

## **CHAPTER III - REGIONAL CONTEXT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Each town in the Lake Sunapee region has a stake in keeping the area a desirable place to live and work. Newbury and its neighbors cannot afford to look only as far as their town lines and must continue to put planning and growth issues in a regional context. Towns should consider the potential impacts of development on their neighbors as well as within their own borders. This regional conscience has been institutionalized by RSA 36:54 which encourages planning boards to consider the interests of other affected municipalities when considering proposals for new development.

The state statutes (RSA 674:2) provide for a “Regional Concern” section of a Master Plan. The intent of this section is to promote regional awareness in managing growth while fulfilling the vision statements of the Master Plan. This section describes the specific areas in the municipality of significant regional interest. These areas may include resources wholly contained within the municipality or bordering, or shared, or both, with neighboring municipalities. Items to be considered may include but are not limited to public facilities, natural resources, economic and housing potential, transportation, agriculture and recreational open space.

Individual communities each play a distinctive role in the growth of this region. As the town looks ahead to the future, it is important to understand Newbury’s identity and role in this broader regional context.

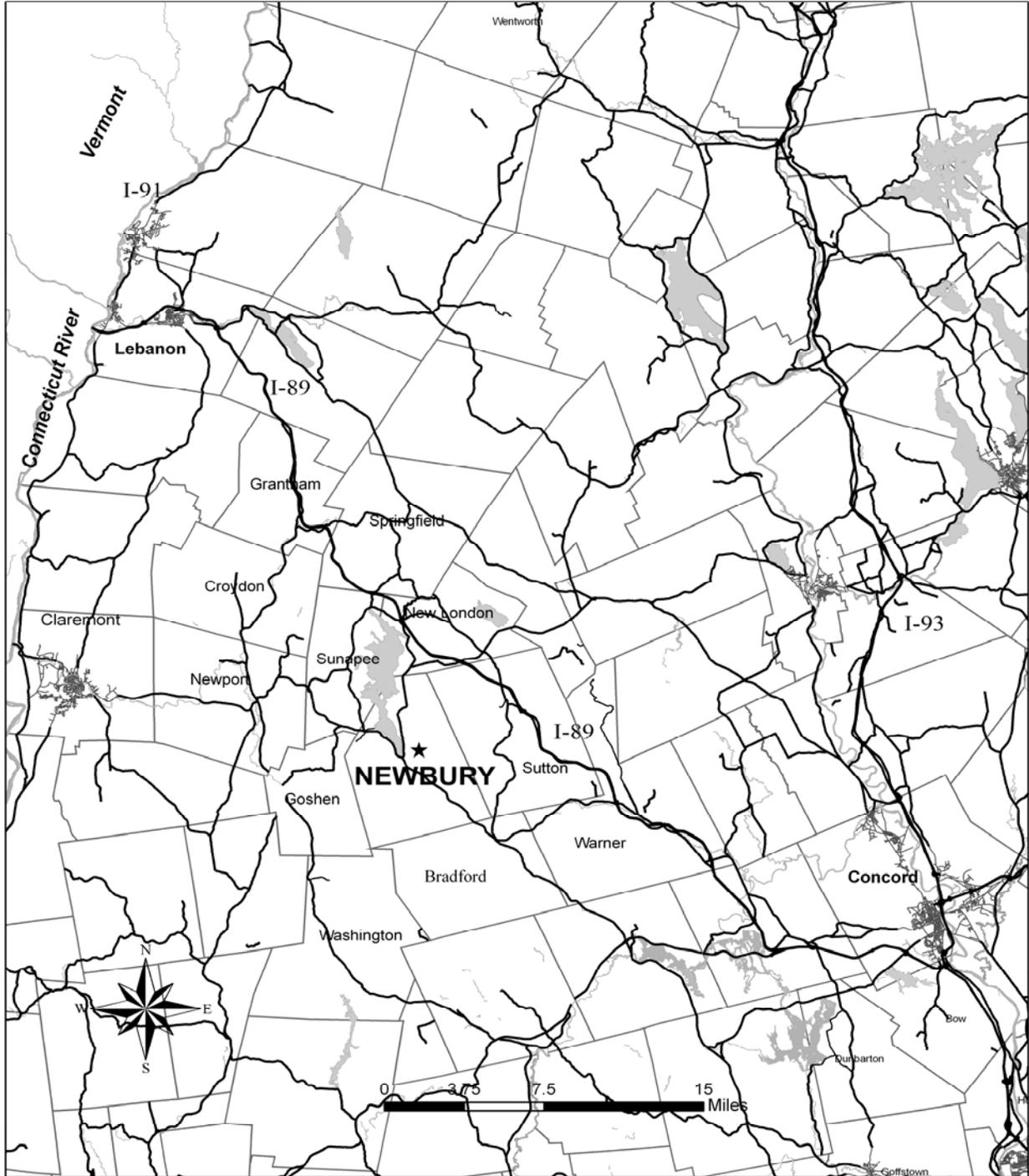
This chapter will begin by discussing Newbury’s regional setting. Then areas of significant regional interest in Newbury will be briefly outlined followed by a synopsis of the points of regional cooperation and coordination.

### **REGIONAL SETTING**

#### **Physical Setting:**

The town of Newbury is located about half-way between Concord and Lebanon south of I-89 on the southern end of Lake Sunapee. It is located in the west-central part of New Hampshire in Merrimack County as reflected on the map to follow. Neighboring communities include Bradford, Sutton, New London, Sunapee, Goshen and Washington. The Town’s area covers 38.1 square miles, being on average roughly eight miles north to south and five miles east to west.

# Map III-1 Regional Setting



### **Newbury's Growth in Regional Perspective:**

With its attractive natural and recreational resources, Newbury has experienced considerable population growth over the past thirty years. From a population of 509 in 1970 the Town's year-round population has more than tripled to 1,702 in 2000. Between 1990 and 2000, the year-round population increased by 26%. A few of the highlights comparing Newbury's growth with trends in the County and state include:

- Newbury's annual population growth rate between 1970 and 2000 (4.1%) was over double the growth rate of Merrimack County (1.8%) and the State (1.7%);
- Newbury's annual population growth rate between 1990 and 2000 (2.4%) was over double the growth rate of Merrimack County (1.3%) and the State (1.1%); and
- Newbury was the 4<sup>th</sup> fastest growing community in the UVLSRPC Region between 1990 and 2000 as measured by percentage of population increase.

### **Natural Resources:**

Clearly Lake Sunapee and Mt. Sunapee are the two most dominant physical natural resource features in the area. Each offers an abundance of recreational opportunities acting as a major draw to the area. Both the mountain and the lake are partially located in Newbury and partially located in neighboring communities. For decades, Lake Sunapee and Mt. Sunapee have been magnets for growth in the area towns and they will continue to attract growth in the future.

Beyond these natural resource jewels, Newbury is blessed with a diverse and attractive natural environment throughout town that is of regional importance. Included are numerous hills, hillsides, skylines, watersheds, lakes, ponds, streams, wetlands, flood plain areas, wildlife habitats, areas with fragile soils, open fields and farmland, and areas with fragile & unique natural plant communities. These natural areas in town provide extensive hiking opportunities and trails for other recreational pursuits.

## **Transportation:**

I-89 provides the interstate connection south to Concord, NH (½ hour) and the Massachusetts border (1 hour) via I-93. I-89 north connects with I-91 just across the border in Vermont (¾ hour) providing interstate connections to points north, south and west.

Airports serving Newbury include the Manchester New Hampshire Airport about 50 minutes south, Logan Airport in Boston Massachusetts about 1 ¾ hours south, and the Burlington Vermont Airport about 2 hours northwest.

The development of the interstate transportation system (I-93 & I-89) in the late 1960's had a major impact on growth in the Lake Sunapee area by greatly reducing the travel time to and from the urban populations accessible by I-93 in southern New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island and by I-91 in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York.

The project to widen I-93 will again fuel growth in the region. In the short-term, it will reduce travel time to these major population centers to the south and provide more roadway capacity. In the short term, this means more people can reach Newbury in the shorter travel times. In the long-term, the upgrade of I-93 will provide the capacity for more people to reach the Lake Sunapee area even though at reduced travel times due to increased congestion from continued population growth.

In addition, I-91 has the capacity to provide access for more people coming from western Massachusetts, Connecticut, eastern New York and points south.

## **AREAS OF SIGNIFICANT REGIONAL INTEREST**

Summarized below are some of the *areas of significant regional interest* in Newbury:

### **Lake Sunapee Watershed:**

Through time, Lake Sunapee has been, is now and will continue to be the critical natural resource that is the focus of this region. Continuing to protect the water quality of this mountain lake is critical to Newbury and the surrounding area.

Lake Sunapee is important to Newbury and the other watershed communities in many ways. It is one of the major natural and recreational assets that attract visitors as well as people who want to move to the area. The seasonal high-valued homes bordering the lake provide a significant portion of the tax base for the three communities with frontage on Lake Sunapee: Sunapee, New London and

Newbury.

Newbury should continue to participate with the other communities in the Lake Sunapee Watershed and the Lake Sunapee Protective Association (LSPA) in the Sunapee Watershed Area Coalition's (SWAC) efforts to develop and implement a watershed plan to ensure the long-term protection of Lake Sunapee. Other Lake Sunapee Watershed communities include: Sunapee, Springfield, New London, Sutton and Goshen.

In crafting land use regulations which could impact the Lake Sunapee watershed, those proposals should be shared and discussed with the other watershed communities to request their input and possible participation.

### **Growth & Expansion of the Mt. Sunapee Resort**

In 2003, the Mt. Sunapee Resort proposed an expansion of the ski area in their Master Plan submitted for approval. This proposal has not moved forward since Governor Lynch refused to approve the Master Plan in 2004. However, presuming that it might be raised again sometime in the future, the proposed expansion plans for Mt. Sunapee have raised concerns for potential impacts in Newbury and area communities including: traffic congestion, increased demand and cost for emergency services, and the impacts from spin-off residential and commercial growth. Peak weekend traffic accessing Mt. Sunapee from I-89 impacts neighboring towns including Bradford and Warner along Route 103, Sunapee along Routes 11 and 103B and New London along Route 103A. The proposed ski area expansion plans affect Goshen and Newbury directly and indirectly impacts residential and commercial growth in other area towns.

### **Population Growth & the Housing Demand in the Lake Sunapee Area**

Regardless of whether the Mt. Sunapee expansion plans move forward, the area's abundant natural and recreational assets and its rural, small-town character provide the quality of life features to spur the potential for continued strong growth in the housing market for retirees, second home buyers, and families. This growth has and will continue to increase pressure on town and school services and facilities.

### **Significant Protected Open Spaces**

Mt. Sunapee State Park Area:

This area constitutes the largest area of contiguous protected open space in Newbury. In the Mt. Sunapee State Park, this area includes Mt. Sunapee

Resort Ski Area and the Mt. Sunapee State Park Beach and boat launch. In addition, this area includes large parcels of contiguous protected open space on the southern flank of Mt. Sunapee where the Sunapee-Monadnock Greenway trail connects with Mt Monadnock to the south. These protected open space parcels border on the Towns of Bradford, Goshen and Sunapee.

In the summertime, the Mt. Sunapee State Park Beach is one of the most popular public beaches in the region and offers swimming as well as public boat launching opportunities. The Mt. Sunapee Resort offers some summertime activities, such as hiking and mountain biking, and sponsors some events, such as the NH Arts & Crafts Fair, that draw some large crowds of people to the facility. However, it is wintertime when the place really comes alive. Since the area has been privately leased, Mt. Sunapee Resort has made major improvements to the ski area, which have led to a dramatic growth in skier visit days.

#### The Hay Estate Area:

The second largest area of protected open space in Newbury is the Hay Estate bordering Lake Sunapee and the adjacent wildlife preserve on uplands to the east owned by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF). The Hay Estate is a significant cultural facility that attracts many visitors each year to view the historic buildings and the flower gardens, to enjoy the view along the shore of Lake Sunapee, or to hike in the neighboring wildlife preserve.

#### **Visual Impact of Development:**

The visual impact of how development is occurring on the hillsides and skylines in the Lake Sunapee watershed, in particular, is an area of significant regional interest in Newbury. This same regional concern for the visual impact of development applies to all the watersheds throughout the community. Many new residential homes being constructed on hillsides and skylines have wantonly cut trees and exposed the house site more than necessary for “window views” in their effort to maximize unobstructed views. The result is a patchwork of clear-cut house sites with exposed buildings on hillsides and skylines that visually detract from the landscape. By following the provisions Town’s Skyline & Hillside Protection Overlay District, the visual impact of hillside and skyline development in Newbury will be minimized. Maintaining an attractive visual landscape is very important to maintaining property values and the tax base, continuing to support the outdoor and recreation related businesses, and continuing to attract future residents and visitors to Newbury.

## **AREAS OF REGIONAL COOPERATION AND COORDINATION**

Summarized below are some of the *areas of regional cooperation or coordination* between Newbury and neighboring communities.

### **Public, Institutional & Cultural Facilities**

There are numerous examples under the category of public, institutional and cultural facilities of how Newbury cooperates with other communities.

- Newbury shares elementary, junior and senior high schools with the other communities in the Kearsarge Regional School District including Springfield, New London, Wilmot, Warner, Bradford and Sutton.
- Newbury coordinates with neighboring communities including Sunapee, New London, Bradford and Sutton on providing mutual aid emergency response services. For ambulance services, Newbury coordinates with Bradford and New London for service.
- The three Towns bordering Lake Sunapee (Newbury, Sunapee and New London) have recently joined together to hire assessors to update property appraisals on an on-going basis in the three Towns.
- Newbury coordinates with area towns on solid waste disposal including efforts to recycle and participate in household hazardous waste collection days.
- Newbury coordinates and cooperates with Bradford on providing recreation services.
- Newbury coordinates with New London on providing Newbury with dispatch services for the police and fire departments.

### **Natural and Open Space Resources**

Natural and open space resources in Newbury of regional interest include the following:

- Public boating access to Lake Sunapee is a limited resource of regional interest. The existing and proposed public boat access locations on Lake Sunapee include the following in addition to the boat launch at the State Park Beach: Public access for motor boat docking and fishing is provided in Newbury Center at the town dock and a small car-top boat access is available south of Blodgetts Landing. A proposed motor boat access at the Wild Goose site off Route 103 on Lake Sunapee has raised concerns for safe access onto the highway system and the environmental impacts of constructing a public boat ramp and parking lot so close to the lake. Many

feel the site is better suited for car-top only boat access with a picnic area and swimming area.

- The surface waters feeding into Lake Todd in Newbury form the upper reaches of the Lake Massasecum Watershed, which includes parts of Newbury, Bradford, Sutton and Warner. Newbury should encourage and support efforts to initiate development of a watershed study with the other communities in the watershed.
- Hiking opportunities are available on Mt. Sunapee and the connecting trail systems including the Sunapee-Kearsarge-Ragged Greenway trail and the Sunapee-Monadnock Greenway trail.
- Groundwater resources (aquifers) are shared with New London and Bradford.
- Wildlife are blind to political boundaries and are a resource interconnected with all the neighboring communities. For wildlife, the critical areas to protect include: deer wintering areas; wildlife corridors, such as along streams; and feeding areas, such as around wetlands and field/forest edges.
- The visual impact of development in Newbury's portion of the Lake Sunapee watershed impacts views from properties in other communities around the Lake Sunapee watershed and visa versa.

## **Transportation**

There are several transportation related issues that affect a broader region beyond Newbury's borders. These include the following:

- Peak weekend traffic accessing Mt. Sunapee to and from I-89 impacts Newbury by blocking the intersection of Route 103A with Route 103 in Newbury Center creating concerns for safety and congestion. The Mt. Sunapee peak weekend traffic also affects Bradford and Warner along Route 103, Sunapee along Routes 11 and 103B, and New London and Newbury along Route 103A.
- In Newbury Center, improve safety for through traffic on Route 103 and improve the safety for traffic and pedestrians.
- The need to provide for through traffic capacity along the Route 103 corridor needs to be balanced with providing safe access to the road system for new developments.
- The old railroad right-of-way has been abandoned and the ownership has reverted to the abutting landowners precluding public access for trail or any use in some sections.
- There are no bike lanes or paths along routes 103, 103A and 103B in Newbury.
- The Kearsarge Council on Aging's Rural Transportation Program provides transportation services to area seniors.

## **GOALS: REGIONAL CONTEXT**

1. The town should promote regional awareness in managing growth while fulfilling the vision statements of the Master Plan
2. The town should consider the interests of other affected municipalities when considering proposals for new development.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS: REGIONAL CONTEXT**

### **Lake Sunapee Watershed:**

1. Newbury should continue to participate with the other communities in the Lake Sunapee Watershed and the Lake Sunapee Protective Association (LSPA) in the Sunapee Watershed Area Coalition's (SWAC) efforts to develop and implement a watershed plan to ensure the long-term protection of Lake Sunapee. Other Lake Sunapee Watershed communities include: Sunapee, Springfield, New London, Sutton and Goshen.
2. In crafting land use regulations which could impact the Lake Sunapee watershed, those proposals should be shared and discussed with the other watershed communities to request their input and possible participation.

### **Growth & Expansion on the Mt. Sunapee Resort**

The town should monitor the demand for town services and the impact of growth of the *Mt. Sunapee Resort* on the growth and development of the community and the region.

### **Population Growth & the Housing Demand in the Lake Sunapee Area**

The town should continue to plan for the growth in population and the resultant demand for housing through updating the town Master Plan and Capital Improvement Program as well as updating local land use regulations. The town should also anticipate and plan for the type and location of housing needed to meet the demands of all segments of the community, including the housing needs for an aging population ten years into the future.

### **Significant Protected Open Spaces**

Mt. Sunapee State Park Area:

The public interest in the Mt. Sunapee State Park should be given priority over private interests of the Mt. Sunapee Ski Resort in the State Park. The multiple uses for Mt. Sunapee State Park should be supported, encouraged and preserved and should not be precluded by the Mt. Sunapee Ski Resort.

The Hay Estate Area:

Continue to support and protect the Hay Estate.

### **Visual Impact of Development:**

Newbury should work with other Lake Sunapee watershed communities to explore ways to minimize visual impacts from future development in the watershed. Newbury should present their Skyline/Hillside Overlay Protection District from the Zoning Ordinance to the other communities to consider for adoption.

### **Areas of Regional Cooperation and Coordination**

Public, Institutional & Cultural Facilities

Examples of how Newbury has and recommendations on how Newbury should continue cooperate with other communities under this category of public, institutional & cultural facilities include the following:

- Newbury should continue to coordinate with other communities in the Kearsarge Regional School District in planning and providing for the necessary educational facilities and services to meet the needs of the school district into the future.
- Newbury should continue to coordinate with mutual aid emergency response services from neighboring communities including Sunapee, New London, Bradford and Sutton. For ambulance services, Newbury should to continue to coordinate with Bradford and New London for services now and study the long-term future alternatives.
- Newbury should coordinate closely with the other two communities on the hiring of appraisers to update property appraisals on an on-going basis in the three Towns and make this new regional approach successful.
- Newbury should continue to coordinate with area towns on solid waste disposal including efforts to recycle and participate in household hazardous waste collection days.

- Newbury should continue to coordinate and cooperate with Bradford on providing recreation services.
- Newbury should continue to coordinate with New London on providing Newbury with dispatch services for the police and fire departments.

## Natural and Open Space Resources

Recommendations related to natural and open space resources in Newbury of regional interest include the following:

- Continue to advocate for the proposed boat launch at the Wild Goose site off Route 103 on Lake Sunapee for use as car-top only boat access with a picnic area and swimming area.
- Newbury should encourage and support efforts to initiate development of a watershed study with the other communities in the Lake Todd watershed.
- Newbury should encourage and support efforts to maintain and improve on the trail systems available in town and particularly with efforts to interconnect with trail systems in neighboring communities.
- Groundwater resources (aquifers) shared with New London and Bradford should be protected.
- Newbury should coordinate efforts with neighboring Towns on ways to plan together to preserve critical wildlife habitats interconnected between the towns.
- The Lake Sunapee watershed communities should cooperatively work together to explore ways to minimize visual impacts from future development around the watershed. Newbury should present their Skyline/Hillside Overlay Protection District from the Zoning Ordinance to the other communities to consider for adoption.

## Transportation

There are several transportation related recommendations that affect a broader region beyond Newbury's borders. These include the following:

- The town should work with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and the Mt. Sunapee Ski Resort to find solutions to the peak weekend traffic accessing Mt. Sunapee to and from I-89.
- In Newbury Center improve safety for through traffic on Route 103 and improve the safety for traffic and pedestrians by: 1) constructing a Route 103 bypass for through traffic and 2) adding sidewalks and bike paths in Newbury Center.

- The Planning Board needs to balance the need to provide for through traffic capacity along the Route 103 corridor while providing safe access to the road system for new developments.
- The town should work cooperatively with the property owners to reestablish the old railroad right-of-way for public trail use, where feasible, to connect with similar rails-to-trails opportunities in Sunapee to the northwest and Bradford to the south.
- Work with the NH Department of Transportation so that they provide bike lanes or paths along routes 103, 103A and 103B and coordinate with other communities including New London, Sunapee, and Bradford.
- The town should support the Kearsarge Council on Aging's Rural Transportation Program to provide transportation services to area seniors.