



Town of Enfield
Planning Board
74 Lockehaven Road
Enfield, New Hampshire 03748

Introduction:

Enfield is a bedroom community of approximately 4,456 full-time residents located in the Upper Connecticut River Valley. We are directly adjacent to Lebanon and Hanover, the population, employment and commercial hub of the region. We have the unique challenge, in a region with a projected need for 10,000 additional housing units by the end of the decade, of reversing a decline in population and less than even modest growth in our housing stock in the first two decades of the 21st century.

Required Information:

Town of Enfield, New Hampshire 03748

Whitney Hall
23 Main Street
PO Box 373

Contact: David Fracht, Planning Board Chairperson, PBChair@Enfield.NH.US, 603-208-9800

Master Plan adopted December 28, 2022.

Relevant sections of the plan include:

- Housing
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Vision

The Master Plan can be accessed at www.Enfield-Leaps.Org/Plan for a downloadable PDF version and for the fully interactive web version <http://placesense.com/enfieldplan/>.

This is an application for a phase 3 grant in the amount of \$62,344.00 to be used in support of rewriting Enfield's zoning and site plan regulations.

UEI # MYLDHWF3WMB5

Signature

April 28, 2023

Date

Housing Challenges and Projected Goals

“The [Keys to the Valley](#) Housing Needs Forecast projected that Enfield should construct 200 additional housing units by 2030 to meet housing needs. The town has been issuing building permits for less than 20 new units per year on average and a majority of those are replacements of older units.” [Enfield Master Plan](#)

Enfield's 33 year old [zoning ordinance](#) and 47 year old [site plan review regulations](#) were crafted to discourage development in the town. While each set of regulations has been periodically amended over the years, many of the core regulations discourage increasing the housing stock and economic growth, do not comport with actual development patterns on the ground, and are not consistent with today's housing needs and 21st century municipal planning and development best practices. In short, our land use regulations are a significant impediment to the town's housing growth and economic well-being.

The Planning Board proposes a blank slate re-write of its land use regulations based on the goals and recommendations of residents, land owners, business owners and other stakeholders as expressed in the five chapters of its 2022 Master Plan and on additional chapters of the plan as they will be written in the coming months. Due to time constraints, we are proposing that only the development of new Zoning and Site Plan Review regulations be funded by this NHHOP grant as they will have the highest impact on the creation of new housing, both single and multi-family, in the core districts of town as outlined in the following paragraph. Revision of the Town's Subdivision Regulations will follow in the 2025-2027 timeframe, subject to the availability of funding from town or grant sources.

Enfield residents and other stakeholders consistently identified controlled growth while maintaining the rural characteristics of the Town as desirable planning objectives. They cited the lack of a walkable, central village “downtown” with a range of amenities such as locally owned specialty shops, restaurants, gathering spots and other commercial services as some of the critical barriers to attracting new housing, and, by extension, new residents to the Town. The Master Plan expresses a preference to locate new housing in or near the existing population centers and those areas which are, or can be serviced by the current municipal infrastructure components of water, sewer and roads. The plan also recognizes the need for a variety of housing sizes and types at affordable price points. Smaller, efficient to own and easy to maintain housing for senior citizens, young singles and couples, families and others who form the under-housed workforce of the Upper Valley region were housing needs identified by residents and other stakeholders who participated in the Master Planning process. Residents also expressed a desire to expand upon and leverage the existing recreational and cultural opportunities within Enfield as a means of attracting visitors and potential new residents to town. Recreational and cultural opportunities include three major lakes with public access, Northern Rail Trail, Shaker Inn and Museum, Shaker Bridge Theater, Whaleback Ski Area, a public golf course, and over 6,500 acres of public or conserved land available for different types of outdoor recreation. Building a commercial base of retail specialty shops, restaurants and other gathering spots was also cited as necessary to increasing the quality of life for existing residents and attracting new residents to Enfield.

We believe that by expanding and enhancing those qualities which make Enfield an attractive place to live, we can enable controlled growth of both population and housing stock while maintaining the overall integrity of those qualities. (586)

Deliverables and Outcomes:

The deliverables from this grant proposal will be a “from the ground up” rewrite of Enfield's Zoning and Site Plan Review regulations. It is expected that the current zoning map will be revised with additional zoning districts added to enable residential, mixed use and business development in areas of town identified in the Master Plan as desirable for more intensive housing development. In addition, it is expected that “lakeshore districts” will be created which acknowledge the existing, densely developed shorelines on our three major water bodies while protecting these valuable recreational, visual and natural resources.

It is expected that there will be extensive public engagement and input opportunities for stakeholders and relevant Town Boards and Committees throughout the process of crafting these new regulations and that the final draft will receive a strong favorable majority when put before the voters at Town Meeting in 2025.

The expected outcomes are Zoning and Site Plan regulations which implement the development goals and recommendations expressed in Enfield's Master Plan, reflect the 21st century housing, commercial, economic and recreational needs and desires across demographic groups present in the community, across the larger Upper Valley geographic area and beyond. In short, we expect that revised land use regulations will remove existing regulatory barriers to denser housing in areas of town served by the municipal sewer system, enable the establishment of a variety of local commercial amenities such as retail shops, restaurants, and other gathering places within walking or biking distance of many residences, while maintaining the rural characteristics of the town by limiting development in the outlying sections.

The focus of our land use regulations will include, but not be limited, to the following:

- Allowing for denser housing in areas served by municipal sewer.
- Promoting denser housing through increased numbers of ADUs
- Allowing for an expansion of mixed use zoning districts, and possible creation of new mixed-use districts
- Encouraging additional retail and commercial establishments and other amenities
- Encouraging the development of walkable neighborhoods and downtown
- Bringing many non-conforming, sub-standard lots into dimensional compliance to reduce the number of variances required by property owners to make improvements on their lands.
- Protecting water quality in our lakes and streams
- Providing incentives to encourage the development of affordable housing units.
- Encouraging cluster development and other innovative land use methods in rural sections of town to maintain the visual and working agricultural landscapes.
- Discourage single family residences on large, multi-acre lots.

The outcome metrics will be reflected by the number and type of building permits, subdivision permits and site plan review decisions issued over time. Anecdotally, new housing starts, and the establishment of new, or expansion of existing, consumer oriented businesses and other amenities will be a visual measure of our success.

(463)

Scope of Work and Budget:

(PS= Placesense, Windsor, VT PB= Enfield Planning Board)

Task	Who	What	Timetable	Work Product	Partners	Cost
Review existing regulations and Master Plan	PS, PB	Identify regs that need to be brought into conformance with Master Plan and as built patterns	Anticipated Start July 1, 2023 Months 1-2	Outline of process and methods	None	\$12,000.00
Update Website	TBD	Update website as needed to inform stakeholders of planned engagement activities and progress	Ongoing as needed throughout the project	Enfield-Leaps.Org Website	TBD	\$3,500.00
Informal meetings	PS, PB	Informal meetings with stakeholders and relevant Boards and Committees	Months 1-2	Input from stakeholders	None	\$4,000.00
Drafting Administrative Procedures	PS	Proposed Administrative Procedures	Months 2-3	Regulations and procedures to be followed	None	\$2,500.00
Neighborhood Meetings	PS, PB	Conversations with community members	Months 3-4	Input from stakeholders	Relevant Town Boards, Committees, Master Plan Task Force, etc.	\$5,000.00
Draft Site Plan and Engineering Specifications	PS	Proposed Site Plan and Subdivision regulations	Months 4-5	Site plan and Subdivision Regs	None	\$3,000.00
Revise Zoning Districts and Map	PS, PB	Proposed new zoning districts and map	Months 6-7	New Zoning map with meets and bounds descriptions	None	\$6,000.00
Define By-Right and Special Exceptions Uses	PS, PB	Proposed dimensional requirements and uses for all districts	Months 7-8	Use section of zoning regs	None	\$2,500.00
Final Draft of Land Use Regulations	PS, PB	Combine all input and work into final draft document.	Months 8-10	Finalize draft regulations	None	\$7,000.00

Focus Groups	PS, PB	Review of final draft regulations to confirm that proposed regs address significant concerns of stakeholders	Month 11	Revisions to proposed regulations based on focus group feedback. (If needed)	TBD	\$1,500.00
Prepare materials for Public Hearing	PS, PB	Prepare materials for required public hearing	Month 13 (July 2024)	Printed Materials, Powerpoint deck , Mailing, etc	None	\$3,500.00
Public Hearing	PB	Required Public Hearing	January 2025	Public Hearing	None	\$0.00
Town Meeting Vote	PB, SB	Town Vote on new Land Use Regulations	March, 2025	Required Town Meeting Ballot Vote	None	None
Rewrite Subdivision Regulations	PB, TBF	Rewrite of Subdivision Regulations	2025-2027	New Subdivision Regulations	TBD	TBD

Proposed Budget

Number	Task Name	Details	Cost
1	Planning Consultant	Professional planner to write new regulations and lead planning and community engagement activities. Placesense of Windsor VT is our preferred planning consultant	\$54,000.00
2	Meeting Room Rental	Room Rentals for Public Meetings 5 @ \$125.00	\$625.00
4	Mailing	Printing and Mailing	\$4,000.00
5	Training	NH Housing Academy 3 people @ \$250.00	\$750.00
6	Grant Administration	Record Keeping, reporting and other administrative tasks 5%	\$2,969.00
		Total Project Cost	\$62,344.00

Community Engagement:

There will be extensive community engagement in the process of re-writing Enfield's Land Use Regulations. Stakeholder meetings down to the neighborhood level and input from relevant town Boards and Commissions will be especially important in building support for several new zoning districts including defining their allowed uses and boundaries.

We expect to employ a community information and engagement plan similar to that developed for our Master Plan. These activities include the following:

- EDDM mailing(s) to alert residents to community engagement activities.
- Deployment of lawn signs to alert residents to community engagement activities.
- Use of social media, list-serve, town newsletter, e-mail list and website to provide information on engagement activities and draft regulations.
- Meetings with residents, Town Boards and Committees and other stakeholders to explain the need for new land use regulations, the Planning Board and Consultant's recommendations for the new regulations and what is hoped to be accomplished by their implementation, and to gain feedback from residents and other stakeholders.
- Community engagement at Enfield Markets—Informal conversations between Planning Board and/or Consultant and the public to gain community insight into specific topics.
- Community wide and/or targeted surveys—Web and hardcopy.
- Community workshop(s) to further identify and clarify the needs and wants of community members and other stakeholders.
- Focus groups to evaluate proposed land use regulations..
- Final required public hearing prior to Town Meeting vote (231)

Consistency with Master Plan:

Enfield's Master Plan was adopted in December, 2022. The housing chapter draws upon the regional housing needs assessment recently prepared by a consortium of New Hampshire and Vermont regional planning agencies <https://www.keystothevalley.com>. The Master Plan concludes that Enfield will not meet its fair share housing goals if it continues its historic pattern of lackluster housing growth. The Plan states, in part:

“While the problems are clearly identified, there are no simple solutions. The housing challenge is multi-faceted and complex. Small towns like Enfield have very limited ability to influence the housing market. Many people have chosen to live in Enfield because of the location and setting. They enjoy the quiet and privacy of rural living. Most residents have nearly direct access to trails, forests, open spaces, rivers, streams, lakes and ponds from their home. Outdoor recreation is the foundation of Enfield’s quality of life and our sense of community.”

The Planning Board concluded, during the Master Planning process, that Enfield's outdated land use regulations were a significant impediment to growth in the town. We have opted for a complete rewrite of the regulations, rather than update the existing, as the most efficient way of bringing them into conformance with the views of the community as expressed in the newly adopted Master Plan. This ground-up approach will insure that there will be across-the-board conformance of zoning, and site plan regulations with the Master Plan as it currently exists, and as additional chapters are added during the next 12-18 months. (250)