size. The high-end of the range is based on state standards for classroom size.

**School Administrative Unit # 2 Offices (Map ID # 10).** SAU # 2 offices are in the Humiston Building located on Main Street and High Street in Meredith. The Humiston building was constructed in 1914 as Meredith's high school. The facility includes the offices of the Superintendent of Schools, Business Administrator, Director of Special Education, Curriculum Coordinator and a conference room with seating capacity for approximately 40 people. There are 27 on-site parking spaces and overflow parking area. The Lakes Region Planning Commission occupies the second floor of the building.

**Figure 9-1. Interlakes Elementary School - Historical and Projected Enrollment**

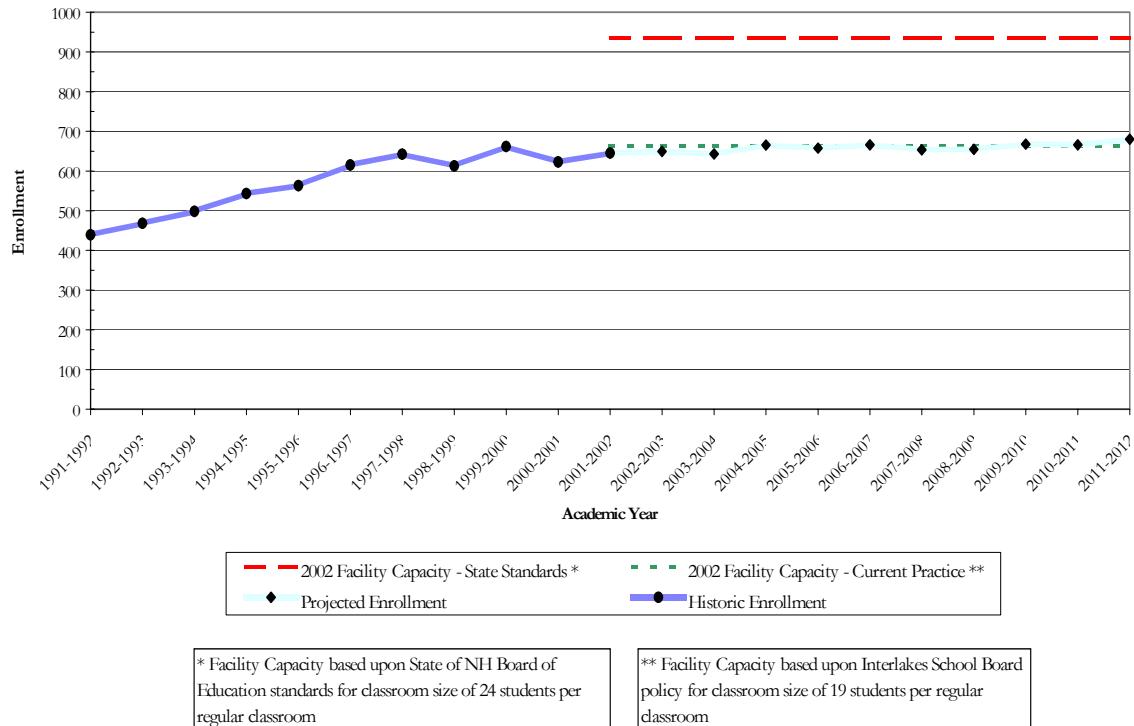


**Interlakes Elementary School (Map ID # 11).** The Interlakes Elementary School located on Laker Lane off NH Route 25 was constructed in 1970. The facility currently includes grades Pre-K through 6 and has a student population of 612. Students at Interlakes Elementary School come primarily from Meredith and Center Harbor. A major expansion and renovation project was completed in 1990, which incorporated the consolidation of the Lang Street Elementary School. In 2001, a maintenance facility was constructed. The elementary school includes 36 instructional units that could accommodate general elementary instruction. Of the 36 units, there are 29 regular education classrooms, 2 special education classrooms, 1 computer laboratory, 1 student support services room, 1 band room, 1 art room, and 1 music room. The facility also includes a multi-purpose room, gymnasium, library, offices and various support services. There are 113 on-site parking spaces, with 12 additional spaces planned for construction in summer 2002. The Interlakes Elementary School has an overall capacity range of between 551 and 696 students. Historical school enrollment and enrollment projections by grade are summarized on Figure 9-1.

**Figure 9-2. Sandwich Central School - Historical and Projected Enrollment**

**Sandwich Central School.** The Sandwich Central School, constructed in 1950, is located on Squam Lake Road in the Town of Sandwich. The facility currently includes grades K through 6 and has a student population of 99. Students at Sandwich Central School come primarily from Sandwich. The facility includes 7 instructional units, all identified as regular classrooms, a multipurpose room, gymnasium, kitchen/ cafeteria, offices, and various support services. The Sandwich Central School has an overall capacity range of between 133 and 168 students. Historical school enrollment and enrollment projections by grade are summarized on Figure 9-2.

**Figure 9-3. Interlakes Junior/Senior High School - Historical and Projected Enrollment**



**Interlakes Junior/Senior High School (Map ID # 12).** The Interlakes Junior/Senior High School located on Laker Lane and NH Route 25 was constructed in 1956. The facility currently includes grades 7 through 12 and has a student population of 645. Students at Interlakes Junior-Senior High School come from all three communities comprising the District. Additions and renovations occurred in 1964, 1981, 1990 and 2001 and 2002. The facility includes 39 regular education instructional units, a 450 seat community auditorium, a gymnasium, kitchen/cafeteria, library, offices and various support services. There are 230 on-site parking spaces. The Interlakes Junior/Senior High School has a capacity range of between 663 and 936 students. Historical school enrollment and enrollment projections by grade are summarized on Figure 9-3.

### Interlakes School District Facility Capacity Summary:

The enrollment projections and capacity analysis suggest the following:

*Interlakes Elementary School:* The current enrollment falls within the capacity range established by local policy and state standards. Projected enrollment, however, may exceed the state standards by the academic year 2006-2007.

*Sandwich Central School:* The current enrollment falls well below the capacity range established by local policy and state standards. Projected enrollment remains at or near current levels, providing for additional capacity if needed.

*Interlakes Junior/Senior High School:* The current enrollment approaches the capacity established by local policy, but falls well below state standards. Projected enrollment remains at or near current levels.

**Table 9-1. Existing Community Facilities Capacity Summary**

Community Facility	Available Capacity	Near Capacity	Above Capacity	Map #
Town Hall			x	1
Police Station		x		2
Central Fire Station		x		3
Meredith Center Fire Station	x			4
Public Works Garage		x		5
Transfer Station/Recycling Center	x			6
Meredith Village Cemetery	x			7
Public Library		x		8
Water Treatment Plant	x			9
SAU #2 Office		x		10
Interlakes Elementary School		x		11
Sandwich Central School	x			N/A
Interlakes Junior/Senior High School	x			12
Meredith Post Office		x		13

**Note:**

**Available Capacity:** Facilities noted as having available capacity means that future growth can be accommodated without additional facility expansion.

**Near Capacity:** Facilities noted as being near capacity means that utilization levels should be monitored and that facility planning and study should be initiated as appropriate.

**Above Capacity:** Facilities noted as being above capacity means that future growth may not be accommodated without facility expansion.

### ***PART 3. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

In order to achieve our vision for the future, we have identified the following community facilities goal:

**Ensure efficient and high quality community facilities are provided to meet existing and future needs of Meredith's residents and visitors.**

To fulfill this goal, several objectives and recommendations have been developed to guide future planning policies and initiatives:

**Objective A. Facility planning and needs study initiatives should be community based emphasizing collaboration and communication relying upon the considerable skills and talents of our residents.**

1. Establish a Municipal Office Space Needs Committee to begin the detailed planning process for a new, expanded or refurbished Town Hall facility. Continue funding in accordance with the Capital Improvement Program while the planning process evolves towards a specific proposal.
2. Reconvene the Community Center Committee to continue to develop a community center proposal or proposals for consideration in 2003. Continue funding in accordance with the Capital Improvement Program while the planning process evolves towards a specific proposal.
3. Establish a Fire Station or Emergency Services Space Needs Committee to begin planning for the future space needs of the Fire Department. Such an initiative could also incorporate the future needs of the Meredith Police Department.
4. When the closure of the landfill is completed, develop an overall master plan for Department of Public Works facilities.
5. The Interlakes School District should actively participate with the Route 3 and 25 Citizens Advisory Task Force regarding NHDOT's plans to make improvements to NH Route 25 as part of the state's Ten Year Transportation Plan.
6. Pursue shared technology planning between town and school facilities.

**Objective B. All community facilities should be periodically reviewed to assess utilization levels, efficiency, and available capacities.**

1. Consider acquisition of additional space adjacent to the Water Treatment Plant to allow for future expansion. The land could also be used for vehicle parking for recreational users of Lake Waukewan.
2. Continue to foster the shared use of municipal and school facilities such as Prescott Park and the Community Auditorium.
3. The Interlakes School District should continue to closely monitor actual school enrollment trends in relation to projected enrollments. Projections should be updated annually. Actual and projected data in relation to facility capacities should be presented to the CIP Advisory Committee as part of the annual CIP update cycle.

4. Continue the use of the Capital Improvements Program process. Utilize the CIP to forecast major municipal and school facility needs and to promote tax rate stability. Encourage a coordinated CIP process with the towns of Center Harbor and Sandwich as it relates to school facilities.
5. Determine actual capacities of additional burial plots for the Meredith Village Cemetery. Plan for additional cemetery space as needed.

**Objective C. The siting and design of new or expanded community facilities should take into consideration the potential to enhance community character.**

1. Architectural designs for future community facilities should be compatible with the architectural heritage of the community.
2. Carefully examine the benefits of possible downtown locations for future core community facilities such as the Town Hall, Community Center, and Post Office as part of the facility siting process.

**PART 4. RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER CHAPTERS**

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND PEOPLE.** Community facilities provide necessary support to the population. It is important that our facilities continue to meet the needs of the growing population of Meredith.

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND COMMUNITY RECREATION.** Community facilities often provide opportunities for recreation and leisure. The use of community facilities must be coordinated to ensure that future recreation and leisure needs are met.

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.** The long term economic well-being of a community is related to the level of both public and private investment in the community. A community that meets its facility needs is attractive to private investment. It is important that Meredith continue to invest in community facilities through a coordinated process including the Capital Improvements Program (CIP).

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND LAND USE.** Community facilities are an important component of land use. The location of new or expanded community facilities should take into consideration land use objectives.

**PART 5. REFERENCES**

*Enrollment Projections for the Interlakes School District.* Personal correspondence between Dr. Scott AndersEn, Superintendant of Schools SAU #2 Interlakes School District and Mr. John Edgar, Meredith Town Planner. March 2001.

SAU #2. 1996. *Interlakes School District Strategic Plan.* Meredith, NH.

Town of Meredith Planning Board. 2002. *Meredith Capital Improvements Program 2003-2008.* Meredith, NH.

United States Federal Government. *39 CFR Part 241: Expansion, Relocation, Construction of New Post Offices.* Washington, D.C.

# CHAPTER 10. COMMUNITY RECREATION

## ***PART 1. WHAT THIS SECTION COVERS***

Opportunities for recreation and leisure are fundamentally important to the quality of life cherished by our residents. This section examines recreation from a community perspective, with a focus on municipal-sponsored recreation, organized team sports, and the private sector.

## ***PART 2. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES***

**Town-Sponsored Recreation.** The Town of Meredith Parks and Recreation Department sponsors a wide range of popular programs, trips, and events throughout the year. The Department works in conjunction with the Meredith Recreation Commission, a volunteer body that advises on program and facility needs. The recreation and leisure opportunities offered by the Department in the year 2000 are summarized in Table 10-1, Table 10-2, and Table 10-3.

**Public Recreation Facilities.** Meredith residents benefit from a wide array of indoor and

**Table 10-1. Town-Sponsored Community Trips - YR 2000**

Community Trips	Age/Grade Level	Estimated Annual Participation	Season
Senior Adult Trips	Age 50+	80-100	Spring, Summer, Fall
Teen Trips	Age 13 - 15	15-20	Spring
Community Trips	All Ages	80-100	Spring, Summer, Fall
SK8 Park Series	Grade 4 - 12	40-50	Summer, Fall

Source: Meredith Recreation Department

outdoor recreational facilities. Municipal and school facilities provide the venue for the Recreation Department's programs, various organized team sports, and for individual use and enjoyment. Existing municipal and school facilities and associated uses are identified in Table 10-4 and located on Map 9-1.

Since 1989, six facility-related improvements have been completed:

- A bathroom/concession/storage building at Prescott Park
- A bathroom/storage building at Leavitt Beach
- Approximately 3 miles of recreational trails at Waukewan Highlands Park
- Rehabilitation of the track at the Interlakes Junior/Senior High School
- A playground area at the Interlakes Elementary School
- A gymnasium at the Interlakes Elementary School

There are several major projects that are pending at one stage or another. The projects and their current status are as follows:

Table 10-2. Town-Sponsored Recreation Programs - YR 2000

Programs	Age/Grade Level	Estimated Annual Participation	Season
X-treme Outings	Age 13 – 15	20-30	Summer
Swim Team	Age 7 – 15	30-40	Summer
Tennis Lessons	Age 6 – 15	30-40	Summer
Summer Playground Program	Age 5 – 12	175-200	Summer
Swim Lessons	Age 3 – 14	80-100	Summer
Mini-Sports	Age 3 – 5	15-20	Spring
T-Ball	Grade K – 2	50-75	Spring
Ski/Snowboard Program	Grade K – 8	40-50	Winter
Ice Skating Program	Age 5 – 12	20-30	Winter
Youth Soccer	Grade K – 2	80-90	Fall
Modern Dance	Grade 4 – 14	6-8	Fall
Swing Dance	Adults	6-8	Fall
Youth Gym & Fitness	Age 3 – 5	40-50	Winter, Spring, Fall
Senior Exercise	Age 50+	40-50	Winter, Spring, Fall
Aerobics	Adults	40-50	Winter, Spring, Fall
School Vacation Activities	Age 5 - 14	100-200	Winter, Spring, Fall
Yoga	Adults	15-25	Spring, Fall
Red Cross Babysitting Course	Age 11 & up	25-30	Spring, Fall

Source: Meredith Recreation Department

- **Prescott Park Expansion.** This project is a cooperative venture between the Town of Meredith and the Interlakes School District. The Prescott Park Planning Committee has spearheaded the project. New facilities will include one baseball field, one soccer field, utility field space, irrigation, and six tennis courts. The project is fully designed, permitted, and funded. Construction began in May 2001. Play is expected to begin in 2003.
- **Prescott Park Rehabilitation.** The second phase of the recommendations made by the Prescott Park Planning Committee includes the rehabilitation of the three existing ball fields including drainage improvements and irrigation. The project has been identified for purposes of the CIP process, but has not been scheduled in the 2001-2006 CIP.
- **Community Center.** In 1999 the Community Center Committee estimated that a new community center at Prescott Park would Cost \$777,950. In 2000, Town Meeting voted to create an Expendable Trust Fund recommended in the Capital Improvement Program to construct a community center. As of 2002, there are \$300,000 in the fund. The Community Center Committee is currently working on a proposal that will be brought

before a future Town Meeting as early as March 2003.

- **Hamlin Forest.** The Hamlin Forest is a 305-acre Town Forest under the auspices of the Meredith Conservation Commission. A partial, selective timber harvest was completed in 2000. Plans for the forest include the creation of a network of hiking trails. The trail system is expected to open in the autumn of 2002.
- **Reconstruction of the Interlakes Junior/Senior High School athletic fields.** This project includes the reconstruction and irrigation of both the soccer field and the upper utility field. The project was included in a proposed bond issue approved by the 2001 School District Meeting. Work on these fields will be coordinated with the completion of the Prescott Park Expansion Project.

**Organized Team Sports.** Team sports provide an important element to community recreation. In addition to physical fitness and skill development, there are important values such as

**Table 10-3. Town-Sponsored Special Events - YR 2000**

Special Events	Age/Grade Level	Estimated Annual Participation	Season
Water Carnival	Age 5 - 15	60-80	Summer
Family Fun Night	All	40-60	Summer
Fun in the Sun	Age 5-12 & 50+	80-100	Summer
Lot Dance	All Ages	300-400	Summer
Street Dance	All Ages	300-400	Summer
Tippy Canoe & Kayak Too	All Ages	50-75	Summer
Summer Concert Series	All Ages	2000-3000	Summer
Greetings from the Easter Bunny	Grade PK - 3	25-35	Spring
Easter Egg Hunt	Grade PK - 3	75-100	Spring
Trail Clean Up Day	All Ages	20-30	Spring
Family Skating Party	All Ages	100-150	Winter
North Pole Calling	Grade PK - 3	30-40	Winter
Christmas Tree Lighting	All Ages	100-300	Winter
Family Fun Fest	All Ages	80-100	Fall

Source: Meredith Recreation Department

sportsmanship, teamwork, and personal commitment inherent in team play. In Meredith, there are youth sports leagues for baseball, soccer and basketball. These leagues depend upon volunteers committed to providing opportunities for the youth of Meredith. In addition to the youth leagues, the Interlakes School District fields a variety of teams at the junior high, junior varsity and varsity levels. The extent of organized team sports in Meredith is summarized in Table 10-5.

**Recreation and the Private Sector.** Recreation and leisure opportunities offered by commercial and non-profit enterprises add to the diversity of recreation in the community. Commercial

Table 10-4. Local Recreational Facilities - YR 2002 Summary

Facility	Skate Park	Swimming	Fishing	Hiking	Snowshoeing	Walking	Picnicking	Boat/Canoë Launch	Docking	Events	Playground	Baseball	Softball	Soccer	Tennis	Volleyball	Basketball	Ice Skating	Map #
Prescott Park	x					x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	14
Leavitt Park		x	x				x	x	x	x									15
Childs Park										x	x	x	x					x	16
Swasey Park			x			x	x		x										17
Hesky Park			x			x	x	x	x	x									18
Scenic Park			x			x	x												19
Clough Park			x			x	x												20
Town Docks			x			x			x										21
Lake Waukewan Beach	x																		22
Lake Waukewan Launch		x				x	x												23
LoveJoy Landing		x					x	x											24
Cattle Landing		x						x											25
Pickering Park			x				x												26
Waukewan Highlands Park		x	x	x		x													27
Hamlin Conservation Area			x	x		x													28
ILHS Gym								x						x	x				12
ILHS Auditorium									x										12
ILHS Upper Field										x	x	x							12
ILHS Lower Field						x					x			x					12
ILES School Gym								x						x	x				11
ILES Multi-purpose Room							x							x	x				11
ILES School Yard								x						x					11

Source: Meredith Parks and Recreation Department

Note: All school facilities and fields are the Interlakes School District, SAU #2

**Table 10-5. Summary of Local Team Sports and Leagues- 2000**

<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Sport</b>	<b>Season</b>	<b>Age/Grade Level</b>	<b># of Teams</b>
Interlakes Youth Soccer League	Soccer	Fall	Gr. 3-6	12
I-L High School	Soccer	Fall	Varsity	2
I-L High School	Soccer	Fall	JV	2
I-L High School	Soccer	Fall	JH	3
I-L High School	Cross Country	Fall	JH/Varsity	4
I-L High School	Volleyball	Fall	JH/JV/Varsity	3
I-L High School	Golf	Fall	Varsity	1
Bill Lamper Youth Basketball League	Basketball	Winter	Gr. K-6	16
I-L High School	Basketball	Winter	Varsity	2
I-L High School	Basketball	Winter	JV	2
I-L High School	Basketball	Winter	JH	4
I-L High School	Nordic Ski	Winter	JH/Varsity	4
I-L High School	Alpine Ski	Winter	JH/Varsity	4
I-L High School	Spirit Team	Winter	JH/Varsity	2
Lakes Region Youth Baseball/Softball League	Baseball	Spring/Summer	Age 7 - 8	5
Lakes Region Youth Baseball/Softball League	Baseball	Spring/Summer	Age 9-12	7
Lakes Region Youth Baseball/Softball League	Softball	Spring/Summer	Age 9-12	6
Babe Ruth Baseball League	Baseball	Spring/Summer	Age 13	1
Babe Ruth Baseball League	Baseball	Spring/Summer	Age 14 - 15	1
Interlakes Youth Soccer League	Soccer	Spring	Gr. 2-6	4
Vutek	Softball	Spring/Summer	Adults	2
I-L High School	Baseball	Spring	JH/JV/Varsity	3
I-L High School	Softball	Spring	JH/JV/Varsity	3
I-L High School	Tennis	Spring	Varsity	2
I-L High School	Track	Spring	JH/Varsity	4

recreation plays an important part in the local economy. Opportunities offered by local commercial and non-profit entities include golfing, camping, boat rentals, bicycle rentals, fishing tournaments, a canoe/kayak water trail, guided fishing tours, boat cruises, a snowmobile club, a movie theatre, live summer theatre, a dance studio, candlepin bowling, a climbing wall and miniature golf. In the nearby surrounding area, the public can also enjoy indoor racquet sports, indoor swimming, sports camps, nordic skiing, alpine skiing, and organized youth football, swim and ice hockey teams. In addition to private providers of recreation and leisure, there are numerous supporting retail establishments. These businesses sell and service a wide range of products including sporting goods, bait and tackle, ski equipment, bicycles, boats and snowmobiles.

In 2002, 124 parcels of privately owned land in Meredith totaling 3618 acres were enrolled in the Current Use Assessment Program receiving the so-called “recreation adjustment”. Current Use is a taxing strategy aimed at making it easier for landowners to keep their open space undeveloped. Properties receiving the additional tax savings afforded by the “recreational adjustment” are open to public use throughout the year without entrance fee. In exchange for the property tax savings, the landowner must allow for hunting, snow shoeing, skiing, hiking, fishing and nature observation. The landowner may prohibit all other activities including camping, off road vehicles (ORV's), and snowmobiles.

### ***PART 3. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

In order to help achieve our vision for the future, we have identified a general community recreation goal:

**Ensure that year-round recreational and leisure opportunities are available to meet the needs of all age groups.**

To fulfill this goal, objectives and recommendations have been developed to guide future planning policies and initiatives:

**Objective A. Offer a diversity of programs and activities.**

1. Routinely evaluate town-sponsored programs and activities for effectiveness and interest. Maintain flexibility and responsiveness to changing needs and opportunities for improvement.
2. Develop programs and activities for the teenager/ young-adult age group.
3. Consider offering programs and activities that focus on outdoor recreation skills such as orientation, field archery, fishing, hunting, canoeing, and snowshoeing.
4. Work closely with other organizations such as the Meredith Senior Center and the Fifty Plus Club to provide leisure activities for our older citizens.
5. Consider developing programs and activities during the times of the year when recreation and leisure opportunities are more limited.
6. Continue to ensure that recreational opportunities are available to all of our citizens. Program costs and fees should not be a barrier to participation.

7. Consider identifying a mountain bike course/trail that could be used for either individual use or for organized race/rally style events. This could be accomplished utilizing low-volume, Town Class 5 roads, Town Class 6 roads and snowmobile trials.

**Objective B. Provide and maintain the recreation facilities that are necessary to meet the needs of a growing community.**

1. Renovate the existing Prescott Park fields after the expansion project is completed and turf has been established. Amend the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to schedule this project.
2. Replace the portable toilet rentals at Waukewan Beach with a permanent bathroom structure.
3. Complete improvements at Waukewan Highlands Park and at the Hamlin Town Forest for low impact passive recreation/conservation purposes.
4. Explore opportunities to create a skate park in conjunction with the Interlakes School district..
5. Develop an inter-departmental, comprehensive maintenance program for all municipal parks and recreation facilities.
6. Recognize and evaluate operations and maintenance costs associated with any new or expanded park or facility.
7. Support efforts to create a multi-purpose trail network to expand trail opportunities within the community and to connect communities with one another.
8. After completion of the expansion and rehabilitation of Prescott Park, determine to what extent there is a long range need for additional ball field space.
9. Explore the need for a neighborhood park on Meredith Neck, similar to Childs Park at Meredith Center. This facility could have features such as a playground, softball field, picnic area and basketball court.
10. Explore the need for covered, multi-use space for use as a rainy day location for summer programs, winter skating, skateboarding, tennis instruction, special events etc.

**Objective C. Improve communication, cooperation and collaboration in order to better serve the recreational needs of the community.**

1. Create a community wide clearinghouse of recreation-related information. This clearinghouse could summarize program content, facilitate registrations, post schedules, and advise participants of cancellations.
2. Publish informational materials such as a brochure, which would provide a map indicating facility locations and a brief description for each public recreation facility.
3. Provide informative trail guides for public properties with designated trials or paths, such as the Waukewan Highlands Park and the Hamlin Town Forest.
4. Promote greater awareness and convenience regarding community recreation opportunities through the use of public television and a local web site.
5. Improve public awareness of opportunities to access private lands for the purpose of recreation resulting from the Current Use Assessment Program.
6. Continue to foster cooperative use of recreational facilities. Town, School and League officials must work closely together to efficiently and effectively coordinate the use of recreation facilities. This is of particular importance should there be any consideration to expand the number of teams or the number of sports that use the facilities.

7. Recognize and celebrate the important contributions of volunteers, coaches, instructors, parents, recreation commissioners, local businesses and all those who support community recreation in Meredith.
8. Encourage collaboration between the Meredith Recreation Department and recreation counterparts in surrounding communities regarding joint programs and activities.
9. Promote community events that encourage participation from the whole community, provide opportunities for residents to socialize, and emphasize family-orientated activities.
10. The Board of Selectmen, working in conjunction with the Recreation Commission and Conservation Commission, should establish town policy concerning the use of off-road vehicles, dirt bikes and snowmobiles in town parks and forests.

#### ***PART 4. RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER CHAPTERS***

**COMMUNITY RECREATION AND PEOPLE.** Recreation and leisure are fundamental aspects of quality of life for residents and visitors alike. As Meredith's population grows we must recognize, and respond to, the changing needs for recreation and leisure opportunities.

**COMMUNITY RECREATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES.** Outdoor Recreation is an important element of our multiple-benefit conservation strategy. Our outdoor recreational needs should complement, and be balanced with conservation objectives.

**COMMUNITY RECREATION AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**

Recreation and leisure are important aspects of quality of life that underlie decisions to live, work, and vacation in a community. Meeting our recreational needs also serves to enhance economic opportunities in Meredith.

#### ***PART 5. REFERENCES***

Burke, Michael M., Consulting Forester. 1994. *Forest Management Plan—Reservoir Property*. Prepared for the Meredith Recreation Commission, May 24, 1994. Meredith, NH.

Brown, Brenda L., Consulting Forester. 1998. *Forest Stewardship Plan—Hamlin Lot*. Prepared for the Meredith Conservation Commission, September 1998. Meredith, NH.

Town of Meredith Prescott Park Planning Committee. 1998. *Concept Plan for Prescott Park*. February 28, 1998. Meredith, NH.

Town of Meredith Planning Board. 2002. *Meredith Capital Improvements Program 2003-2008*. Meredith, NH.

# CHAPTER 11. COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## ***PART 1. WHAT THIS CHAPTER COVERS***

Our quality of life is directly linked to the economy of Meredith and the choices that are made to live, work, visit, and invest here. This chapter identifies the dynamics of the economy and includes recommendations for improving economic opportunity from a quality of life perspective.

## ***PART 2. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES***

**Regional Setting.** The economy of Meredith can best be understood when first viewed within the context of its regional setting. Economies often function within a geographical context that exceeds local political boundaries. Meredith (pop. 5,943) is the fourth largest of the eleven towns that comprise Belknap County (pop. 56,325). The county seat is located in the adjacent City of Laconia (pop. 16,411). Belknap County is located in the heart of the Lakes Region, just southeast of the geographic center of the state. The Lakes Region of New Hampshire is considered one of state's prime destination areas. The region's climate and natural beauty combined with an abundance of cultural resources and recreational opportunities help sustain the economy by attracting numerous visitors and seasonal residents. This translates into a seasonally influenced demand for labor, goods, and services.

Over the last fifty years, traditional economic sectors have shifted significantly. Logging and agriculture, once economic mainstays of the region, offer relatively little employment opportunity. The manufacturing sector, once a major source of employment, furnishes only eighteen per cent of the total employment in the Belknap County. By contrast, the service and retail sectors have grown dramatically accounting for 53 percent of the county's total employment in 1999. The NH Employment Security has projected that retail trade will have the fastest job growth through the year 2008 while the service sector will create the most new jobs over the same period.

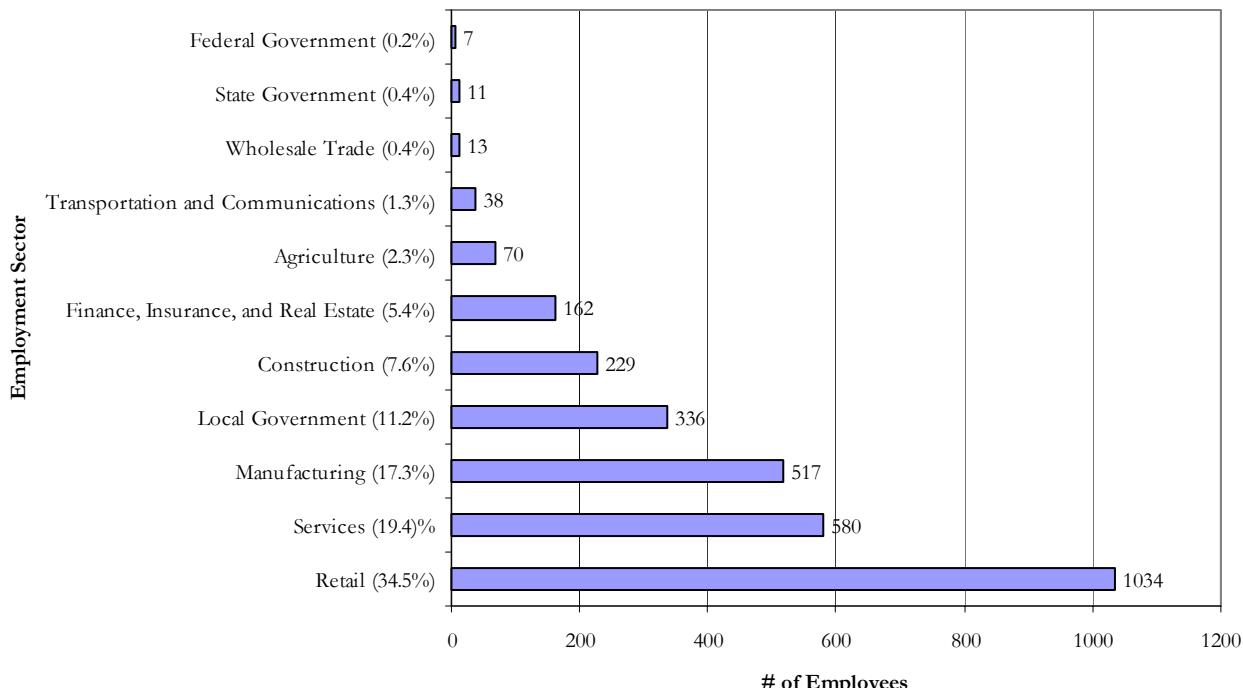
These trends generally represent several important impacts on the area economy: a) Employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector have been replaced with service sector jobs. Employment in the service sector tends to be characterized by lower wages, poorer benefits, and less stability; b) The increased reliance on tourism related jobs creates added vulnerability of the economy during economic downturns; c) Growth in tourism and an increased demand for second homes have pushed up prices for rental housing and home ownership; d) Increases in population have resulted in greater demand for public services, increasing the amount of revenue that must be raised through property taxation; and e) Continued regional commercial and industrial growth have increased the demand for employee housing. The lack of affordable housing may limit a company's ability to attract workers.

All sectors of the economy present opportunities and challenges for the future. Agriculture and farming contribute to our rural character and complement the tourism industry. Certain types of manufacturing, particularly those that are technology related, will expand or locate to the area as suitable real estate is developed or redeveloped. As the region grows in population, there will be a corresponding increase in the demand for service jobs of all types. Certain professional services (i.e. health, legal, business services, etc.) offer the opportunity to meet the varied needs of a growing and aging population. Non-technical jobs within the service sector will continue to grow making it important to address the problems of lower pay, instability, and poor benefits associated with this aspect of service industries. In all sectors, it is important that workers have excellent training and education. In an increasingly global economy where activities can be readily shifted out of the region, only workers with competitive skills and sound work ethics can expect to earn good wages.

**The Local Economy.** The local economic structure is a mix of local, regional, and even global interrelationships. Components of the economy include the makeup of various employment sectors, the size and mix of the tax base, the size and skill level of the workforce, needs of the workforce such as housing and child care, the natural and cultural environments, and the transportation and communication systems which support the delivery of goods, services, and information.

Meredith constitutes a small scale commercial hub located on the northwest side of Lake Winnipesaukee. The main focus of commercial activity in Meredith lies in and around Meredith Village and along the US Route 3 corridor. Commercial and industrial properties in Meredith account for approximately 12% of the tax base. There are approximately 3,000 people employed in

**Figure 11-1. 2000 Employment by Sector - Town of Meredith, NH**



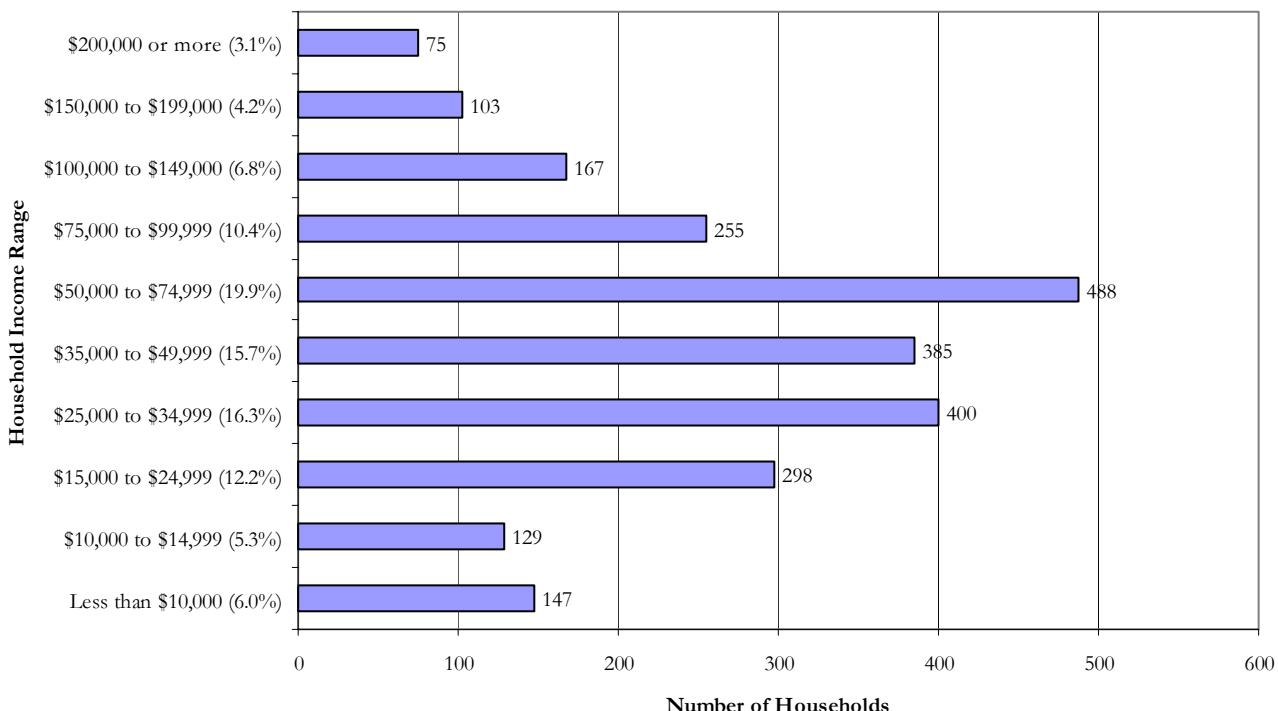
Source: NH Employment Security

Meredith. Local employment opportunity is dominated by the retail, service, and manufacturing sectors as indicated in Figure 11-1.

The above summary of employment sectors does not include those that are self-employed, those in the armed services, and those working out of their homes. We also know that increasing numbers of residents are “telecommuting” from Meredith to work at locations out of our region. Aside from telecommuting, home-based employment also includes more traditional occupations such as childcare, business services, and professional offices. As our quality of life continues to attract new residents, we can anticipate growth in home-based employment. Other potential growth areas include retail trade, health services, and business services that will be driven by continued population growth and an aging population.

Household income represents the ability of households to meet expenses such as food, utilities, housing, transportation, taxes, medical services, and other common expenses. Household income includes the income from all persons who occupy a housing unit, whether those individuals are related to one another or not. Figure 11-2 illustrates the distribution of 1999 household income for the 2447 Meredith households. Note that approximately 574 Meredith households have an income of less than \$25,000 per year. This represents 24% of all Meredith households. Approximately 345 Meredith households have income of \$100,000 or more per year. This represents 14% of Meredith households.

**Figure 11-2. Household Income Distribution for Meredith, NH (1999)**



Source: 2000 U.S. Census

In 1999 the median household income for Meredith income was \$44,758. *Median household income* is a level of income at which 50% of the households have less income, while 50% of the households have more. Figure 11-3 compares Meredith's median household income to Belknap County and the State of New Hampshire since 1979. In 1999 Meredith's median household income was slightly less than the median household income for Belknap County, and substantially less than the median household income figure for the State of New Hampshire. However, since 1989, the median household income for Meredith has increased at a faster rate than both Belknap County and the State of New Hampshire.

Meredith Village as a whole has experienced numerous public and private improvements over the last ten to fifteen years, resulting in economic expansion that has complemented the village character. However there remain several challenges including the need to: a) Increase activity during the slower early spring, late fall and winter seasons; b) Reduce the frequency of small business turnover; c) Increase the level of cohesion in terms of business hours of operation and downtown promotion; and d) Improve pedestrian and bicycle opportunities to minimize the effects of seasonal traffic congestion.

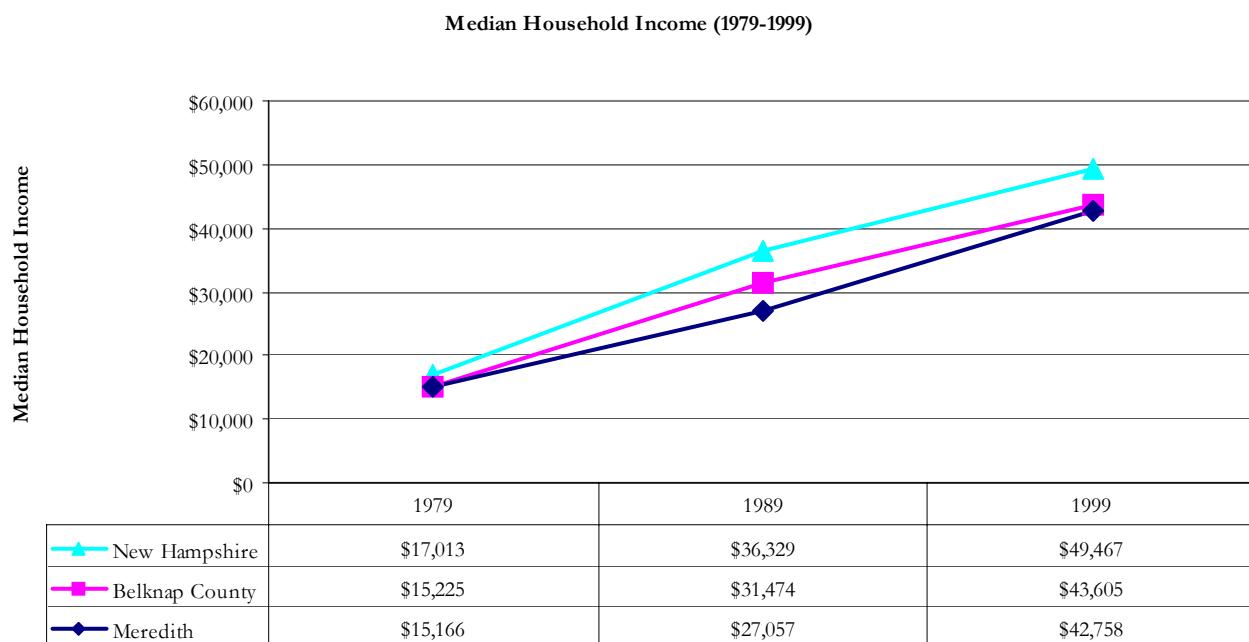
Meredith continues to make substantial investments in its sewer, water, and roadway infrastructure that have been noted in previous chapters. Maintenance and improvement of infrastructure is fundamental to continued economic prosperity. The Capital Improvements Program serves as an ideal vehicle for the identification of needed improvements and their organization into a balanced and stable program.

Although not yet quantified, Meredith has a limited supply of land with suitable environmental characteristics (soils, slopes, etc.), highway accessibility, infrastructure, and favorable zoning to support commercial development. Commercial and industrial objectives must be balanced with other demands for land (including housing and conservation) in order to achieve a reasonable mix of land uses in the community. Several properties in Meredith have significant development or re-development potential and can have measurable impacts on the community. For example, these properties could include Wickes Lumber on Main Street and Railroad Avenue, the Bickford Farm on NH Route 25, the northeast corner of NH Routes 3 and 25, the southwest corner of NH Routes 3 and 106, and the Longridge Farm on NH Route 3 south. Development of these properties needs to be carefully planned in order to ensure that the impacts of development are positive and that any negative impacts are minimized.

The principal means by which growth is managed is through Meredith's land use regulations. Our current regulatory framework has evolved since 1968 to its present form. While our regulatory approaches have been effective in the past, it is important that our regulations be easy to navigate and focus on advancing our current planning and economic development policies. Our regulatory processes must be efficient, consistent and reasonably predictable while our land use regulators must be progressive, skilled and approachable. Meredith is generally noted for its healthy approach towards business, a climate promoted by various offices within the municipal government, private business, the Meredith Area Chamber of Commerce, the Meredith Main Street Program, and Latchkey Charities.

Education is important to the economy of Meredith. It is the community's responsibility to give all of our youth the foundational skills necessary to become productive citizens and capable

**Figure 11-3. Trends in Household Income - Town of Meredith, Belknap County, and State of New Hampshire (1979-1999)**



Source: 1980, 1990, and 2000 U.S. Census

employees. In 2001, 68% of the graduating class at Interlakes High School continued their education, 8% entered the armed forces and 24% entered the workforce. The *annual* high school drop-out rate for 2000/2001 was 4.8%. According the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies, the *cumulative* drop-out rate for Interlakes High School was 18%. Cumulative drop-out rate is the percent of students in any given eighth grade class that do not graduate from high school some years later. We need to recognize that there is a significant number of young adults who do not complete or continue their education. Job opportunities in NH for those without a high school degree are diminishing, and increasingly being concentrated in a few occupational groupings with lower wage levels and fewer opportunities for advancement. The NH labor market is increasingly dependant on workers who are well educated, adaptable and technologically capable.

The quality of a public education system is an indicator of a community's well-being. An education system that is successful can have an influence on economic decisions such as a businesses decision to invest in a community, or an individuals decision to relocate their family to a community. Therefore, education can have a meaningful effect on the economy of Meredith, and the Region as a whole.

### ***PART 3. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

In order to achieve our vision for the future, we have identified the following community economic development goal:

**Promote an economy that fosters diverse economic opportunities in manners that are consistent with the qualities of life that form the foundation of our community.**

To fulfill this goal, several objectives and recommendations have been developed to guide future planning policies and initiatives:

**Objective A: Cultivate the natural, physical and social environments to conserve and promote our quality of life and quality of place.**

1. Maintain as a high priority, the protection of natural and cultural assets that make our community interesting and unique; the setting within which the economy functions.
2. Promote development that complements the community. Discourage commercial and residential sprawl.
3. All community stakeholders must recognize that development has its limits. There is a need to balance the environment and development to maintain the very resource base that residents and visitors alike have come to enjoy.
4. Pursue innovative local and regional strategies to increase housing opportunities for people of all economic levels. Consider innovative approaches such as a regional housing development authority (similar to an Industrial Development Authority).
5. Improve opportunities for safe and affordable childcare.
6. Foster individual growth in areas such as intellectual enrichment, parenting, and employee training, etc.
7. Ensure that our land use regulations allow the town to protect the health, safety and welfare of the community.
8. Develop a network of pedestrian and bicycle pathways to improve access to and within the village area.
9. Encourage business leaders to promote involvement in the community that their businesses depend on. Support for cultural and volunteer programs, and encouraging employee participation in community based activities pays dividends that are beneficial to both the individual business and the community as a whole.

**Objective B: Maintain a healthy business climate within which town officials and the business community foster economic opportunity.**

1. Form a mixed group of community leaders who would be available to meet with and assist prospective businesses or entrepreneurs who are considering locating in Meredith.
2. Maintain positive relations between the public and business sectors.
3. Improve and refine the town's land use regulations to ensure that they function to help implement the Community Plan.
4. Continue to provide capital investment in facilities and infrastructure such as roads, wastewater collection, water distribution, water supply protection etc. Continue to utilize

the Capital Improvements Program as a forecasting and budgeting tool for capital improvements.

**Objective C: Ensure that the communications technology and infrastructure are available, and expandable, to support the most current means of communication.**

1. Develop a municipal web site to improve public access to information.
2. Encourage utility companies to install and maintain the latest communication technologies.
3. The Town of Meredith and the Interlakes School District should work collaboratively to develop a shared technology plan to maximize the community opportunities and benefits.
4. Encourage high-speed electronic communications capabilities to all areas of Meredith and promote home-based businesses that rely upon such systems.

**Objective D: Encourage a system of education that creates well-prepared citizens and a highly skilled workforce.**

1. Support efforts to improve early childhood education to ensure that our youngest get the best foundation possible for learning and school achievement.
2. Encourage meaningful school goals and indicators to ensure school accountability and to help improve school performance.
3. Increase focus on the needs of students whose post high school graduation plans do not include higher education and of students that do not graduate from high school. Post high school student tracking, counseling and referral should be considered.
4. Encourage greater communication between educators and employers to increase awareness of the needs of local businesses, potential partnerships, and placement opportunities.
5. Encourage efforts to provide opportunities for lifelong learning through area adult continuing education and training programs.

**Objective E. Provide focus and support to improve overall economic viability and income opportunity.**

1. Support regional organizations such as the Belknap County Economic Development Council, the Partnership Between Education and Business, the NH Workforce Opportunity Council, and the NH Department of Employment Security in developing regional approaches to the critical economic issues of workforce education and training, workforce housing, and small business development.
2. Support local organizations such as the Meredith Area Chamber of Commerce, the Meredith Main Street Program and Latchkey Charities, Inc., that are engaged in community economic development at the local level.
3. Form a consortium of local businesses, town government, the Interlakes School District, the NH Technical Institute, Plymouth State College, and the Belknap County Economic Development Council to deal with workforce education, training, retraining, career counseling and high school drop-out intervention on a continual basis.
4. Periodically review the recommendations contained in the report entitled Main Street Resource Team Visit, dated May 4-7, 1998 for purposes of identifying potential implementation opportunities.
5. Develop small task forces to study the major land holdings in the central area of town and

to meet with the landowners to discuss what may be the most appropriate direction for development of their properties.

6. Encourage increased home-based employment as a flexible alternative to conventional work arrangements.
7. Seek innovative solutions to issues such as workforce availability, workforce housing, seasonal unemployment, and employee benefits that face seasonally dependant industries such as agriculture, recreation, and hospitality.
8. When the zoning ordinance is re-written, establish a schedule of uses that is contemporary and well defined. Districts need to be permissive regarding projected employment growth sectors that offer solid year-round employment such as health care services (including residential care), technology-based business services and professional services.
9. Carefully evaluate opportunities to improve the geographical limits of commercial zoning within the context of desired land use patterns.
10. Establish Village Commercial and Village Residential Districts that are more reflective of the prevailing development patterns of the village core area.

#### ***PART 4. RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER CHAPTERS***

People are the foundation for all community development activities. People form the organizations and provide the leadership that are important ingredients for community development. Community development occurs when communities successfully address a variety of human needs, including housing, employment, recreation, education, and quality of life. As we address our needs, opportunities for economic development and economic security are increased.

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## CHAPTER 12. LAND USE

### ***PART 1. WHAT THIS SECTION COVERS***

The use of land in Meredith is both the determinant of, and a response to, the quality of life we experience in our community. Land use patterns are the physical expression of numerous public and private decisions that have been made in the past. These decisions in turn have a substantial impact on the nature, location, and timeliness of growth that will occur in the future. This section discusses how we can best manage growth to direct desirable development to appropriate locations and in ways that enhance the community.

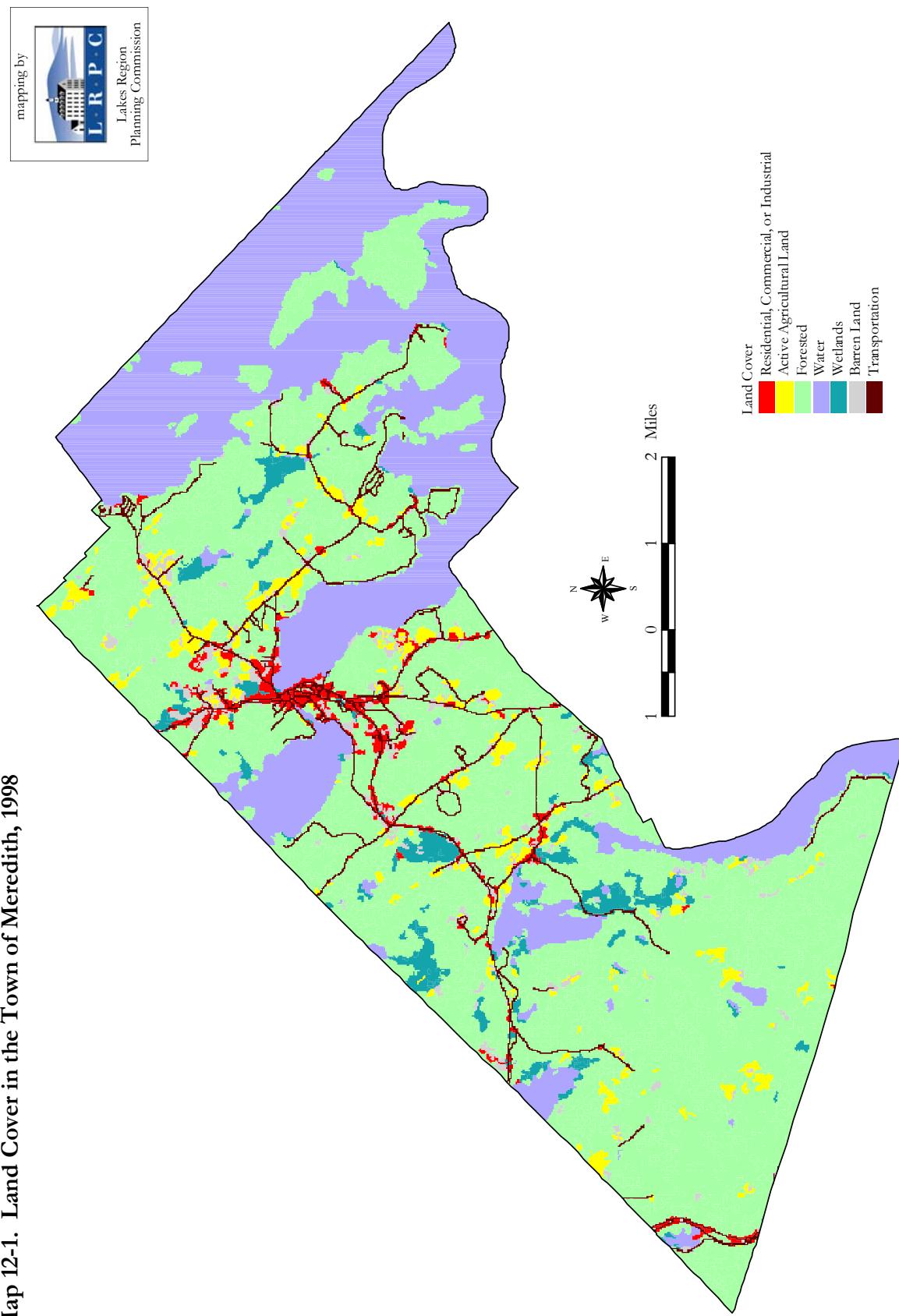
### ***PART 2. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES***

**General Land Use Development Patterns.** Meredith has experienced significant residential and non-residential growth over the last decade. However, over the last several decades general patterns of development have remained consistent due in part to the town's zoning which was initially adopted in 1971. These patterns include:

- A concentration of commercial uses in and around Meredith Village and along the US Route 3 corridor;
- Limited, light industrial opportunities in and around NH Route 104, east of Pease and Winona Roads;
- Low density, rural residential character along the NH Route 25, NH Route 104 and NH Route 106 (Parade Road) approaches to the village;
- A mix of residential densities throughout the community with the most intensive development directed towards areas with supporting infrastructure;
- Large areas for forestry and conservation purposes west of Meredith Center Road

Map 12-1 illustrates various land cover types in Meredith through satellite imagery interpretation. Although the satellite imagery is not of sufficient detail to show individual houses, businesses, etc., it does provide the reader with a general understanding of areas of land of concentrated development throughout the community. Dominant land use patterns are discussed in greater detail below.

*Meredith Village.* Meredith Village is a densely developed, traditional town center located on Meredith Bay at the junctions of US Route 3 and NH Route 25. The village center and surrounding area includes mix and diversity of uses. Sewer and water public utilities are located in the village area and support the highest residential densities in the community. The village core has benefited from substantial private sector and municipal investments in recent years.



*Highway Corridors.* The US Route 3 corridor was the focus of considerable speculative development in the late 1980's. However, several major projects that had obtained approvals never came to fruition. New commercial development throughout the corridor outside of the village area has been minimal. Growth has been limited to occasional rehabilitation, modest business expansions or occupancy changes. Municipal sewer has recently been extended to the US Route 3 area south of junction Route 104. Construction of utility improvements to the US Route 3 North area will get under way in 2002.

NH Route 104 serves as a critical link to Interstate 93. Significant general business and industrial development activity has occurred on roadways adjacent to NH Route 104 in the Business and Industry District over the last ten years. The balance of the corridor towards the New Hampton town line is zoned for moderate density, rural residential development and has not experienced significant development.

NH Route 25 (from Meredith Village to the Center Harbor townline) is an important link in the East-West corridor passing through Meredith and the Lakes Region. The westerly portion of the highway serves as an extension of the village area while the balance is comprised of residential, rural residential, and agricultural uses.

*General Residential Patterns.* Significant housing development has occurred throughout all sections of town even during years of economic recession in the early 1990's. Shorefront areas along major lakes are almost entirely built out and are experiencing considerable redevelopment due to the demand for larger waterfront homes in the region. Seasonal or second homes remain a significant component of the housing stock (38%). Individual subdivisions creating 10 or more lots since the late 1980's have been minimal. Lot mergers have offset much of the subdivision activity that has occurred since 1995. New road construction associated with subdivisions has virtually been non-existent during the same time period. This is probably due to a combination of factors including limited land availability having the capability to support development, increased site development costs, limited public infrastructure, increased environmental regulations and permitting requirements and a tightening of credit opportunities for large projects due to the recession of the late 1980's to early 1990's.

*Conservation Land.* There is 2,559 acres of conservation land in Meredith accounting for 10 % of our total land area. The distribution of these properties is depicted on Map 5-3. With the exception of the Moulton Farm and Bushnell easements acquired in 1989, conservation properties in Meredith have resulted from individual donation as opposed to public investment in open space. The importance of an intentional, comprehensive open space strategy is discussed in Chapter 5.

**Land Use and Zoning.** Another helpful way examining land use is through its relationship to the town's zoning districts. An analysis of the development potential of land in each zoning district can lead to a better understanding as to whether or not the town has an adequate supply of land to accommodate future growth of specific land uses. A review of land use in the context of zoning can also identify how effective or ineffective certain regulations have been towards guiding the kind of growth that is desired by the community. First adopted in 1971 and revised annually through 2002, the Town of Meredith Zoning Ordinance establishes nine zoning districts, which are described below. The location and extent of the districts are depicted on Map 12-2.

**Central Business District.** The general purpose of the Central Business District is to provide a concentrated area for business and other uses in the pedestrian-oriented, downtown area. A mix of uses (commercial, residential, public, cultural etc.) is encouraged in the village. The district comprises approximately 393 acres or 1.5 % of total land area. As currently configured, the Central Business District does not distinguish the village from the balance of the adjoining highway commercial areas.

**Commercial- Route 3 South District.** The general purpose of The Commercial- Route 3 South District is to provide an area for vehicular-oriented businesses in the US Route 3 corridor. The district comprises approximately 222 acres or .9 % of total land area. As currently configured, the Commercial- NH Route 3 South District promotes a ribbon, strip style development pattern.

**Meredith Center Commercial District.** The general purpose of the Meredith Center Commercial District is to provide a small area for business uses primarily intended to meet the convenience needs of residents in Meredith Center. The district comprises approximately 26 acres or .1 % of total land area. The Meredith Center Commercial is very small and thereby limits commercial opportunities in the area.

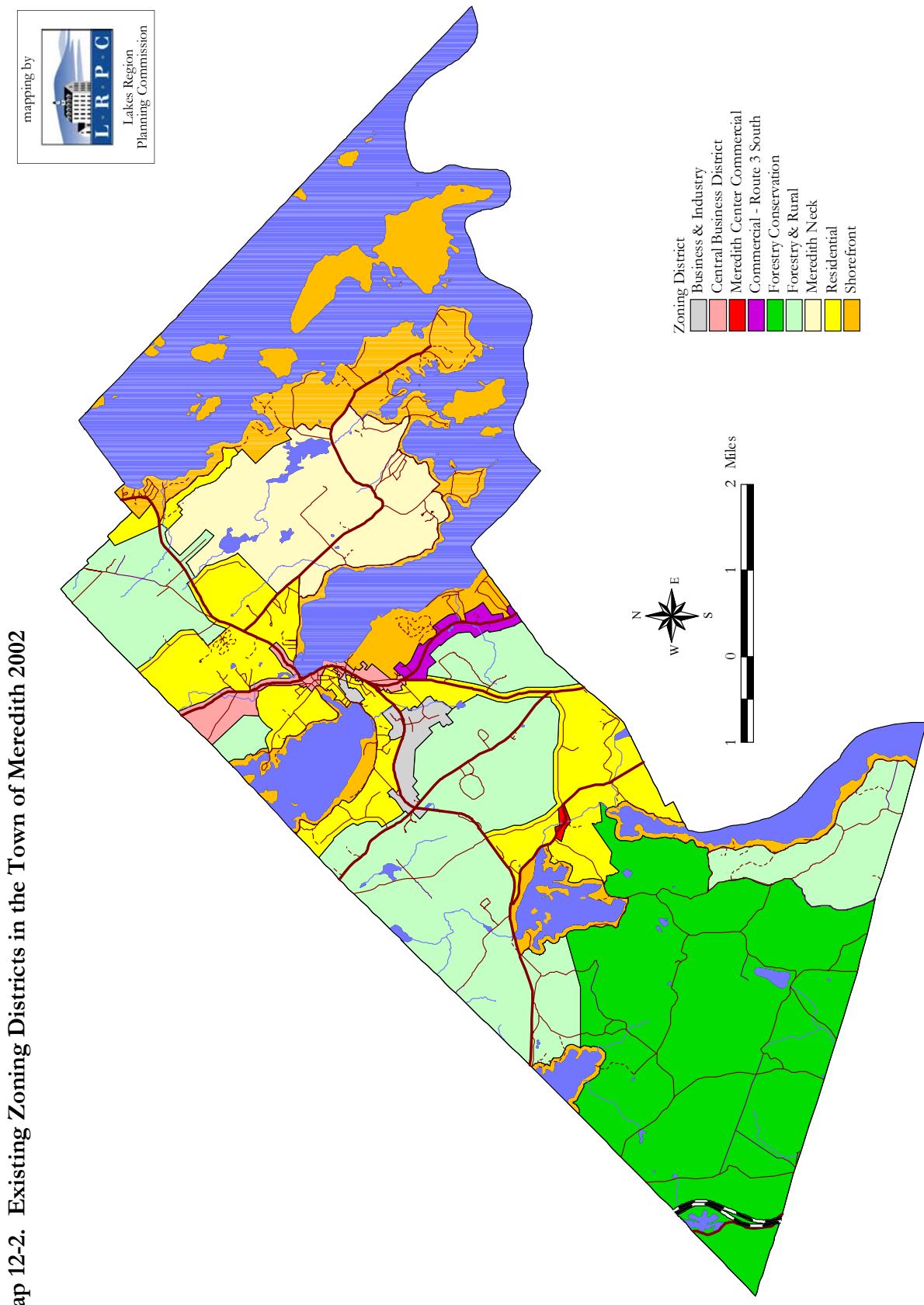
**Business and Industry District.** The general purpose of the Business and Industry District is to provide an area for environmentally compatible, light industry separate from residential and commercial uses. The bulk of the district is located within the Lake Waukewan Watershed. Lake Waukewan is Meredith's drinking water supply. The district also includes a small area in between South Main Street and Waukewan Street (Wickes Lumber). The district comprises approximately 317 acres or 1.2 % of total land area.

**Residential District.** The general purpose of the Residential District is to provide housing for a substantial number of seasonal and year round residents who prefer to live near the village center. The district provides for a mix of housing alternatives and permits the highest residential densities allowed by the zoning ordinance (10,000 sq. ft. per dwelling unit). There is limited available land within the Residential District having the utilities necessary to support higher density housing alternatives. The district comprises approximately 3717 acres or 14.3 % of total land area.

**Shoreline District.** The general purpose of the Shoreline District is to provide housing and recreation for a substantial number of seasonal and year round residents who prefer single family housing with access to lake waters. The protection of water quality, adjacent shorelines and the privacy and tranquility of residents are priorities. The Shoreline District does not include Meredith's five ponds. This district comprises approximately 4562 acres or 17.6 % of total land area.

**Forestry and Rural District.** The general purpose of the Forestry and Rural District is to provide for non-intensive uses and to retain open space. The district is primarily residential in nature and permits a relatively moderate residential density (3 acres per dwelling unit). The district comprises approximately 6,946 acres or 26.7 % of total land area.

**Meredith Neck District.** The general purpose of the Meredith Neck district is to protect the unique historic, residential and recreational characteristics of Meredith Neck. Like the Forestry and Rural District, the district is primarily residential in nature and permits a relatively moderate



residential density (3 acres per dwelling unit). The district comprises approximately 2,625 acres or 10.1 % of total land area.

**Forestry and Conservation District.** The general purpose of the Forestry and Conservation District is to provide an area for relatively low-density residential development (10 acres per dwelling unit) and customary rural land uses such as forestry, agriculture and opens space conservation. Large forest tracts, rugged terrain, significant wildlife areas and historical properties and settings characterize the district. This district comprises approximately 7,192 acres or 27.7 % of total land area.

The Zoning Ordinance is critically important to the implementation of future land use objectives. The Ordinance has evolved over 31 years and should be reviewed in depth to ensure that it is both user friendly and consistent with current planning policy objectives. However, the public participation process discussed in Chapter 1 did *not* identify a need for major shifts in land use policy that would necessitate a major re-direction of land use patterns or regulatory objectives. Previous chapters of the Community Plan *have* identified numerous opportunities to create new planning tools, and to improve and adjust the regulatory framework. Opportunities have been identified in the following areas:

- Watershed management planning,
- Open space planning,
- Ridgeline, steep slope development,
- Open space, conservation subdivision design,
- Scenic Resource protection,
- Protection of Meredith's ponds,
- Bicycle and pedestrian planning,
- Highway access management,
- Context sensitive road design guidelines,
- Signage and landscape site plan guidelines,
- Careful regulation of businesses that represent potential threats to the health, safety ,and welfare of the community,
- Rezone a portion of the Business and Industry District between South Main Street and Waukewan Street (Wickes Lumber),
- Establish commercial and residential village districts in and around Meredith Village,
- Comprehensive review/re-write of the zoning ordinance, including zoning uses, terms, definitions, and district boundaries.

**Challenges of Growth.** *Incremental growth.* Growth occurs incrementally and negative impacts generally associated with it are cumulative over decades. It is difficult to manage growth that consists of many incremental development decisions. The effects of incremental growth are often difficult to recognize. It is therefore particularly important that the negative impacts of growth such as increased traffic congestion, loss of open space, environmental degradation, long term financial impacts on the town are carefully monitored in relation to land use policies. As the town continues to grow, it will become increasingly challenging to protect the very resources that sustain the quality of life that attracts growth in the first instance.

**Development Pressures on Environmentally Sensitive Land.** Residential development pressures will likely continue to account for the largest amount of land conversion in the future. As most of the readily developable land has already been developed, pressures on environmentally sensitive lands will increase. This, if unchecked, could have demonstrably negative impacts on critically important resources such as unfragmented habitat areas, wetlands, steep slopes, streams and small ponds.

**Land Use and Transportation.** The use of land in terms of type, location and intensity, has a basic influence on how well or how poorly a roadway functions. Conversely, the availability and condition of the transportation system influences the type, location and intensity of future land uses. Land use and transportation should not be considered separately in the planning process. For example, a major transportation facility such as NH Route 104 is shared by many communities as a means of access to Interstate 93. Development along this highway in Meredith and New Hampton can have a positive (or negative effect) on the future capacity, flow, safety and appearance of this important highway link.

**Land Use and Infrastructure.** Future development will place added demands on municipal utilities and the local roadway network. In some instances our infrastructure simply may not be adequate to accommodate more growth. It is important that the Town continue to articulate its plans for infrastructure improvements in the Capital Improvements Program. This becomes an important planning tool to forecast and prioritize needed improvements. It also serves to advise future developers of the Town's practical inability to address each and every infrastructure limitation. The Planning Board must: (1) continue to require applicants to fund their fair share of improvements that are affected or required by the proposed development, (2) ensure against premature development; and (3) ensure that development does not require an excessive expenditure of public funds.

**Landscape Character.** The Town of Meredith encompasses approximately 38 square miles of land that range from flat to gently rolling to minor mountain formations near its western edge. Meredith is surrounded by mountain ranges that serve as magnificent backdrops to open fields, many highway and trail vistas, and the larger lakes that exist within the town. The far majority of the Town is forested. Contrasts of open area are usually found within open wetland areas or in the few remaining farm fields scattered around the community. A concentration of cultural features occurs within and around Meredith Village. The village is picturesque and has maintained much of its nineteenth and early twentieth century architecture. Visually the focal point of the village area is centered around Meredith Bay. Overall, the existing landscape character of Meredith offers a unique blend of attributes that make it special among the towns located in the Lakes Region and around Lake Winnipesaukee. The focus of its unique visual character is centered around the bay and village area but also exists in remaining rural, natural areas scattered throughout the entire community. Overall, the entire town contains a variety of significant, scenic attributes that collectively help define the visual character of Meredith. Landscape character, like environmentally sensitive land, is a resource that faces the challenges of development pressures.

### ***PART 3. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

In order to achieve our vision for the future, we have identified a general Land Use goal:

**Encourage balanced and harmonious growth capable of meeting present community needs in an environmentally sound, economical, efficient, and complementary manner without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.**

To fulfill this goal, objectives and recommendations have been developed to guide future planning policy and initiatives:

#### **Objective A. Support the viability of the town's village center and surrounding area.**

1. Allow compact and infill development in the downtown core area.
2. Promote a variety of mixed uses within walking distances.
3. Encourage safe, convenient and interesting transportation alternatives including options for walking and biking.
4. Create districts and district boundaries that reflect the compact village development patterns such as a Village Commercial and Village Residential Districts.
5. Distinguish the higher residential densities and housing types in and around the village core area, supported by municipal sewer and water infrastructure, from other residential districts (Village Residential District).
6. Promote public, civic and institutional uses with the existing town center. When considering new or relocated facilities, factor in the true costs associated with alternative locations.
7. Consider utility extensions within the general village area and the US Route 3 corridor that could expand housing and economic opportunities.

#### **Objective B. Carefully limit the outward expansion of commercial development beyond the downtown core area**

1. Encourage commercial growth in the US Route 3 Corridor. Development should be consistent with the Scenic Byway Designation and Meredith's Architectural Design Review Guidelines.
2. Development on important transportation corridors outside of the village such as NH Route 106 (Parade Road), NH Route 104, and NH Route 25 should be consistent with the transportation objectives and not detract from the economic viability of the downtown area.
3. Break up the ribbon effect of a corridor district through greater lot size minimums, nodal zoning, and careful site plan review.
4. Consider breaks in the NH Route 3 corridor zoning either through revised residential/commercial boundaries or through selective open space conservation.
5. Approach the residents of Meredith Center and Chemung to determine if there is a desire to expand the commercial boundaries in Meredith Center.
6. Maintain distinctions between rural areas and the downtown core.

**Objective C. Promote development design that is sensitive to, and enhances Meredith's community character**

1. Develop conservation sensitive subdivision design guidelines that link open space protection requirements to overall community conservation goals.
2. Distinguish between the concepts of density and lot size in order to encourage flexibility in the subdivision design process.
3. Avoid unattractive, repetitious, unimaginative design lacking aesthetics and inconsistent with local architecture.
4. Promote scenic qualities that are consistent with Existing Scenic and Cultural Byway Designations, protect various scenic landscapes and highway corridors with various techniques appropriate to the circumstance such as landscape buffering, limited highway access, careful building design and placement, etc.
5. Develop a Watershed Protection Plan for Lake Waukewan with an emphasis on mitigating potential sources of water quality contamination that may result from non-point pollution.
6. Extend shoreline protection zoning to all remaining water bodies including Page Pond, Forest Pond, Randlett Pond, Spectacle Pond, and Swain Pond.
7. Develop a town-wide, comprehensive open space plan for to guide the refinement of the zoning ordinance, the review of development proposals, and the acquisition of open space. Promote conservation based subdivision practices.
8. Consider a visual resource Overlay District based upon the inventory and analysis entitled *Town of Meredith Visual Resource Inventory and Assessment* prepared by Thomas Kokx, completed in 2002. Enact steep slope and ridgeline development guidelines and regulations.

**Objective D. Continue to improve the land use development review processes.**

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and site plan review regulations to ensure that they are both user friendly and that they are consistent with current planning policy objectives.
2. Ascertain the amount of developable land in each district to (1) assess the adequacy of the supply of land for future growth of specific purposes, (2) identify how efficiently certain districts have been used, and (3) as a cross check to population projections.
3. Encourage improved training and support for local land use boards and commissions.
4. Encourage increased inter-municipal planning efforts including the coordination of land use policies affecting shared resources.
5. Utilize Geographic Information System (GIS) as a planning tool to quantify the extent of useable vacant land, parcel-specific land uses, and to further refine the zoning ordinance.
6. Revise and update the schedule of permitted uses and uses allowed by Special Exception.
7. Improve the sign ordinance and landscape requirements to include user-friendly performance/ design guidelines.

#### ***PART 4. RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER CHAPTERS***

How we use land influences the character and quality of our community. Decisions on how land is used, whether it be for transportation, housing, conservation, or commercial development, are made by local people that are affected by those decisions. In order to ensure that Meredith grows in ways it desires, we need to implement land use policies that complement one another and balance community needs as expressed in this Community Plan.

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