



## **Master Plan Steering Committee**

### **AGENDA**

**Tuesday, May 6, 2025**

**6:00 PM**

**City Hall,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Training Room**

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
- II. Adoption of Meeting Minutes – March 18, 2025 and April 1, 2025
- III. Story Map Survey Results
- IV. Draft Future Land Use Map
- V. Population Growth Goal Discussion
- VI. Next Steps:
  - a. Prioritization Survey / Decision-Making Tool
  - b. June 3 Future Summit, 5:00 PM, Heberton Hall
- VII. New Business
- VIII. Next Meeting: **June 10, 2025 –6:00 PM**

**City of Keene  
New Hampshire**

**MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, March 18, 2025**

**7:00 PM**

**Council Chambers,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Harold Farrington, Chair  
Alex Henkel, Vice Chair  
Cody Morrison  
Joshua Meehan  
Emily Lavigne-Bernier  
Alexander Von Plinsky, IV  
Joe Walier  
Kenneth Kost, Alternate (Voting)  
Councilor Philip Jones, Alternate (Voting)  
Mayor Jay V. Kahn, Alternate (Voting)

**Staff Present:**

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner  
Andy Bohannon, Deputy City Manager

**Members Not Present:**

Councilor Michael Remy  
Leatrice Oram  
Elizabeth Wood  
Dr. Joseph Perras  
Juliana Bergeron  
Councilor Catherine Workman, Alternate

**1) Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair Farrington called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Project consultants were present remotely on MS Teams: Heather Branigin (Future IQ), Leslie Gray (JS&A), and Andrew Cozier (WGI).

**2) Update on Strategic Pillar Task Forces**

Keene Senior Planner, Mari Brunner, noted that at this time, each of the Task Forces were in the midst of their third and final meetings. Chair Farrington welcomed project consultant and urban designer from WGI, Andrew Cozier, for an update on the Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP). Mr. Cozier showed an infographic to demonstrate where the City was in the complex CMP process: Step 4, Testing & Confirmation, with the survey & prioritization setting process. The community had gone through a process of defining the parameters of the six Strategic Pillars, establishing the goals and aspirations that reflect onto each Pillar and identifying specific

25 projects and action items to realize each Pillar’s goals. Next, the consultants would launch the  
26 StoryMap, which would begin public input on prioritization of the action items. As the  
27 consultants start receiving the full public vetting of the CMP elements, they would start looking  
28 at changes to the Future Land Use (FLU) Map. Mr. Cozier mentioned how the Overarching  
29 Themes based on previous Steering Committee feedback would be incorporated throughout the  
30 CMP and each Pillar: Sustainability, Education, Accessibility, Public Health, Collaboration,  
31 Region, & Leadership. He showed a complex chart to demonstrate the synergy and coordination  
32 between the goals and themes in all the Pillars.

33

34 **3) Draft Outline for Strategic Pillar Chapter**

35

36 Next, Mr. Cozier described the outline of how the consultants planned to build the chapters for  
37 each Pillar:

- 38     ▪ Section 1: Importance of the Pillar
  - 39         ○ What this means to Keene and its relation to the seven Overarching Themes
  - 40         ○ Connection to other Pillars
  - 41         ○ Data insights
- 42     ▪ Section 2: Community Aspirations
  - 43         ○ What people said, bold ideas
  - 44         ○ Data insights
- 45     ▪ Section 3: Emerging Trends, Challenges and Opportunities, Trade-Offs
  - 46         ○ Implications and potential solutions
  - 47         ○ Examples and case studies (e.g., how other communities in nation have overcome
  - 48             problems)
  - 49         ○ Future insights
- 50     ▪ Section 4: Planning Goals and Action Areas
  - 51         ○ Overarching goals with action areas
    - 52             ▪ Including objectives, aspirations, and action items (initiatives and
    - 53             programmatic elements) that help with prioritization.
  - 54         ○ Prioritization data
  - 55         ○ Planning insights

56

57 Mr. Cozier stepped back to show the Committee an outline of how the entire CMP would be  
58 organized, which he called the CMP Build-Out:

- 59     ▪ Community Vision:
  - 60         ○ Process
  - 61         ○ Overarching Themes
  - 62         ○ Strategic Pillar Diagram
- 63     ▪ Strategic Pillar Chapters:
  - 64         ○ Livable Housing
  - 65         ○ Thriving Economy
  - 66         ○ Connected Mobility
  - 67         ○ Vibrant Neighborhoods

- 68 ○ Adaptable Workforce
- 69 ○ Flourishing Environment
- 70 ■ Future Land Use (FLU) Map
- 71 ■ Implementation
- 72 ○ Matrix (action items and time frames for implementation)

73

74 Mr. Cozier listed the next steps in the CMP project:

- 75 1. Task Force Meetings #3 in March
- 76 a. Review the draft Pillar document and refine.
- 77 2. Prioritization Survey (April Launch)
- 78 3. Implementation Matrix & FLU Map
- 79 4. Comprehensive Master Plan Draft (planned mid-May for Committee review)
- 80 5. StoryMaps
- 81 6. Future Summit (June 3, 2025, 5:00 PM, Heberton Hall, Keene Public Library)
- 82 a. Ms. Brunner provided other details in advance of the Future Summit:
- 83 i. Draft Pillar newsletters planned to be ready for review on:
- 84 1. Pillar 1: March 31
- 85 2. Pillar 2: April 7
- 86 3. Pillar 3 (& promoting StoryMap): April 14
- 87 4. Pillar 4 (& promoting StoryMap): April 21
- 88 5. Pillar 5: April 26
- 89 6. Pillar 6: May 5

90

91 Discussion ensued.

92

93 Mayor Kahn noticed that the review of the CMP and the Future Summit were planned close in  
94 time. He asked what the expectation would be of the participants at the Future Summit to have  
95 reviewed the CMP. Leslie Gray, Vice President at JS&A, replied that the June 3 Future Summit  
96 would be the key CMP project touch point with the broader community, starting to transition  
97 from the Plan process to the actual CMP. She anticipated having a draft of the CMP around June  
98 3 and said the Future Summit would be an opportunity to receive some public input and start to  
99 test the document with the broader community and work toward finalizing it.

100

101 Mayor Kahn asked for more perspective about that timeframe; would the expectation be that  
102 participants at the Future Summit would have already read the available CMP? Ms. Gray said  
103 that similar to the Future Summit in October 2024, she expected that some participants would  
104 arrive having been fully engaged in the CMP process. However, the Summit would be accessible  
105 and participatory for all, regardless of their expert familiarity or detailed perspective into the  
106 CMP. Ms. Brunner added that the June 3 Future Summit would be the first opportunity to present  
107 the CMP to the community. Then, the intention would be to submit the final version of the CMP  
108 to begin the formal adoption process in July; the Steering Committee would vote to recommend  
109 that the Planning Board adopt the CMP and then the Planning Board would recommend that the  
110 Council endorse the Plan through its normal process. As a final step, the CMP would go through a

111 Planning Board public hearing before the Planning Board officially adopts it, according to NH  
112 law. Ms. Brunner anticipated that full process taking up to three months, so she thought the CMP  
113 would be finally adopted around mid-fall, depending on any revisions needed during that  
114 process.

115  
116 Ms. Brunner added that during this timeframe, there would be two surveys. First, there would be  
117 a survey of the broad public associated with the StoryMap—that the public could eventually  
118 view online—which would include geospatial background information and context. For example,  
119 it would hopefully include a lot of the input being gathered from all of the various youth  
120 engaged. The StoryMap would also help the public to better visualize “jargony” terms from the  
121 CMP that might not make sense to them initially like “neighborhood node,” “smart growth,” or  
122 “infill development.” The StoryMap will be accompanied by a short Prioritization Survey  
123 launching early April. Second, there will be a more in-depth prioritization survey or “decision-  
124 making tool” launching in late April or early May. The consultants have gathered the goals,  
125 strategies, and action items for each Pillar and will create a more detailed survey to be sent to  
126 specific groups in the community (task force members), senior leadership of the City staff, and  
127 all City board and committee membership (200+ individuals). The Prioritization Survey would  
128 help to prioritize the aspects for the final section of the CMP, the Implementation Plan.

129  
130 Councilor Jones and Ms. Brunner discussed the timeline, agreeing that if the process starts in  
131 July, the CMP could be adopted by the Planning Board by October, depending on various  
132 factors. Councilor Jones recalled that during the Council endorsement process, the CMP would  
133 have to be referred to a Council Standing Committee, which adds time to the process. Ms.  
134 Brunner agreed.

135  
136 Ms. Lavigne-Bernier asked if the Pillar chapter drafts that Ms. Brunner mentioned would only be  
137 sent to the Committee or also be made public. Ms. Brunner said the Pillar updates would be  
138 newsletters sent to everyone who signed up to receive project updates. Simultaneously, the  
139 consultants and City staff would be working on the drafts of the Pillar chapters, and non-initial  
140 drafts would be shared with the Steering Committee before the June 3 event.

141  
142 Mr. Kost referred to the most recent Flourishing Environment Task Force meeting he attended  
143 and a discussion about understanding the more environmentally sensitive (e.g., wetlands, steep  
144 slopes) parts of the City to not encourage development in. The Task Force also discussed the  
145 need to talk about areas of the City that are suitable for more intense development (e.g.,  
146 previously developed). Mr. Kost asked if the FLU Map would be an underlying piece of  
147 information that would help drive development to areas that make more sense. Ms. Brunner said  
148 the FLU Map is not meant to be regulatory (like a zoning map), it is meant to be the basis for  
149 zoning and a guide for future land use decisions. She said the initial StoryMap would tell the  
150 overall story of the project, input received, and the different goals and strategies to provide  
151 context so that people can complete the public survey. Ms. Gray expanded on the StoryMap,  
152 explaining that the consultants would use Esri ArcGIS to create an interactive web page that  
153 walks the public through a lot of great content in an approachable, easy to understand way.

154 Because the StoryMap is produced with the go-to mapping software, it allows users to zoom in  
155 on certain areas. For example, key priority environmental areas are identified on the FLU Map to  
156 preserve and retain; the StoryMap would zoom in and discuss how the key priority came from  
157 the Flourishing Environment Task Force. Ms. Gray said that StoryMaps are intended to be a  
158 community engagement tool, help raise awareness of what is discussed in the CMP, and provide  
159 another avenue of helping the broader community follow along through the CMP process.

160  
161 Chair Farrington was surprised to see the CMP Build-Out as essentially the Table of Contents of  
162 the CMP, though he did not have a problem with it. He noted that the Build-Out list did have all  
163 of the required sections from the NH RSA in addition to the Strategic Pillars; the Chapters did  
164 not exactly match the possibilities listed in the RSA, but he said the 2010 CMP did not either. He  
165 wondered if any other Committee members saw anything missing from the Build-Out before it  
166 was finalized. Mr. Kost asked if the Build-Out was the official Table of Contents of the CMP.  
167 Ms. Gray said that the Build-Out was an abbreviated version of the Table of Contents. The  
168 Build-Out included the key sections the consultants had started to draft in the CMP and their  
169 recommendations for how the CMP should start to flow as a document. The intent was to flow  
170 from the community vision (set-the-stage; expectations) at the beginning of the document to the  
171 individual Pillar chapters in the middle and ending with the Implementation Plan and specific  
172 action items.

173  
174 Mr. Von Plinsky asked about the starting point for the FLU Map (e.g., existing condition). Chair  
175 Farrington replied that it was based on the FLU Map from the 2010 CMP. Ms. Brunner said that  
176 was correct. She added that ahead of the April meeting, the Committee would receive a packet  
177 with background information that may be helpful, including the 2010 FLU Map and the current  
178 Zoning Map. Ms. Brunner was working with the City's GIS Coordinator, Will Schoefmann, to  
179 get an existing Land Use Map because the existing land uses did not necessarily match the 2010  
180 Map or Zoning Map. Additionally, at the April meeting, the Committee would get Ms.  
181 Branigin's input and feedback on the new FLU Map before presenting something to the public.

182  
183 To the Chair's question about the Build-Out/Table of Contents, Mayor Kahn said the connection  
184 to the Overarching Themes was not entirely clear to him. He said the Committee had been very  
185 focused on trying to define the Pillars to pursue and develop them with strategies and priorities.  
186 Chair Farrington referred to the seven Overarching Themes mentioned earlier in the meeting that  
187 interconnect with the Pillars. Mayor Kahn said some of them did. He felt that public health was  
188 getting folded into everything else, for example. He did not feel that the Leadership theme had  
189 been fully fleshed out. He asked for the consultants' vision for how the overarching themes  
190 would set up a review of the Pillars. Ms. Gray replied, recalling the visioning process of the  
191 CMP in 2024, dating back to the Think Tank Summit in May to develop the framework for the  
192 Pillars around the essential node of Regional Magnetism. Ms. Gray said that provided context,  
193 explaining that throughout all of the Task Force meetings, conversations with City Staff, and  
194 insights from the broader community, it became clear that there were other overarching aspects  
195 about Keene not captured in the six Pillars, like Accessibility (i.e., mobility, education, job  
196 training, or whether Keene is accessible to the broader region). She said the vision for the CMP

197 is to set the stage with these Themes before getting into the Pillar chapters. The regional  
198 approach to Keene and some of the initiatives proposed would be interwoven in the CMP as the  
199 space to boldly call attention to that vision. The consultants were still working on how to best  
200 portray those Themes in the CMP narrative. Mayor Kahn and Ms. Gray agreed that it would be  
201 an effort to illustrate the unique attributes of the community.

202

203 Ms. Lavigne-Bernier said that during the first Task Force meeting she participated in, she found  
204 these Overarching Themes to be reminders of the Pillar she was working on (e.g., Thriving  
205 Economy). The words kept bringing her back to Keene in the region and the community, so she  
206 thought the Themes were helpful and would continue to be useful in moving toward the City's  
207 goals.

208

209 Ms. Brunner provided more context about the Accessibility Theme. She said a lot of the Themes  
210 came up through this Committee or the Future Summit. For example, at the Future Summit,  
211 someone brought up Education repeatedly and it resonated with everyone in the room and  
212 developed into an Overarching Theme. For Accessibility specifically, staff and consultants were  
213 contacted by constituents throughout the CMP project, expressing it as a priority. For example,  
214 Ms. Branigin received a long email from a resident concerned about Accessibility, sharing  
215 comments and suggestions for ways Keene could improve, so the resident was encouraged to  
216 participate in the online Discussion Boards. Another resident reached out very passionately who  
217 ultimately participated in the Connected Mobility Task Force. She said Accessibility was a  
218 regular topic on the Discussion Boards. So, while discussed less by this Committee, Ms. Brunner  
219 said Accessibility was a major Theme throughout the project. Mr. Meehan said that it was  
220 aligned with the discussion of housing from the beginning and the Livable Housing Task Force,  
221 particularly related to being able to age in one's home. The Mayor supported highlighting the  
222 unique attributes of the community.

223

224 Mayor Kahn recalled the Committee discussing a growth objective and said that if it still wanted  
225 that to emerge clearly in this CMP structure that was presented, it might be a challenge, so he  
226 suggested discussing it. Chair Farrington agreed, stating that perhaps the Community Vision  
227 could discuss goals around population or economic growth. He recalled making this point a few  
228 times. Mr. Kost asked the consultants if the FLU Map could be one tool that suggests potential  
229 growth. He went on to suggest that there could be a way to calculate—capacity (infrastructure,  
230 school district, etc.) aside—the amount of people who could move to Keene and directly infuse  
231 tax dollars before it starts costing money to accommodate them.

232

#### 233 4) **Keene Solid Waste, Composting and Recycling Program**

234

235 Chair Farrington referred to the memorandum in the agenda packet, calling it a great in-house  
236 resource.

237

238 Mr. Von Plinsky said that at the Flourishing Environment Task Force meeting, the Assistant  
239 Public Works Director, Duncan Watson, came to speak. Mr. Von Plinsky said that a consistent



240 topic at those meetings had been people wanting Keene to be a leader on solutions like waste  
241 disposal; there was energy and excitement around the issue. Chair Farrington said it was good to  
242 hear, citing some difficult challenges (e.g., capital). Mr. Von Plinsky said being open to solutions  
243 would be important, because the City gets rid of a lot of trash. He said the City had the chance to  
244 stand out as a leader.

245  
246 Regarding being a leader in waste disposal recycling management, Mr. Morrison thought back to  
247 an instance he experienced approximately one year prior at a Statewide forum led by an  
248 environmental engineer. The presenter's first comment to the diverse audience of 40+ members  
249 was that he saw someone from Keene in the audience. The presenter called Keene's recycling  
250 center and transfer station a shining example within NH of a community that does very well with  
251 waste disposal and recycling; in particular, plastic bottles that go to a plant in Michigan. Mr.  
252 Morrison shared that positive reputation with the City Manager. Ms. Lavigne-Bernier thought  
253 that was a good example of openness in the community and she suggested trying to do even  
254 better; she said it seemed like there were some people to potentially back the City.

255  
256 Ms. Brunner said Mr. Watson, who wrote the memo, was unable to attend this meeting. She said  
257 that waste disposal is different in every community, and she hoped this provided the Committee  
258 with a clearer understanding of the process in Keene to help when considering strategies, goals,  
259 or actions for the CMP. For example, she cited a question from the Task Forces about why the  
260 City does not provide everyone with a recycling bin for free. Ms. Brunner said people can  
261 actually bring recycling to the Transfer Station for free, but the recycling bins themselves are  
262 provided by private companies. She said it was encouraging to hear Keene being held up as an  
263 example.

264  
265 Mr. Morrison said someone else in the audience that he cited was from Peterborough and  
266 announced using Keene's Transfer Station and Recycling Center on Saturdays, which Mr.  
267 Morrison did not know was possible for non-residents and called it a great asset. Mayor Kahn  
268 thought it aligned with Keene's unique character and the statement of values, and he was glad to  
269 hear the connection to the Flourishing Environment Pillar; with prioritization and a strategy for  
270 how to move towards sustainability goals the City is not acting on currently. Brief discussion  
271 ensued between the Chair and Councilor Jones about the various larger volume items the City's  
272 Transfer Station might not accept but that the Chamber of Commerce might promote, and  
273 mention of a Styrofoam collection program at Keene State College. Councilor Jones also noted  
274 how at this time, Keene's Recycling Center could only accept plastics Numbers 1-2 (of 7). Not  
275 accepting these various products could pose challenges for the City over time.

276

277 **5) Next Steps:**

278 **A) Prioritization Survey**

279 **B) Future Land Use Map**

280 **C) StoryMaps**

281 **D) June 3 Future Summit, 5:00 PM, Heberton Hall**

282



283      **6) New Business**

284  
285 Mayor Kahn returned to Councilor Jones’ comments about checks-and-balances on the  
286 Committee’s ambitions. The Mayor wanted to ensure that the Committee wrestled with those  
287 ambitions. Chair Farrington recalled the first Committee meeting, when he said he wanted to  
288 make sure the key trade-offs—growth vs. green space, aspirations vs. budget, etc.—would be  
289 addressed, and he did not think that had happened in a formal enough way yet. So, he turned to  
290 the consultants to have some of those key questions answered moving forward. Mr. Meehan  
291 thought some of that might be happening naturally in the Task Forces conversations—at least the  
292 one he was a part of. Ms. Brunner said the decision tool she mentioned (prioritization survey)  
293 would hopefully be the opportunity to dive into the question of trade-offs and determine which  
294 action items should be the top priorities for the City to invest its limited resources (i.e., staff  
295 time, volunteer time, and money). With that input, the Implementation Plan could set the City up  
296 for success, with clear direction. Mr. Meehan said the Committee would also be looking for  
297 staff’s expertise to indicate whether or not things like a \$250 million bond would not be feasible,  
298 for example. Mr. Kost hoped that if there were visions like a very sophisticated recycling process  
299 that the City could not afford now that they might be included in the CMP as important trends  
300 that would require additional study after the CMP. He does not want those creative ideas lost.

301  
302      **7) Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 1, 6:00 PM**

303           **A) April Agenda preview: Review of draft prioritization survey, overview and**  
304           **feedback on the future land use map, update on youth engagement,**  
305           **presentation from SWRPC regarding regional transportation issues**

306  
307      **8) Adjournment**

308  
309 There being no further business, Chair Farrington adjourned the meeting at 8:14 PM.

310  
311 Respectfully submitted by,  
312 Katie Kibler, Minute Taker  
313 March 25, 2025

314  
315 Reviewed and edited by,  
316 Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

**City of Keene  
New Hampshire**

**MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, April 1, 2025**

**6:00 PM**

**Council Chambers,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Harold Farrington, Chair  
Alex Henkel, Vice Chair  
Leatrice Oram  
Joshua Meehan  
Emily Lavigne-Bernier  
Dr. Joseph Perras (left at ~ 8:00 PM)  
Alexander Von Plinsky, IV  
Joe Walier  
Kenneth Kost, Alternate (Voting)  
Councilor Catherine Workman, Alternate (Voting)  
Councilor Philip Jones, Alternate (Voting)  
Mayor Jay V. Kahn, Alternate (arrived at 6:06 PM)

**Staff Present:**

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner  
Megan Fortson, Planner  
Paul Andrus, Community Development  
Director (remote)

**Members Not Present:**

Councilor Michael Remy  
Cody Morrison  
Elizabeth Wood  
Juliana Bergeron

**I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair Farrington called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

Project consultants were present remotely on MS Teams: Heather Branigin (Future IQ) & Courtney Powell (WGI).

**II. Adoption of Meeting Minutes – March 4, 2025**

Chair Farrington confirmed that the Committee would adopt the March 18 meeting minutes along with the April 1 minutes at the May 6 meeting.

A motion by Councilor Jones was duly seconded by Mr. Von Plinsky to adopt the March 4, 2025 minutes and the motion carried unanimously.

25 **III. Transportation Planning in Southwest NH: J.B. Mack, Assistant Director of Southwest**  
26 **Region Planning Commission, will provide an overview of recent transportation**  
27 **planning initiatives including the region’s long-range transportation plan, corridor**  
28 **planning, transit planning, and rail trail planning.**  
29

30 Chair Farrington welcomed JB Mack, Assistant Director at Southwest Region Planning  
31 Commission (SWRPC). Mr. Mack was invited by the Committee’s City Staff Liaison, Senior  
32 Planner, Mari Brunner, to provide a presentation about transportation planning in southwest New  
33 Hampshire. In preparation, Mr. Mack reviewed the Steering Committee’s materials and goals, as  
34 well as the transportation trends the Committee had analyzed in thinking about Keene as a  
35 regional hub. He also brought Jeremy Evans of the Monadnock Regional Rail Trail Collaborative  
36 (MRRTC) because of the Steering Committee’s interest in rail trails in case of questions.  
37

38 Mr. Mack began by explaining what the SWRPC is:

- 39     ▪ One of the nine Regional Planning Commissions in New Hampshire that were established  
40       by State law. He showed the Commission’s Region on a map, including all of the Cheshire  
41       County towns, 10 communities in western Hillsborough County, Langdon, and Sullivan  
42       County.
  - 43     ▪ In the State statute, Regional Planning Commissions are recognized as political  
44       subdivisions. However, Mr. Mack emphasized that the main function of SWRPC is  
45       advisory: providing information, promoting coordination between entities, and helping  
46       others to implement their plans and programs.
    - 47       ○ For example, SWRPC might help to coordinate representatives of NH Department  
48       of Transportation (DOT), the Bureau of Trails, and various municipalities in  
49       developing plans or implementing steps on a regional rail trail planning committee.
    - 50       ○ SWRPC also encourages a lot of public-nonprofit-private coordination in  
51       transportation. For example, working with a monthly committee in the region  
52       focused on providing rides to people in need, which is a mix of private and  
53       nonprofit sector transportation services.
    - 54       ○ Another instance was SWRPC facilitating the implementation of the NH DOT  
55       10-Year Transportation Improvement Plan—the State’s capital improvement plan  
56       for all transportation projects—by helping develop the regional priorities that  
57       should be introduced into that Plan every two years (a scoring process). SWRPC  
58       has also helped the City of Keene to develop local street policies, for example.
  - 59     ▪ The mission of SWRPC is to help local governments promote coordinated planning,  
60       orderly growth, efficient land use, and environmental protection.
  - 61     ▪ The Commissioners are representatives of all the towns in the region. They vote on a  
62       volunteer board of directors that helps run the organization.
  - 63     ▪ Paid staff do most of the work for the Regional Planning Commission and some of the  
64       things they work on in addition to transportation are technical assistance on zoning and  
65       land use issues, housing issues, economic and community development, public health, and  
66       environmental planning.
- 67

68 Next, Mr. Mack explained the SWRPC structure of operations, guided by the Unified Planning  
69 Work Program FY 2026–2027, which has four main activities:

- 70 1. Planning & Policy (e.g., with municipalities on transportation goals)
- 71 2. Public Involvement & Coordination (e.g., trying to hear from vulnerable populations with  
72 transportation needs, like those without a driver’s license)
- 73 3. Plan Support (Data Collection) (e.g., collecting traffic or poverty demographic data to help  
74 municipalities develop plans)
- 75 4. Technical Assistance & Support (e.g., making calls on behalf of towns to help deal with a  
76 number of issues and develop a better public transit system for their constituents)

77  
78 Mr. Mack explained how SWRPC tries to be a problem solver, listening to the needs of member  
79 towns and considering the different avenues by which to connect to try to get a project done. For  
80 example, if it is important for a town to get a project completed it would be important to have the  
81 project recognized in the town’s transportation plan, so a funder would understand the need.  
82 SWRPC seeks funding opportunities as well to help municipalities implement projects.

83  
84 Mr. Mack described the Southwest Connects: Long Range Transportation Plan, 2025–2050.  
85 SWRPC must redevelop its Long-Range Transportation Plan every five years. As an advisory  
86 organization that identifies the needs of the region and does not implement things, this Plan is a  
87 policy guidance document that also informs SWRPC’s approach. Mr. Mack thought the Plan  
88 Vision connected to language in the City of Keene’s Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP)  
89 documents, so he read it:

90  
91 *“Looking at a map of the southwest region in the future, its network of major highways, rail  
92 rights of way, airports, and other transportation features will look much the same as they do  
93 today. New infrastructure will not displace or disturb the special places, cultural resources, and  
94 natural features that comprise our rural landscape. That which will change will happen in the  
95 context of our existing infrastructure and rights of way. New modes of transport will utilize the  
96 regional transportation network and public rights of way to make way for passenger  
97 transportation services, broadband fiberoptic cable, safe bike routes, and the reintroduction of  
98 some rail. Technological and travel demand management solutions will use our existing  
99 infrastructure more efficiently as well as reduce energy demands, curb greenhouse gas emissions,  
100 and save households and government money. All transportation will have stable, reliable revenue  
101 sources and will provide individuals of all ages and abilities affordable access to basic needs  
102 such as healthcare, employment, shopping, and community interaction. Infrastructure will be  
103 sufficiently managed to avoid costly repairs or upgrades due to poor asset management,  
104 nearsighted land use decisions, or climate induced severe storm events. Villages and downtowns  
105 will serve as intermodal transportation hubs, helping to connect and move people and goods  
106 between places, both local and far away. Transportation decision making will rely on an active  
107 participatory and well-informed public that weighs in on transportation alternatives thoughtfully  
108 and carefully by accounting for long term as well as short term costs and benefits.”*

109

110 Mr. Mack asked the Steering Committee whether the Long-Range Transportation Plan Vision he  
111 read resonated with how the Committee imagined Keene in the region; a network of nodal centers  
112 and village centers with good walkability within them and good connectivity—including better  
113 transit or facilitation of some bike connections—between those. Mr. Mack noted the overlap  
114 between the Steering Committee’s mobility goals for the CMP and the Transportation Plan Goals  
115 focusing on things like economic benefit, safety, accessibility, mobility, and environmental  
116 sustainability.

117  
118 Next, he described the eight SWRPC Corridors: NH 9 East, NH 9 West, NH 10 South, NH 12  
119 North, NH 12 South, US 202 North, US 202 South, and NH 101 East. These were identified  
120 based on a system wide analysis of the transportation needs in the region. While there are  
121 similarities between towns, it was difficult to work with communities to develop strategic  
122 planning on the basis of a 1,000 square mile region. So, considering the region as corridors  
123 helped. He noted that Keene is a hub for a lot of corridors. He recalled the hub-and-spoke model  
124 discussed in the past, with Keene as sort a regional center for employment and services (e.g.,  
125 human services, government). For example, understanding where people shop is an important  
126 indicator for understanding transportation, like visitors all the way from Springfield, VT.

127  
128 Mr. Mack showed a Challenges & Opportunities Map from the Long-Range Transportation Plan  
129 for one of the corridors as an example of how the municipal needs are visualized in connection to  
130 the region. He thought these could be good resources for the Steering Committee to understand  
131 larger issues identified through the regional planning process. Mr. Mack summarized that  
132 SWRPC had learned that Keene’s relationship with the region was as a hub for employment,  
133 shopping, and services (commercial, government, social, educational, cultural). Mr. Mack also  
134 thought something important that was often overlooked about Keene was its source of a labor  
135 population, noting that a lot of people were moving to work in Keene. At the same time, a lot of  
136 people were leaving Keene. He cited the very large labor pool in the City, so he said it would be  
137 important to consider both current commuters and enhancing future commuting opportunities  
138 (e.g., rail trail crossroads) to enhance Keene as that hub for things like tourism as well. He  
139 mentioned the Dillant Hopkins Airport. He added that the population density and density of  
140 businesses and services make Keene a good candidate for some transit, bike, and pedestrian  
141 improvements in the community.

142  
143 Mr. Mack continued, explaining that in the Regional Transportation Plan, there was also a  
144 Regional Transportation Improvement Program & Database, listing projects scheduled in the  
145 region. This could be a resource for projects happening in the Keene area. He presented four that  
146 were relevant:

- 147 1. Reconstruct NH 10 from NH 101 to Market Basket & Replace Ash Swamp Brook Bridge:  
148 Will involve several more roundabouts and some improved bike and pedestrian access, the  
149 latter of which he thought was related to Keene’s focus on walkability and complete  
150 streets. Mr. Mack called this an important corridor where people were not protected when  
151 mobile.

- 152 2. Reconstruct NH 101 from .4-mile east of Optical Ave. to Branch Road, Replace Branch  
153 Bridge, & Move Swanzey Factory Road: This is a Red Listed bridge. This would  
154 potentially move the intersection of Swanzey Factory Rd. with NH 101 to a safer position  
155 with better sight distance, as well as widening the roadway and adding shoulders for  
156 pedestrians.
- 157 3. Improve Operational Performance at NH 9/10/12/101: Proposed roundabout at the T-  
158 intersection of NH 9/10/12/101 to optimize mobility in that area.
- 159 4. Corridor Improvement from NH 9/10/12 to School Street: A Complete Street retrofit on  
160 West St., from School St. to the NH 9/10/12 interchange. Involves improving walking and  
161 biking conditions but also addressing some of the access management (e.g., trying to  
162 restrict too many left turns).
- 163 5. Road Safety Audit at NH 9 and Whitcomb’s Mill Road  
164

165 Mr. Mack described current regional bike and pedestrian projects:

- 166 1. Cheshire Rail Trail, Transportation Heritage Corridor Improvements: Connecting the  
167 Industrial Heritage Trail behind the Kingsbury property to the Transportation Heritage  
168 Trail to the east of Eastern Ave. Eventual goal to build a bridge to connect walkers and  
169 bikers over NH 101 and make a safer environment for them.
- 170 2. Ashuelot Rail Trail Improvements: Ongoing at this time for west Swanzey.
- 171 3. Crossing to Bellows Falls, VT: Groups like the MRRTC were working to connect this  
172 region with other states. MRRTC was actively pursuing opportunities to connect the  
173 northern part of the Cheshire Rail Trail or the Fort Hill Rail Trail (Hinsdale) across the  
174 Connecticut River to Brattleboro and eventually to the West River Trail. Someday, they  
175 hope to connect even further to a trail in Westminster, MA.
- 176 4. Crossing to Brattleboro, VT
- 177 5. Crossing to Winchendon, MA
- 178 6. Extensive Continual Maintenance and Improvement of the Rail Trail System
- 179 7. Other Complete Street Communities in the Region Connecting to Keene by Road and Rail  
180 Trail: Swanzey, Marlborough, Troy, Walpole, Winchester, and Hinsdale  
181

182 Mr. Mack proceeded to describe the meager regional transit services that existed at this time,  
183 showing a map. In the region at this time, there was Greyhound, MOOver!, Community  
184 Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC), and Home Healthcare Hospice Community Service  
185 (HCS), which operated the Friendly Bus and Para Express, as well as several shopping shuttles  
186 over the years. Outside of Keene, there were not many transit options in this rural region.  
187 SWRPC’s demographic analysis showed a strong interest in a more direct intercity bus route to  
188 Boston from Keene. At this time, the only option was to go through Springfield, MA, which Mr.  
189 Mack called painful. He thought there was potential opportunity—with strong promotion from the  
190 City of Keene—to get the State of New Hampshire to consider providing a subsidy to create a  
191 more direct route to Boston.

192  
193 Mr. Mack concluded his presentation by describing SWRPC’s “Next Generation” Transit Project  
194 to examine the political will of municipalities and institutions (e.g., Keene State College [KSC])



195 and Cheshire Medical Center [CMC]) in the region to invest more in a better transit system. The  
196 goal would be to increase transit ridership by over 100%, with a transit system in which one does  
197 not have to schedule a ride with a transportation provider up to one week in advance. The goal  
198 would be to get a ride with the touch of a button on a smartphone or a quick call to a call center.  
199 SWRPC was presenting the concept of a Greater Keene Microtransit Zone within this project,  
200 with a fleet of small buses that would roam within a zone and be accessible like Lyft or Uber  
201 service. This system, software, and algorithm would all be focused on decreasing wait times from  
202 over 15–20 minutes and helping people get where they are going. With the use of technology,  
203 SWRPC thought there was a lot of promise. Mr. Mack demonstrated how the app would work. He  
204 welcomed questions on the overall presentation.

205  
206 Mr. Von Plinsky asked for a high-level description of the Complete Streets Program. Mr. Mack  
207 recalled that Keene was already a Complete Streets City, with associated policy and design  
208 standards—though perhaps due for an update. Essentially, Mr. Mack said the Complete Streets  
209 Program is meant to recognize that people need to get from point-A to point-B, but that not  
210 everyone drives. Complete Streets recognizes that the street is a public space that could be used  
211 for a host of travel modes. Historically in this country, transportation engineers had focused on  
212 moving vehicles from place-to-place, when in fact he said that if there was infrastructure to  
213 promote safe walking, biking, or other transit, people would use it too. With a Complete Streets  
214 Program, a municipality determines the likely travel modes on a street. For example, a  
215 mixed-use zone with a lot of commercial activity and housing might need unique options. Mr.  
216 Mack said that with the history of underdeveloped streets mostly focused on vehicles, Complete  
217 Streets helps to open imaginations to what streets could be (e.g., health benefits from exercise or  
218 financial benefits from families not needing two cars).

219  
220 Mr. Walier asked about a transportation corridor around I-91. Mr. Mack replied that I-91 was one  
221 of the greatest challenges. This region did not have its own interstate highway, so mobility was  
222 important for the economy. In its Regional Plan, Mr. Mack said SWRPC talked about making  
223 sure to not overly congest arterials like Rt-9 to I-91, as well as being careful about too many  
224 driveways and entrances/exits to I-91 that create friction on that route.

225  
226 Dr. Perras appreciated the great presentation, noting that he had lived in a few rural communities  
227 that did not have Keene’s infrastructure but were far more bikeable. He noted Keene’s richness of  
228 rail trails but said that biking to CMC, for example, seemed like a near impossibility. He added  
229 that while the roundabouts were great for flow of traffic, they were horrifying for cyclists to  
230 navigate through. Dr. Perras thought it would be important to look at whole communities that are  
231 seemingly cut off from either box stores, hospitals, or larger employers. He was also glad Mr.  
232 Mack mentioned the MOOver! program in Windsor; the prior hospital Dr. Perras ran in VT  
233 helped write the grant that funded the program. They called it “medical Uber” and he said it was  
234 very effective, but Dr. Perras was unsure the State of NH would open its pockets the way VT did.  
235 Lastly, Dr. Perras noted that especially with KSC here, the City should have a version of the  
236 Dartmouth Coach that was used heavily between New York and Boston from the Upper Valley.



237 He agreed with how challenging it was to get to Boston from Keene. Mr. Mack agreed that it had  
238 been a main topic over the years.

239  
240 Dr. Perras also said that at this time, CMC was paying heavy subsidies just to stabilize emergency  
241 transport in the area, and he was unsure how much was left in the budget to subsidize other  
242 things. Mr. Mack said that SWRPC worked a lot with the Monadnock Region Coordinating  
243 Council to look for opportunities. He thought there were some redundancies in specific  
244 institutions having their own transportation systems when some could be blended to help finance  
245 each other. Within SWRPC’s Microtransit Project, it had identified enough State and Federal  
246 funding already that would fund more than 50% of the service that SWRPC was proposing.  
247 However, Mr. Mack said it would require bringing in \$200,000–\$300,000 more from local  
248 sources to make it work. Dr. Perras noted that Dartmouth Health—the largest healthcare provider  
249 in NH—was working on a plan to station advanced cardiac life support rigs and other ambulances  
250 around the state but was struggling to secure State of NH and Federal funding. He reiterated that  
251 emergency transport was tenuous, at best. To this point, Mr. Mack mentioned that a lot of medical  
252 transportation at this time was not Medicaid eligible and was being serviced by volunteer driver  
253 programs. He said volunteer driver programs are great because they are very inexpensive and  
254 fortunately, there were many generous, charitable people in the region willing to offer rides.  
255 However, those rides are not guaranteed, they are based on people’s personal schedules. In  
256 SWRPC’s 7.5 years of data on these systems, it found that 10%–15% of the volunteer rides would  
257 go unmet, which is problematic if someone had a serious medical need.

258  
259 Mr. Kost asked the reality of the Greater Keene Microtransit Zone project and when it might  
260 happen; the idea of using an app to quickly get on a bus sounded great to him. Mr. Mack replied  
261 that there was enough density around Keene to make it a reality and potentially reaching into  
262 downtown Marlborough or northern and western Swanzey, where there is more density and it is  
263 close enough for trips to be fairly rapid. Funding was the issue and so SWRPC was trying to find  
264 parties interested in being a part of the solution. While it was not asking for any commitments at  
265 this time, SWRPC was seeking a sense of whether the City agreed that this was a need and  
266 wanted to be a part of planning for it. SWRPC was also trying to identify a “Sponsor” that would  
267 run the Microtransit System or be the local face of it, governing how it works, expands, or  
268 changes over time. SWRPC had spoken about this with Cheshire County, Southwestern  
269 Community Services, and HCS; they would be talking with staff from the City of Keene, the  
270 Towns of Swanzey and Marlborough, and even Senator Fenton about a possible Transit Authority  
271 framework with towns added over time.

272  
273 Mr. Kost said that when he is around the City, like at CMC, he sees license plates from VT, for  
274 example. He knew there was a lot of traffic from other big population centers in Brattleboro and  
275 Bellows Falls, VT, and thought it seemed important to facilitate getting those people to Keene  
276 more easily to shop, etc. Mr. Mack agreed that SWRPC had heard about goals for a commuter  
277 route between Keene and Brattleboro for many years and even explored it with partners in  
278 Vermont, but funding continued to be the challenge. He explained that an additional challenge  
279 with transit is to make it as competitive as possible with the personal automobile, which is hard

280 when there is a lot of easy parking, for example. It involves coordinating trips and pick-up/drop-  
281 off, etc. SWRPC was looking at the Keene–Brattleboro connection, and Mr. Mack said there was  
282 interest in a Keene–Peterborough connection too.

283  
284 Mayor Kahn connected this presentation to the September 2024 Radically Rural Summit’s focus  
285 on microtransit, which he called an important way for the community to coalesce around the  
286 topic. He hoped it would not be the only opportunity to talk about regional transportation. Mayor  
287 Kahn also noted that Mr. Mack did not discuss the Keene Dillant Hopkins Airport much, but the  
288 Mayor said that roadway intersection at Rt. 12 & NH 32 had failed, and he hoped it would be a  
289 priority for SWRPC in the coming years. He also hoped the CMP would recognize the Airport as  
290 an important asset of the City and the Mayor said it is obviously a regional asset, but stated that it  
291 had very poor connectivity to the City at this time; there was no bike program or auto rental, etc.  
292 Yet, Mayor Kahn thought the Airport was a major contributor to the number of Keene visitors,  
293 thought it should be recognized as a greater asset, and thought resources should be put in place for  
294 it.

295  
296 Councilor Jones thanked Mr. Mack for mentioning the nodes, which were very important to the  
297 Councilor. Councilor Jones had mentioned addressing the nodes in the CMP to the Steering  
298 Committee. He also asked the City Council and Joint Committee of the Planning Board &  
299 Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee to start protecting the nodes within the City’s  
300 Zoning. He said they are important to Keene being a walkable City (i.e., Complete Streets) and  
301 would help the City grow. Councilor Jones added that in March 2025, the Steering Committee  
302 heard from the Greater Monadnock Collaborative Chamber of Commerce, whose goals were very  
303 similar to SWRPC, and he was glad to see that.

304  
305 Though not germane to the Keene CMP, Chair Farrington was surprised that Route 119 was not a  
306 corridor, especially with the new bridge in the area creating connectivity to I-91. Mr. Mack said it  
307 was a good point, noting that the SWRPC Corridor Systems are a way to divide the region and  
308 focus and prioritize projects. He said Route 119 was on SWRPC’s radar; it was considered as a  
309 part of the NH 9 West Corridor, noting some really interesting opportunities in that Corridor, like  
310 working with Hinsdale and Brattleboro to repurpose an unused rail trestle bridge and an island for  
311 bicycles and pedestrians. He cited Hinsdale being a pro-growth and economic development  
312 community, seeing opportunities in the Corridor to draw in new commercial businesses and  
313 employers to address some of their housing issues. Chair Farrington thanked Mr. Mack for his  
314 presentation.

315  
316 **IV. Flourishing Environment Pillar Recommendations: Eighth Grade Students from**  
317 **Keene Middle School will Present their Recommendations for the “Flourishing**  
318 **Environment” Pillar of the Keene Master Plan.**

319  
320 Chair Farrington welcomed Teachers Ritu Budakoti and Sarah FERENCE and their eighth-grade  
321 students from Keene Middle School: Whitman Conboy, Devin Boeker, Gabriel Hall, Audric  
322 Olson, Liam Green, Nora Mucha, Colette Roentsch, Ryan Brambilla-Botting, Joyce Smith, Seth

323 Wichland, Michael Prince, Avery Washburn, and Zoya Blackmore. The students were visited by  
324 City staff who gave a presentation on the Keene Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP)  
325 Environmental Pillar. Ms. Washburn explained that after the inspiring visit, which taught them  
326 about the importance of protecting and improving the City, every eighth-grade student at Keene  
327 Middle School took their ideas back to their science class and worked on projects focused on  
328 sustainable land use, waste management, sustainable energy use, and eco-friendly transportation.  
329 Mr. Green said that from these projects, a dedicated group of students formed a team, meeting  
330 multiple times to review every proposal, brainstorm solutions, and create well researched plans  
331 for a better, more sustainable community. They had carefully organized their ideas into a  
332 presentation showcasing their visions for a greener, safer, and more efficient City. Groups of  
333 students came forward and presented their recommendations to the Steering Committee.

334

335 Mr. Prince, Mr. Hall, & Mr. Boeker presented on Transportation:

336     ▪ The City of Keene has some challenges that, while difficult, could be overcome, such as:

- 337         ○ Reliance on gas cars
- 338         ○ A lack of awareness on public transportation
- 339         ○ Too dependent on highway
- 340         ○ Few electric vehicle chargers
- 341         ○ Limited or dangerous bike lanes

342     ▪ These obstacles for Keene may be many, but given the proper treatment, they can be  
343 resolved permanently:

344         ○ They learned that the City was already consistently trying to fix these issues,  
345 including:

- 346             ▪ Consistently fixing and improving roads.
- 347             ▪ Having newsletters written in the Sentinel about public transport to help  
348 people access it.
- 349             ▪ The City Express lets people travel cheaply.

350     ▪ The students shared ideas they thought would help and make the work more effective:

351         ○ Environmental:

- 352             ▪ **Improve EV infrastructure** by building more EV chargers and improving  
353 the EV infrastructure to promote electric vehicles, which are significantly  
354 better for the environment than gas cars.
- 355             ▪ **Build/improve sidewalks** to promote walking, which will decrease the  
356 amount of gas cars on the road. As transportation makes up 47% of  
357 Keene's carbon emissions, it would be environmentally wise to promote  
358 nonmotorized transportation.

359         ○ Economical:

360             ▪ Public transportation:

- 361                 • **Buses, shuttles, and a trolley system** could provide citizens with a  
362 means to get around while also generating income. These systems  
363 have seen success in cities comparable to Keene.
- 364                 • **Bike sharing** has seen success in small cities would also have a  
365 good chance to turn a profit.

- 366 ○ Safe:
- 367     ▪ **Create more dedicated and safer bike lanes to** promote more usage of
- 368     them, which makes it a better alternative for citizens.
- 369     ▪ **Rail trails and other trails are cleaned and put together.** Taming these
- 370     paths will help citizens be more prone to use them and prevent them from
- 371     being hurt by tripping on branches or other obstacles.
- 372     ▪ **More light posts** can be a great way to make people feel safe when
- 373     walking at night and could also lower the crime rate.
- 374     ▪ The students listed some remaining questions they had:
- 375         ○ Has there already been a conversation about these topics?
- 376         ○ What is the budget for transportation?
- 377         ○ What can citizens do to support the effort for better transportation?
- 378         ○ How much does the bus/bus system cost?
- 379

380 Ms. Washburn, Ms. Blackmore, Ms. Mucha, & Ms. Smith presented on Littering in Public Places:

- 381     ▪ Current challenges noticed and discussed:
- 382         ○ Littering—specifically in public places—and people not caring
- 383         ○ Large landfills
- 384         ○ Use of too much energy
- 385         ○ Waste all over the City
- 386         ○ No incentive program
- 387         ○ Lack of awareness
- 388         ○ Mass production of non-decomposable materials
- 389         ○ Overusing single-use plastics
- 390     ▪ The City of Keene was already doing curbside trash pickup and recycling, but this can get
- 391     messy and can pollute. So instead, the students recommended fewer garbage trucks in the
- 392     area and throwing trash on the side of the road.
- 393     ▪ Some other examples of what Keene was already doing:
- 394         ○ Dumps and landfills, curbside collection, using and creating plastic alternatives,
- 395         composting and recycling, categorizing disposal bins, and trash cans in main areas.
- 396     ▪ The students shared their ideas to make this work more effective:
- 397         ○ Environmental:
- 398             ▪ Robot trash cans that are powered by solar panels
- 399             ▪ Reuse trash and waste products
- 400             ▪ Turning the waste into energy (e.g., incineration)
- 401             ▪ Produce more eco-friendly plastic
- 402             ▪ Attract attention to safer waste disposal
- 403             ▪ Reduce anti-decomposing materials
- 404             ▪ Having easily accessible and categorized waste bins
- 405             ▪ Donating extra, unused food to animals or to shelters
- 406         ○ Economical:
- 407             ▪ More trash cans in the City
- 408             ▪ Make recycling more accessible
- 409             ▪ Earn money from throwing away certain trash

- 410                   ▪ People working to keep the trash off the ground
- 411                   ▪ Reimburse citizens if possible
- 412                   ▪ Create new job opportunities
- 413                   ▪ Less plastic use in businesses
- 414                   ▪ Creating an opportunity for teens to work for a cleanup crew and possibly
- 415                   getting paid for it
- 416                   ▪ Community/school composting
- 417           ○ Safe:
- 418                   ▪ Electric dump trucks
- 419                   ▪ Making the trash into fun art
- 420                   ▪ Show videos/tutorials on how to throw away the right trash
- 421                   ▪ Keeping trash out of large landfills
- 422                   ▪ Make sure water sources stay clean
- 423                   ▪ Having education on what happens with our trash
- 424                   ▪ Using and creating more plastic alternatives
- 425           ▪ The students listed some remaining questions they had:
- 426                   ○ How can we use more solar energy in Keene?
- 427                   ○ What is the City's current plan on waste disposal?
- 428                   ○ How can we get the community more aware/willing to help?
- 429                   ○ What are problems that continue to increase?
- 430                   ○ What does the future hold if we do or don't change our waste disposal methods?
- 431                   ○ Do we have any facts on the percentages of waste ending up in the wrong place or
- 432                   how much excessive waste we have?
- 433

434 Zoya Blackmore, Avery Washburn, Ryan Brambilla-Botting, & Audric Olson talked about  
435 Sustainable Land Use:

- 436           ▪ Current challenges they noticed and discussed:
- 437                   ○ Not enough public parking (particularly in the Center)
- 438                   ○ Little to no areas for safe child play
- 439                   ○ Industrial places in residential areas
- 440                   ○ Homelessness
- 441                   ○ Not efficient use of land—we should build UP and not out!
- 442                   ○ Some buildings are not accessible
- 443           ▪ What the students learned the City was already doing:
- 444                   ○ Parks, trails, gardens/green houses, more housing, making access to roads to build
- 445                   connectivity and better access to living in commercial areas.
- 446           ▪ The students' ideas for solutions:
- 447                   ○ Environmental:
- 448                           ▪ Replenishing/fixing up buildings for homeless people (or other uses like
- 449                           small businesses)
- 450                           ▪ More quality parks/make them better
- 451                           ▪ Maintain land better & possibly having cleanup crews
- 452                   ○ Economical:
- 453                           ▪ Adding diverse types of housing (e.g., apartments, family homes, and
- 454                           single-occupant houses)

- 455                           ▪ More public bathrooms
- 456                           ▪ Replace unnecessary/chain businesses (fast food) with useful local
- 457                           businesses
- 458                           ▪ Offering paying cleanup jobs for teens
- 459                   ○ Safe:
- 460                           ▪ Adding ramps for bikes, wheelchairs, scooters, etc.
- 461                           ▪ Use of guardrails where elderly and children walk
- 462           ▪ The students' remaining questions on this topic:
- 463                   ○ Is there a way to advertise/encourage local businesses?
- 464                           ▪ Mr. Brambilla-Botting said, as a resident of Keene, he had noticed that
- 465                           small and local businesses were not getting as much advertising as they
- 466                           should be. He noticed that some radio stations were giving small businesses
- 467                           a chance to compete with the larger ones.
- 468                   ○ How can we preserve wildlife, land and habitats?
- 469                   ○ Can we encourage or find a way to have backyard space and more gardens?
- 470                   ○ How can we make downtown more accessible with parking—because all the space
- 471                           is pretty occupied?
- 472

473 Seth Wichland, Liam Green, and Whitman Conboy talked about Sustainable Energy Use:

- 474           ▪ The current challenges they noticed and discussed:
- 475                   ○ High oil prices
- 476                   ○ Mostly non-renewable sources
- 477                   ○ Citizens not fully informed or aware of renewable vs. non-renewable sources
- 478           ▪ What they learned the City of Keene was already doing:
- 479                   ○ Using 48% natural gas, but produce 57% nuclear energy\* (\*in NH)
- 480                   ○ Using more of a variety of energy than we produce\* (\*in NH)
- 481                   ○ Over half of what City producing and using = non-renewable sources
- 482           ▪ Solutions the students developed for these challenges:
- 483                   ○ Environmental:
- 484                           ▪ **Solar Paint:**
- 485                                   • This is an ingenious idea, due to the fact the solar paint is portable,
- 486                                   can be applied multiple times, and you won't have to worry about it
- 487                                   weighing 40–50 pounds moving it.
- 488                                   • If we apply this to roads and sidewalks, then e-bikes and electric
- 489                                   cars will charge without the concern of using electricity the City
- 490                                   will use when people are charging their vehicles.
- 491                   ○ Economical:
- 492                           ▪ **Windmill Investments:**
- 493                                   • The City could profit in three years maximum from buying a \$2
- 494                                   million commercial windmill.
- 495                                   • An average commercial windmill produces 6 million Kw, which
- 496                                   costs \$2–\$4 million dollars. Per year, 6 million kw makes \$720,000.



- 497 Therefore, the City could profit in three years maximum from  
498 buying a \$2 million commercial windmill.
- 499 ■ Safe:
    - 500 ● **Bioluminescent Algae:**
      - 501 ○ To capitalize on the amount of electricity the downtown area  
502 produces, if we install bioluminescent algae on the  
503 sidewalks, it could produce light inexpensively.
      - 504 ○ It would get rid of the need for streetlights entirely and  
505 would produce enough light for people to see.
    - 506 ■ The students listed their remaining questions about this topic:
      - 507 ○ What renewable energy source do we already use the most?
      - 508 ○ What releases the most emissions in Keene?
      - 509 ○ How much can we rely on solar power?
      - 510 ○ Why do we use type-2 (fuel oil) energy for our main source (of heating energy)?
      - 511 ○ Can we use the Ashuelot River for energy production?
      - 512 ○ Does the City of Keene use bordering hills for any purpose, if so, can we use them  
513 for energy use?
      - 514 ○ How much fossil fuel does Keene approximately combust per year?
      - 515 ○ Why don't we use renewable energy for our main source, and, how can we use  
516 more?
      - 517 ○ Can we purchase fields separately for solar panels? How can we balance that with  
518 housing needs?

519  
520 Mr. Brambilla-Botting concluded the presentation, welcoming questions from the Steering  
521 Committee. Chair Farrington led the Committee in applauding the students. Chair Farrington  
522 clarified that chain restaurants are not unnecessary, and Mr. Brambilla-Botting agreed, stating that  
523 they just take some shine from some local businesses.

524  
525 Mr. Kost expressed thanks for the well-thought-out presentation. He found some technologies the  
526 students mentioned interesting, like solar paint and bioluminescent algae. He said it would be nice  
527 to have conversations about those more with the people who could actually implement them. Mr.  
528 Wichland explained the bioluminescent algae idea as applied to roads where cars and people go,  
529 and then a generator could be connected to the roadway, causing a chemical reaction that makes it  
530 light up when someone is on it vs. using lights. Mr. Conboy said companies turn bioluminescent  
531 algae into paint already, so the City would not have to complete that process. Mr. Wichland added  
532 that solar paint could be applied to the tops of buildings for thermal energy to heat homes and  
533 store energy for the community, noting that it would be more affordable than solar panels. Mr.  
534 Green agreed that the paint acts the same as a solar panel but is more portable and cheaper.

535  
536 Mayor Kahn was intrigued by this project-based learning model. He encouraged the school and  
537 families to participate in Green Up Keene on April 26. Regarding parking, the Mayor compared it  
538 to the former President of University of California Berkeley some 60 years prior who described  
539 the University as a group of cats unified by a common goal to increase parking on campus. The



540 Mayor called parking a constant perceived need. The Mayor also promoted the Keene  
541 Community Power Plan, which was introducing up to 50% as the default rate produced by non-  
542 fossil fuels. He called that a really aggressive plan by the City to try to get to 100% renewable  
543 energy.

544  
545 Mayor Kahn asked the students if they could reflect on their project-based learning experience,  
546 their skills, and any additional areas in which middle schoolers could help the City address  
547 problems. Mr. Brambilla-Botting mentioned an inspiring Neil de Grasse Tyson quote and how  
548 Friday science labs helped him to understand things. Projects in other classes helped him to  
549 understand things instead of just going through textbooks; he got to be interactive and learn how  
550 he understood the subject. To the Mayor's point, Mr. Brambilla-Botting thought there were a lot  
551 of ways the middle schoolers could help the City address problems but said to not take their ideas  
552 too seriously because they are not that experienced. Ms. Washburn shared some other examples  
553 of project-based learning, such as the National Junior Honor Society with projects focused on  
554 making the school a better place, and other projects cleaning up rivers or other parts of the  
555 community. She said she really loved working together because they could hear and combine  
556 everyone's different ideas. Mayor Kahn mentioned the Keene High School Youth Council that  
557 was tapping into the good ideas of Keene's youths who have lived in Keene all their lives and  
558 have valuable experience in the City to contribute.

559  
560 Ms. Lavigne-Bernier thanked the students for their exciting ideas, stating that she hoped to see her  
561 child in a similar role in the future. Having grown up in Keene, moved away for a while, and  
562 come back, she told the students this was cool, that they were being heard, and they were really  
563 helping. She said it was refreshing and the Steering Committee appreciated it.

564 Dr. Perras agreed, stating that when you get to be an adult, you are weighed down with all the  
565 reasons why you cannot do certain things, and it was clear the students did not have that. It was a  
566 great reminder to the Steering Committee to think a little bit differently about what is actually  
567 possible. He said the presentation was incredibly valuable.

568

569 **V. Future Land Use Map Discussion and Activity**

570

571 Senior Planner, Mari Brunner, provided the Steering Committee with three reference maps: (1)  
572 preexisting Zoning Map, (2) existing Land Use by major categories by parcel of land, and (3)  
573 2010 Future Land Use (FLU) Map. She offered to display others on the screen if it would be  
574 helpful, like the Complete Streets Map. Then, she provided handouts of four blank maps and  
575 markers (colors corresponding to map legends) and requested high-level input, asking the  
576 Steering Committee members to individually use the markers to visually demonstrate what they  
577 saw as the future of Keene in 15 years if the CMP vision is achieved. The four maps were:

- 578 1. Citywide Land Use Map:
- 579 a. Citywide future land development/land use areas. Where Committee members  
580 wanted to see residential development, mixed-use, industrial, commercial,  
581 agriculture, rural, and conservation.
- 582 2. Close-Up Land Use Map of the Downtown:

- 583                   a. Same as the city-wide map but zoomed in on the downtown area.  
584           3. Citywide Mobility Connections:  
585                   a. Where the Committee wanted to see trails, bike routes, and transit.  
586           4. Close-Up Mobility Connections for the Downtown  
587

588 Staff intended to scan them and share them with the project consultants after the meeting. The  
589 new FLU Map would be based on the Community Vision input received to date and this  
590 feedback. There was a question about how residential growth is defined, and Ms. Brunner defined  
591 it broadly, stating it was about increasing housing builds and not a focus on lot size. Committee  
592 members worked individually on their maps for approximately 15 minutes. The Steering  
593 Committee reconvened, and Ms. Brunner asked the Committee specific questions about how they  
594 completed the maps.  
595

596 *In the Land Use Section, where did Committee members place Neighborhood Nodes (activity*  
597 *centers)?*  
598

599 Councilor Jones and Ms. Lavigne-Bernier worked together and listed: (1) upper Court Street near  
600 Dunkin Donuts and 711, (2) Park Avenue at Jack’s Hardware and Park Avenue Deli & Market,  
601 (3) Park Avenue and Summit Avenue near the gas station, (4) Carpenter Street, and (5) Marlboro  
602 Street.  
603

604 Chair Farrington suggested the area on Optical Avenue where KSC had a past project idea for a  
605 mixed-use three- or four-story building.  
606

607 *Areas for residential growth?*  
608

609 Mr. Kost said he did not place residential anywhere specific, mostly capturing it in mixed-use and  
610 trying to keep the residential in a core urban setting that would get the most density and number  
611 of units while protecting the hillsides. Then, he said there could be infill housing based on the  
612 City’s Zoning, but he was not thinking about large tracts of development. Mr. Meehan agreed  
613 with mixed-use development, which he placed all over the center of town, and he placed red (to  
614 indicate “residential growth area”) where there were already existing neighborhoods outside of  
615 the core.  
616

617 Mayor Kahn approached residential differently because he thought the City needed everything,  
618 stating that some people want to live in the hillsides where the environment is more attractive, and  
619 others prefer an urban environment. He listed Summit Road, Maple Avenue to Black Brook, and  
620 Base Hill Road; he said some were hard to relocate. He agreed with there being a lot of  
621 opportunities for mixed-use infill development.  
622

623 Councilor Jones asked if Ms. Brunner was looking for build-up, accessory dwelling units  
624 (ADUs), new housing, or a combination. Ms. Brunner said anywhere to add new housing units,  
625 and the type of housing would depend on the area of the City.  
626

627 Ms. Oram said that, as someone with a single-family home who was eager to not have that at  
628 some point, she thought downtown Keene had limited condominiums. She referenced the  
629 repurposed factory buildings that were popular but only had a handful of units. She spoke of  
630 people who want to enjoy everything Keene has to offer and not be in a single-family home, for  
631 whom the options were limited.

632

633 As a single person not needing a lot of space, Councilor Workman agreed that it was hard to find  
634 housing that would fit her needs. On the maps, she listed extra housing further down Arch Street  
635 toward Stonehouse Lane and Hastings Avenue.

636

637 *Areas for commercial growth only?*

638

639 Ms. Oram thought about the highly commercial area at the Rt. 9/10/12 intersection but noted the  
640 large cornfield, which seemed perennially supposed to be something but never was. It seemed  
641 ripe for commercial, already having egresses, and would not be disturbing any residential area.  
642 She said it would be a significant commercial footprint in a City this size. Mayor Kahn said that  
643 the Ledger family owns it.

644

645 Dr. Perras struggled with the commercial aspect when thinking about small businesses vs. box  
646 stores. He thought about following the spines of the major roadways from downtown out of the  
647 City and seeing the larger commercial, industrial, and manufacturing scale. He said a larger  
648 operation would imply the need for close availability of bigger roadways. In Dr. Perras' 20  
649 months in Keene, he felt that the City had land available along the major roadways in-and-out of  
650 town.

651

652 Mayor Kahn mentioned opportunities on Washington Street in the area of Dinkbee's Convenience  
653 Store.

654

655 *Green open space, agriculture, and/or areas for preservation?*

656

657 Mr. Meehan focused on preserving what the City already has and did not speculate about  
658 agriculture. Mr. Kost mentioned wetlands. He also mentioned a lot of privately owned open land  
659 in west Keene near Stonehouse Lane; he thought it could be relevant in the discussion of  
660 community gardens that would be good for the community, if not large-scale agriculture. He also  
661 encouraged a lot of urban farms and pocket parks wherever possible, even infilled with homes.  
662 Mr. Kost encouraged this over large agricultural tracts in the future.

663

664 Dr. Perras left the meeting.

665

666 Ms. Oram suggested trail expansion around the Ashuelot River as she felt the City sometimes  
667 ignored it. So, she urged more walking and biking along it. She said to take advantage of the  
668 beautiful things Keene has to offer.

669

670 Mayor Kahn thought the State of NH defined agriculture as a minimum of 12 acres, so he did not  
671 think that was a priority for the City of Keene. Ms. Oram said except for Green Wagon Farm.  
672 Mayor Kahn agreed that it was a treasure, but not 12 acres; they farmed at several locations with  
673 one being their commerce.

674  
675 Ms. Lavigne-Bernier was knowledgeable about how the former Findings property would be used  
676 for green space. She knew digging was not an option there (contamination) but asked if  
677 community or urban gardening might be possible there, noting what a nice area it is with all the  
678 nearby parks. Ms. Brunner said she would have to check with the Parks and Recreation  
679 Department because part of that parcel is in the floodway and part in the floodplain. The  
680 Skatepark was the one parcel that could be built-up because it was not in the floodway. Though  
681 Ms. Brunner thought it was a great idea. Ms. Lavigne-Bernier asked if grass and trees were only  
682 planned for the Findings property. Ms. Brunner thought some parking too and possibly some  
683 constructed wetlands; there was a plan online. Ms. Lavigne-Bernier commented on it being a  
684 nicely located parcel for housing.

685  
686 Councilor Workman agreed with Mr. Meehan about maintaining the existing greenspace, except  
687 the Councilor wanted to focus on the heavily underutilized pocket parks, like the one on Church  
688 Street. While beautiful, she never saw anyone using it. Similarly with the one on Sesame Street.  
689 She wished to see more kids using them. Ms. Lavigne-Bernier mentioned an idea to bring  
690 volunteerism to the parks and Councilor Workman said to bring a plan to the City Council.  
691 Councilor Workman also suggested leaving approximately Hastings Avenue to Archway Farm  
692 and to Rt. 9 for agriculture, and Hurricane Road as well.

693  
694 Mr. Kost asked if smaller neighborhood gardens are incompatible with floodways and  
695 floodplains. He said that if the gardeners are aware of the risks, areas could be preserved for those  
696 uses. Ms. Brunner said that in the floodway, you cannot build raised beds and on the Findings  
697 property, raised beds would be required because digging underground would be prohibited due to  
698 contamination. There could be raised beds in the floodplain with compensatory storage. Mr. Kost  
699 thought a lot of communities might want to be able to have their own gardens and it would be  
700 worth incorporating in the CMP. He added that perhaps neighborhoods could take ownership of  
701 small parks.

702  
703 *Historic preservation? Size and location of existing downtown Historic District?*

704  
705 Councilor Jones said the Historic District was developed initially as up-and-down Main Street,  
706 with some of Washington and Court Streets. However, he did not think there was a true Historic  
707 District in the City, citing historic places throughout the community as a different perspective.

708  
709 Mr. Kost agreed with Main Street, Railroad Square, and Gilbo Avenue because of the history of  
710 the railroads and Industrial Heritage Trail. He cited the critical areas up Washington and Court  
711 Streets. So, he thought the existing Historic District was capturing those.

712

713 As a resident of Main Street, Ms. Oram said that when she moved there in 2011, there was an  
714 effort underway to preserve all of Main Street as a Historic District but it was not necessarily fully  
715 thought out and did not come to fruition. She said the properties on Main and Court Streets  
716 pay a premium property tax for the beauty of the historic homes, and she said adding all the  
717 constrictions of the Historic District (e.g., replacing slate roof \$500/slate) would require  
718 something to abate the taxes. She thought that was likely why the 2011 effort failed, stating both  
719 things could not be true.

720

721 Councilor Jones asked his fellow Committee members if they did anything with the Kingsbury  
722 property? Chair Farrington said that had been a long-term question. Ms. Oram thought that parcel  
723 could have more purpose as downtown housing because it is so central (despite the onsite issues).

724

725 *Mobility connections?*

726

727 Mr. Meehan suggested extending the rail trails as far as possible, connecting them with one  
728 another, and extending the bike lanes. He also advocated for safer parking on Main Street that  
729 would not be potentially deadly to cyclists. Ms. Lavigne-Bernier agreed. Mayor Kahn thought  
730 there was a defined bike path on Washington Street but not Court Street, which he had heard  
731 parents speak about. The Mayor agreed about connecting out-of-town: Rt. 10 & 12, Swanzey, and  
732 Winchester, among others.

733

734 Mr. Kost referred back to the discussion on Complete Streets and how, when they are designed as  
735 such, they would include the necessary bike lanes and sidewalks to be safe. He advocated for  
736 incorporating nice bike lanes on City streets. Mayor Kahn's concern was not wanting to have  
737 parallel bike lanes where there are already bike paths in town; for example, West Street already  
738 had the extension of the Cheshire Line/North Bridge. So, the Mayor thought the most important  
739 thing on West Street was sidewalks and pedestrian access to the commercial areas.

740

741 Ms. Lavigne-Bernier mentioned close calls when biking, like when Prime Roast started making  
742 coffee deliveries by bike during Covid. She cited scary experiences biking on West Street and  
743 Main Street. She said one of the most used pieces of infrastructure was the foot bridge between  
744 the two communities by Hastings Avenue, so connecting areas like that would be useful.

745

746 Councilor Workman said there was a lot of emphasis on pedestrian safety around downtown  
747 Keene, but further away, crosswalks were farther apart or non-existent. She thought about kids  
748 walking to school or the bus stop who might need a crosswalk at Valley Street, for example, or  
749 North/South Lincoln Streets. On biking, Councilor Workman echoed the eighth graders who  
750 presented and said they wanted bike lanes.

751

752 Ms. Oram was sad to hear the Martell Court footbridge (by Achille Agway, under Rt. 101) was  
753 closed because it linked KSC to the athletic fields on the other side of Rt. 101. She understood it  
754 was in disrepair but knew it would be missed. She knew there was an ongoing conversation  
755 between KSC and the City about who was responsible for it. Mayor Kahn said KSC worked with

756 NH DOT and the City to sustain that bridge after the Rail Trail was extended over Rt. 101, so the  
757 Mayor said it was unfortunate and surprising that it was closed. He understood if it was a  
758 maintenance issue but if KSC had enough interest he thought perhaps there could be a  
759 partnership.

760

761 Ms. Brunner appreciated the input on the mapping activity. She welcomed further input by email  
762 after the meeting. The Committee members' individual maps would be scanned and provided to  
763 the consultants, who were working on the online StoryMap, and the FLU Map would be added to  
764 it in early May with this helpful feedback.

765

766 Looking at the existing Land Use Map, Mr. Kost noted that he was nervous about the incredible  
767 mosaic of little lots. He wondered if there was a way to think about land use in broader categories  
768 to encourage more mixed-use, especially downtown. Ms. Brunner said the existing Land Use Map  
769 they were looking at was created in-house by the City's GIS Coordinator using the Land Use  
770 category of the City's assessing data. The new FLU Map would not be parcel-by-parcel like this.  
771 That was what Mr. Kost was hoping.

772

773 Mayor Kahn added that for the definitions of industry land, there was not a category included for  
774 mixed commercial and industrial. He said the City was desperate to fill large commercial strips  
775 and the City's definition of industry was outdated. So, he thought the City's Zoning was in need  
776 of a mixed-use category. Ms. Brunner wondered whether the Light Industrial category could be  
777 appropriate for commercial but the Mayor was unsure what that meant. Mayor Kahn provided the  
778 example of a company using two buildings that together totaled approximately 8,000 square feet  
779 and would leave Keene if it could not find another sizeable location; the City's definition  
780 prevented them from going in a space like Hannaford or Kohls plaza with more square footage.  
781 He said those situations would cost the City significantly. Ms. Oram agreed, stating that there  
782 were various places where she thought industrial or precision manufacturing could go that would  
783 require space and need to be Zoned for Industry.

784

785 Vice Chair Henkel argued against his own industrial use and the potential for noise to impact  
786 immediate neighbors Zoned in Light Industry. He thought some Light Industry might fit well in  
787 the retail category, but that the City should be careful about what exactly is defined as acceptable.  
788 Vice Chair Henkel and the Mayor agreed that certain Light Industry companies could likely  
789 tolerate each other's noise and others might tolerate each other's vibrations; so there might need  
790 to be narrower definitions of Light Industries (i.e., Optics, Biotech, etc.).

791

792 **VI. Next Steps:**

793 **A) Community Survey & Story Map**

794

795 Launching the week of April 7. There would be weekly newsletters moving forward for those  
796 who signed up.

797

798



799                   **B) Future Land Use Map**

800

801 Ms. Brunner asked the Committee to promote the FLU Map that would launch in early May in the  
802 online StoryMap produced by the project consulting team.

803

804                   **C) Prioritization Survey**

805

806 This narrow, non-public survey (also referred to as a “decision-making tool”) would be sent to the  
807 Steering Committee, City Council, Planning Board, and senior City staff leadership (i.e.,  
808 department heads and City Manager). The intent would be to gain input on how to prioritize the  
809 different strategies under each goal in the CMP.

810

811                   **D) June 3 Future Summit, 5:00 PM, Heberton Hall**

812

813 To encourage participation, there would be appetizers, and the City was trying to arrange for  
814 childcare.

815

816 Chair Farrington asked if the Strategic Pillar Task Forces had concluded and Ms. Brunner said  
817 yes, the week before this meeting. The Task Force membership would also receive the  
818 Prioritization Survey.

819

820 **VII. New Business**

821

822 None presented.

823

824 **VIII. Adjournment**

825

826 There being no further business, Chair Farrington adjourned the meeting at 8:32 PM.

827

828 Respectfully submitted by,  
829 Katie Kibler, Minute Taker  
830 April 8, 2025

831

832 Reviewed and edited by,  
833 Mari Brunner, Senior Planner





# Vision Keene 20-Forward Comprehensive Master Plan Internal Memo: Population Projections

April 2, 2025

## About This Memo

As part of the Comprehensive Master Planning process, JS&A assessed the city's population growth projections. This memo communicates the population projection findings and articulates methodological insights. ***Considering the significant number of factors that may impact future population growth and the unlikelihood of any source to predict the specific population of Keene in the future, this methodology explores multiple projection models to provide a range of growth scenarios that may occur.*** This memo, produced by JS&A, is provided to the City of Keene and the Vision Keene 20-Forward Project Team.

## Methodology

This analysis explored a variety of key data sources and projection methodologies to understand the range of population and household increases that Keene may experience over the next 15 years. These population projections include data from leading providers such as ESRI and Census and state-supplied data from the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs.

## Summary of Findings

Based on current conditions and forecasted growth, Keene's population is expected to remain stable over the next 15 years. By 2040, Keene may see a population change anywhere between growing by approximately 1,100 people to declining by approximately 600 people. The midpoint of the projection models forecasts approximately 200 fewer residents in 2040, and the average across projection models results in a very stable population with a change of only 22 people.

It is important to remember that these figures are merely projections. Actual population growth could vary considerably based on future market forces and economic conditions in the region and country, and Keene has an opportunity to be in the driver's seat of growth. Future residential development and the community's appetite for growth will be the primary factors determining the magnitude of Keene's population growth in the coming decades.

## Implications to Consider

While projection models provide analytical forecasts for the future, cities can also help steer and guide the growth desired in a community. While Keene offers a strong value proposition to prospective residents, the current housing supply in Keene and the surrounding region has been identified as a barrier to the city’s population and economic growth. Increasing residential development can provide additional inventory for new residents, and market dynamics can play a role in the population growth Keene experiences over the next 15 to 20 years. Similarly, upticks in student enrollment at Keene State College can also play a role in growing the city’s population.

## Methodology and Data Sources

This methodology analyzes population projects based on various projection models and data sources to understand a comprehensive picture of how Keene’s population may grow over time. Each model forecasts a different scenario, and the range of the scenarios illustrates the growth patterns that may occur.

Notably, continuing ESRI’s 5-year population forecasts into 2040 offers the most aggressive growth scenario, with a population increase of 1,074 residents between 2025 and 2024. Conversely, the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs projects a very stable population (the model illustrates a slight increase in population and then a decrease) with a slight decline in 213 residents by 2040.

When projecting population growth based on past trends, this methodology examined a continuation of population growth based on US Census data over three periods: long-term (2000-2020), mid-term (2010-2023), and recent years (2020-2023).

Methodology and Data Source		Projected Growth Rates		Projected Population (2040)		Forecasted Households (2040) <sup>1</sup>	
		Annual Rate	Total Rate	Total Population	Change in Population	Total Households	Change in Households
1	ESRI Population Forecast <sup>2</sup>	0.30%	4.6%	24,434	1,074	11,208	492
2	State Projections for Keene <sup>3</sup>	-0.06%	-0.9%	23,211	(213)	10,647	(98)
3	Continuation of Past Long-Term Growth, 2000-2020 (US Census)	0.11%	1.6%	23,334	368	10,704	169
4	Continuation of Past Mid-Term Growth, 2010-2023 (US Census/ACS)	-0.15%	-2.2%	22,340	(509)	10,248	(233)
5	Continuation of Past Recent Growth, 2020-2023 (US Census/ACS)	-0.18%	-2.7%	22,226	(609)	10,195	(279)
<b>Population and Housing Growth Range</b>		-0.18% to 0.30%	-2.7% to 4.6%	22,226 to 24,434	(609) to 1,074	10,195 to 11,208	(279) to 492

<sup>1</sup> Household forecasts assume that the current average household size in Keene remains consistent between 2025 and 2040.

<sup>2</sup> ESRI Population Forecast model assumes that ESRI’s 2024-2029 projected annual growth rate will continue until 2040.

<sup>3</sup> New Hampshire Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau. (2022). *New Hampshire population projections: 2020–2050*. New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs. <https://www.nheconomy.com/getmedia/0205c62d-9c30-4b00-9c9e-d81d8f17b8b3/NH-Population-Projections-2020-2050-Final-Report-092022.pdf>