

Town of Jaffrey, New Hampshire

# Master Plan

2018



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# Vision and Community Character

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## The Master Plan

provides a vision and framework to guide development regulations, capital improvements and the annual municipal budget. The vision and principles set forth in this Plan will chart a course for future planning priorities and responsible growth for Jaffrey. These planning tools ensure that the development decisions made are consistent with the community's expectations and vision to move community development forward while maintaining the unique character and environment that ensures a sustainable, high quality of life in Jaffrey.

### Vision:

The people of Jaffrey have affirmed that we remain a small, attractive New Hampshire town that supports a diversity of citizens and their families. We strive to provide a high quality of life for all residents while welcoming visitors to our unique Monadnock area setting. Jaffrey has an engaged citizenry and local government that openly promotes health and safety, equality and a strong sense of place; cultivates a vibrant economic climate that achieves sustainable growth; ensures public access to the many natural, historical and cultural resources while preserving these assets for generations to come.

### Principles:

- **Promote preservation of natural and rural landscapes:** Preservation of open space, forests and fields, and wildlife habitats, all of which are integral to our rural character, is of crucial importance. Mount Monadnock, our ponds, lakes, wetlands and scenic vistas are trusts to be passed unspoiled to future generations. We will continue to work with neighboring towns and regional efforts on conservation initiatives to promote unfragmented habitat areas.
- **Enhance economic advantage:** Encourage tourism while ensuring the protection of Jaffrey's natural resources. Improve infrastructure: roads, utilities and especially new communication technologies, to encourage and attract new business enterprises as well as home-based work. Promote green infrastructure and sustainable building and energy practices. We will create a business environment that is attractive to both companies and their employees; where people can live where they work.
- **Promote improvement and business development in the downtown:** Improve and enhance the downtown district through better pedestrian access and vehicular traffic management. Promote establishment of businesses in the downtown and support the improvements to existing property and businesses. Encourage new development in and around the downtown district.
- **Increase transportation choice and walkability:** Improve walkability and pedestrian comfort and safety with easy access to and within the downtown. Promote a Complete Street approach to roadway design and walkable

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neighborhoods including bike routes and lanes.

- **Encourage housing diversity:** Enable housing choices for people in all stages of life and of different income levels. We will be the town where families, young people and seniors feel welcome and at home.
- **Foster Educational Services:** Promote the educational successes of the schools and efforts to attract young families. We strive to promote better cooperation between school and town government entities. We will ensure a program of continuous improvement for our schools and recreational facilities.

The Master Plan Committee distributed a community survey during the summer of 2016 consisting of 20 questions addressing several topics. This survey was available to every taxpayer and resident of Jaffrey, as well as employees in town businesses and visitors. The purpose of the survey was to assist the Committee by providing an assessment of

### Question #3 Community Survey:

*Please list Community Cornerstones that you value most*



## Public Participation in the Process:

In order to ensure that the Master Plan Vision reflects the common goals of Jaffrey's individual residents, businesses, and government, the Jaffrey Master Plan Committee solicited and relied on input gathered through a community survey, public outreach during community events, and two public forums.

public opinion on a variety of issues including, but not limited to; community character, economic development, natural and cultural resources, and town government communications. The Committee received 293 responses primarily from residents but also from workers and non-resident property owners. The survey results have helped guide the Master Plan Committee in defining the future Vision and goals that are supported by the community. (The complete Town of Jaffrey Survey Report can be found at [www.town.jaffrey.nh.us](http://www.town.jaffrey.nh.us)).



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In addition to the survey, two open public forums were held in September, 2016. At these forums participants, working in groups,

were asked to address two questions and share and discuss their thoughts. These questions focused on defining Jaffrey's

### What We Heard:

#### *What is Jaffrey's distinct Community Character?*

When describing Jaffrey's distinct character residents overwhelmingly refer to the natural beauty and recreational opportunities within the Town and Monadnock area. People value the historic places and structures, as well as the many events and social organizations. A strong sense of pride and sense of belonging is evident. The socioeconomic diversity is mentioned with both positive negative significance; while diversity is healthy, some feel there is a divide.

#### *How can Jaffrey best guide future development while retaining its community character?*

Looking to the future, forum participants overall would like to see stronger government action and planning to encourage improvements in the downtown area, walkability, and economic development. More housing choice is a priority. New and improved communication technology and infrastructure is considered a must to attract more businesses and younger population. In addition, improved facilities for older residents are needed in order to allow elderly to remain in town. Education and improvements in the quality of the schools is important.

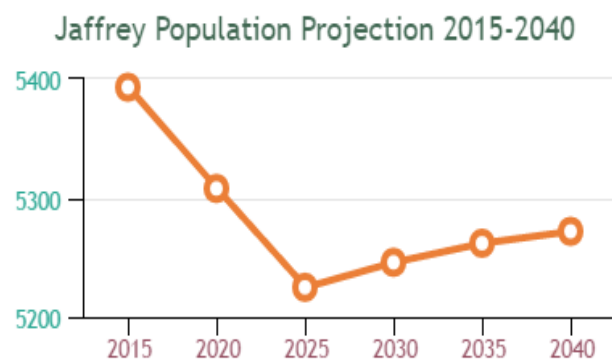
## Vision and Community Character

community character, and then discussing development opportunities and threats that would affect the future of Jaffrey.

## Opportunities and Challenges

The citizens of Jaffrey value its rural, small-town New England charm, its history and many natural resources. The natural beauty of the Monadnock area provides a rich quality of life for residents. Mount Monadnock, along with the many lakes, ponds and rivers in Jaffrey, offer numerous active and passive recreational opportunities for its citizens and visitors. Jaffrey residents also enjoy a deep sense of community and loyalty that stems from a long history of family-centered community values. The Town is home to several large employers and small businesses, in addition, proximity to area higher education institutions creates many opportunities for employment, professional advancement and continuing education.

However, looking ahead, Jaffrey faces a few developmental challenges. New Hampshire

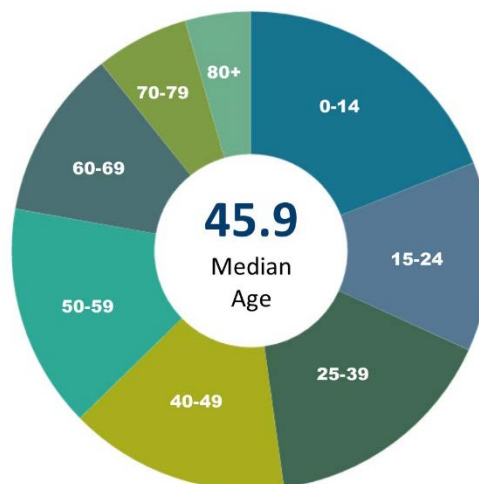


Office of Energy and Planning population

projections indicate 0% to negative growth for Jaffrey in the next decade and beyond.

As with many communities throughout New Hampshire, Jaffrey's population is skewed toward an older sector. The State of New Hampshire, as a whole, has the third highest median age in the country at 42.8 years old. The median age in Jaffrey is 45.9, and over 24% of the current population is over the age of 62. Furthermore, there is a large gap in the 25-40-year-old population sector, who may become the future leaders of the community. While this older population group contributes significantly and is vital to any healthy community, this imbalance in the younger adult population is unsustainable.

### Population Breakdown by Age Group



Attracting new businesses, industries and jobs that will keep and attract younger families, while also providing housing and support for an aging population will require anticipating and implementing the infrastructure needs for these population sectors.

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Although Jaffrey supports several large employers and many small businesses, about 45% of employed residents commute to work in other towns. The economic and social benefits of living and working in the same community are numerous, for both the employee and the Town; less time and money spent commuting, more manageable child care, more time for family life, more dollars spent in-town, and stronger connection to civic life, to name a few. A closer look at Jaffrey's commuting trends and workforce, understanding what types of jobs residents require, may help guide future economic development decisions that support this lifestyle.

In order to foster the sense of community support and close-knit social structure that is valued in Jaffrey, communication between the citizens and the town government, as well as within the town departments should continue to improve. With the many media outlets and communication tools available today, a variety of methods to ensure that all citizens are able to participate in town government should be employed by the town offices.

## Community Character

### Physical Development

The Town of Jaffrey is located in Cheshire County, in the southwestern corner of New Hampshire, bordering Massachusetts and Vermont. At the center of the Monadnock Region, Jaffrey's sense of place stems from the unique geography and beauty of the area. This geography is at the root of the town's early history and prosperity.

Within the northeastern borders of Jaffrey, Mount Monadnock stands at 3,165 feet, and is the most commanding and prominent geographical feature in the region.



In addition, lying within the Contoocook River and Ashuelot River watersheds, the Town contains several spectacular water bodies including Gilmore Pond, Meade Brook, Thorndike Pond, Contoocook Lake and the Contoocook River that runs through the downtown area. These natural features are what first drew settlers to the Jaffrey area, and continue to define the character of the town. Jaffrey citizens highly value the natural resources and opportunities they offer for environmental sustainability, recreation, tourism and visual beauty.



Gilmore Pond

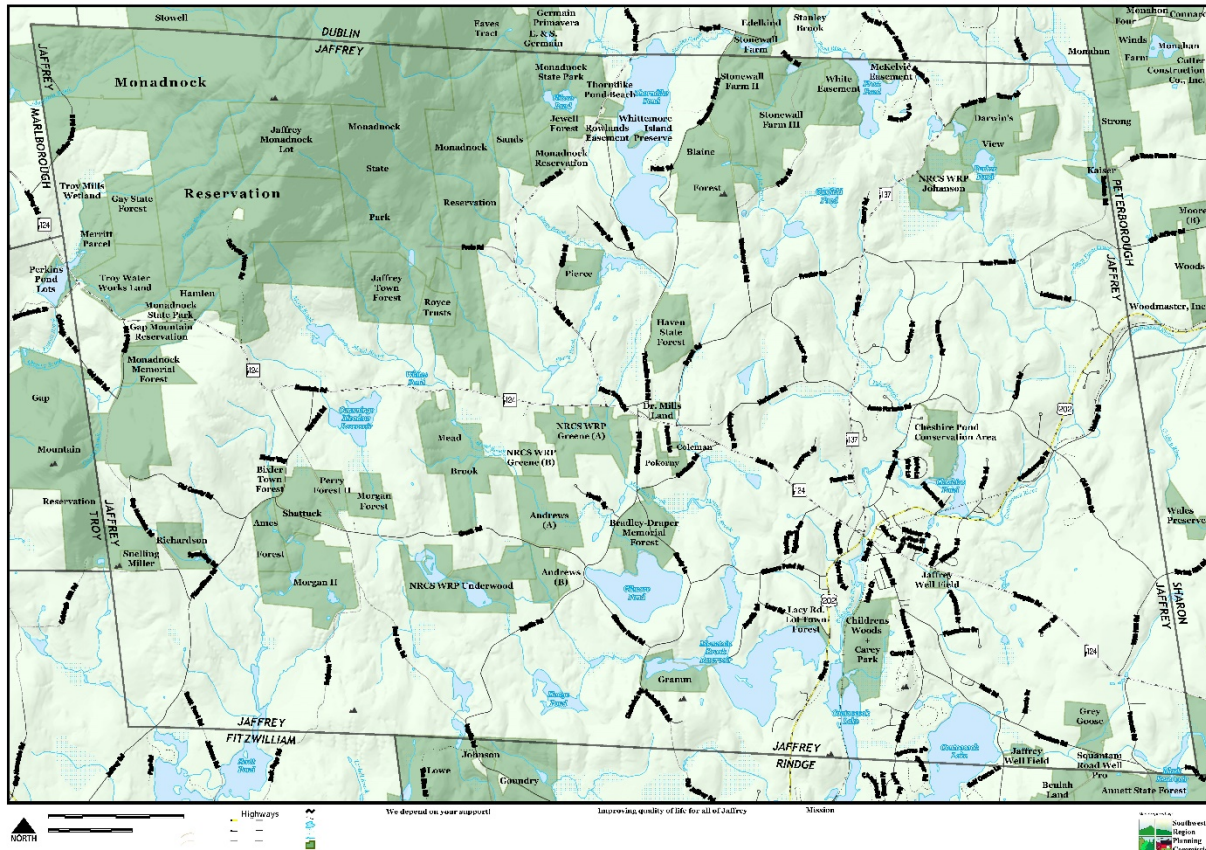


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### JAFFREY CONSERVATION LAND

Why is conservation important to the people of Jaffrey?

The issues we face



Strong conservation efforts have succeeded in preserving large tracts of unfragmented land, particularly to the north and west of the downtown area. Much of this land is within the Monadnock State Park which occupies over four-thousand acres in the northwest corner of the Town.

The pattern of future development will have an effect on this ‘rural’ sense of place. Today the character of Jaffrey’s physical development reflects its past industrial-era activity as a mill town that relied on the Contoocook River for power. The downtown district, located on the Contoocook River in the eastern portion of Town, is the hub of the transportation network and development activity. At this nexus three major roadways, Route 202, Route 137 and Route 124, leading

east/west and north/south come together to form the backbone of development.

Downtown Jaffrey has a very strong sense of place and easily discernable ‘edges’. This busy center, however, is dominated by vehicular traffic and would benefit from pedestrian-centered improvements and amenities.

Most of the densely developed areas are concentrated in the southeastern section of town around the downtown district. Moving further from this district in every direction, commercial development and dense residential neighborhoods give way to more spread out housing enclaves and limited access cul-de-sac oriented developments accessed from the major roadways. This automobile-centered development pattern is a threat to open space preservation and



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**Aerial map of Jaffrey: major transportation routes, water bodies & development patterns**



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retaining the rural nature of the outer areas of Town. Furthermore, development sprawl is typically costlier for the Town in infrastructure and safety services.

The western area of Jaffrey contains the largest tracts of open space, forested areas and fields. Much of the most valuable natural habitat areas are within this region of Jaffrey, within conservation tracts and along the numerous waterways and wetlands. This area of town has a distinctly different physical character.



### Social Capital and Cultural Resources

Social Capital is about the value of social networks, the bonding of people and bridging diversity. This resource is dependent on social relationships which

facilitate collective action and include trust and reciprocity. Social capital encourages bargaining, compromise, and pluralistic politics, which sustain a healthy, cohesive community.



Jaffrey residents have a strong sense of community, and characterize this community quality by town loyalty and pride, a robust volunteerism ethos, and historical and familial ties to the Town. People are attracted to Jaffrey for its small town feel and family-focused lifestyle. The many public events and religious and social groups enjoyed by the residents is an indication of this character and sense of identity. Maintaining and improving the physical development aspects in town is important to maintaining the sense of pride and willingness to volunteer and participate in the governance of the town.

Civic pride and sense of loyalty to Jaffrey is evidenced by the many popular events and celebrations the town's residents enjoy throughout the year. Coming together and participating at events such as Farmer's Market, the Halloween Scarecrows, Festival of Fireworks, Concerts on the Common and the Fourth of July Celebration, has historically been an important aspect of civic life of many Jaffrey residents. Many of these events are organized by the Chamber of Commerce, Civic Center and TEAM Jaffrey, a Main Street organization that supports downtown business development.

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Along with the beauty in the natural environment, Jaffrey residents take pride in the historical buildings and districts in Town; Jaffrey Center, a historical district and the original center of town, the Library and Civic Center are considered by many to be important features of Jaffrey's character.

Cultivating social capital encourages the belief in the equality of citizens, and encourages the formation of over-lapping social groups. This resource is what enables Jaffrey to function effectively, create a sense of place for citizens, and strengthens and supports the community.





**Question #15 Community Survey:**

*What attracted you to Jaffrey?*



# The Jaffrey Master Plan - 2017 is the official road map for

**2017** is the official road map for responsible growth for the future of Jaffrey. Building on the 2007 Master Plan, this update represents the collective desires of the residents, business owners, property owners, local interest groups and elected officials to move community development forward while maintaining the unique community character and an environment that respects the natural resources and surroundings of Jaffrey.

The 2017 Master Plan provides a vision and framework to guide development regulations, capital improvements, and the annual budget. The vision and goals set forth in this Plan will chart a course for future planning priorities. These planning tools ensure that the

development decisions made are consistent with the community's expectations and vision for a sustainable and high quality of life in Jaffrey.

The Master Plan is a dynamic document intended to be revised and updated in order to reflect the current vision for the Town. This document should be used by all residents, elected officials, Planning, Zoning, and other Town boards and committee members to evaluate development application, amend and create ordinances, plan for future expenditures and funding needs. The Master Plan's relevance will ultimately be determined by its use in the official decision-making process. Monitoring the Plan's implementation should be an open and on-going process.



## The Master Plan

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### **VISION (2017)**

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## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The citizens want to retain Jaffrey's small-town atmosphere and protect its rural environs. With a growth rate of between 1% and 2% we can expect to sustain the social character of a "rural town". Key is controlled growth and development with strong land preservation and environmental protection. The Planning Board shall annually review the Master Plan, including implementation, to determine progress and identify issues and report its findings to the town in June each year.

### **Regional Context** (2018)

- Enhance and protect Jaffrey's valuable tourist, recreational and economic assets, e.g. Mount Monadnock, by reorganizing, clarifying and better defining the terms and conditions of the Mountain Zone ordinance. This should include improving the definitions in the Jaffrey Land Use Plan and creating a dialogue with surrounding communities with regard to land use in the Mountain Zone. The Planning Board should head this effort with assistance from concerned citizens of Jaffrey and representatives of the other Mountain Zone towns.
- Understand Jaffrey's unique place in the regional economy, identify the opportunities and attract those businesses that fit with Jaffrey's Vision.
- Promote development of social capital. Develop a pedestrian friendly downtown. The Planning Board should encourage and promote mixed-use development in the downtown "hub" of Jaffrey aimed at enlivening the center of town and making it a retail and entertainment destination for people from other towns. Correction of the Route 202 dog-leg will be a strong step in that direction.

### **Population and Housing** (2018)

The Population and Housing Committee has concluded that in order to maintain the rural character of Jaffrey, innovative ways of conceptualizing land use needs to occur.

#### **Housing:**

- Before any future housing and population growth becomes a reality; the town must determine those areas where the density is to be increased, where land is to be protected from dense development, and develop a strategy to manage the expansion of water and sewer.
- Formalize an understanding of Social Capital from the perspective of relationships between people and housing units. The priority is to reinforce a sense of community, enhance the aesthetics of the town, and maintain a rural feel to the town.

- Balance the interplay of those who work and live in town with those workers commuting in. Maintaining that proportion of anticipated new workers commuting in at about a 1:2 ratio requires a forward looking plan for new housing starts.
- Ascertain what kind of housing might appeal to the elderly population of Jaffrey. A survey should be conducted to find out such things as: Is there real interest in a kind of housing such as a retirement village? How dependent upon transportation, private or public would people in elder housing be? How important is emergency health care or the availability of assisted living facilities, and what other services are required? How important are shared facilities?
- Advance opportunities for flexible housing opportunities, evaluate the need for subsidized units for low and very low-income residents.
- Consider raising the income limits for elderly exemptions. Currently the threshold is \$24,000 for a single person and \$30,000 for a couple.

#### Natural Resources:

- Projected employment growth, and therefore the need for more housing, in Jaffrey and the sub-region will have an impact on the area's natural resources. There is a balancing act required to protect our natural resources and open space and yet accommodate the inevitable growth of the town.

#### **Economic Development** (2007)

The Economic Development Council, Chamber of Commerce, and TEAM Jaffrey, should work in partnership with a focus on using available space and identifying potential new space for relocating businesses to Jaffrey.

- Provide a downtown that is a destination (financially healthy, pedestrian friendly, attractive and culturally active). A Downtown Study Committee is addressing this critical issue.
- Enhance Jaffrey as a tourist destination, e.g. explore synergies between community special events, retail, sports, etc., provide maps, listings of rooms and amenities.
- Recognize the importance of quality schools in attracting new business. The continued upgrading and development of our school facilities and curriculum will improve the abilities of our students and enhance the schools' reputation.
- Promote economic development in the context of protecting our natural resources, e.g. Mt. Monadnock, ponds, lakes, and scenic views, and maintaining our rural character.
- In partnership with the Economic Development Council, TEAM Jaffrey, and Chamber of Commerce, work to create a cohesive downtown (right businesses, right look, right services,

right parking). Recognize that the Route 202 throughpass/realignment is a re-design opportunity for downtown

- Expand and describe through Jaffrey's Annual Report, the Downtown TIF to include the project area impacted by the proposed 202 throughpass.

### **Traffic and Transportation** (2016)

- Implement Main Street/Route 202 "through-pass"
  - Re-route 202 dogleg from Main Street
  - From a transportation standpoint the single most significant issue facing the town of Jaffrey is the Main Street/Route 202 "dogleg". Survey results confirm the earlier Master Planning efforts which seek a solution to the dogleg.
- Maintenance and upgrade of Class V roads
  - Upgrade and reconstruction needed
  - Develop cost effective, equitable, fair maintenance process, through DPW Pavement Management Plan Medium-High
- Develop a Sidewalk Management Program
  - Plan for new sidewalks
  - Maintain and repair existing
  - Participate in the Complete Streets Program and Transportation Alternatives funding program of DOT
- Continue Rails to Trails from Webster Street to Peterborough town line
  - Enhancing some of the downtown paved portion.
  - Extending to Old Sharon Rd.
  - Extending to Peterborough town line
  - Continue efforts to secure funding
  - possible low-level lighting will promote safe travel between businesses and shopping.
  - Complete bridge requirements
  - Enlist help from recreational clubs
- Develop a GIS Inventory of Transportation Infrastructure
  - Complete GIS inventory of infrastructure (signs, culverts, bridges, sewer, waterlines, etc;)
  - Ensure accurate base maps for planning purposes
  - Helpful for understanding municipal transportation inventory and more accurately estimate cost of repair, maintenance, and new construction
  - Will assist with gauging development projects and proposed projects

### **Electrical and communication services** (2007)

- Improve communication services as a part of Jaffrey's infrastructure.
- Investigate Broadband over Power Lines with Public Service and/or investigate wireless service.
- Petition Public Service to begin replacement of high energy usage street lighting with energy efficient color correct light sources designed to light targeted areas and eliminate "sky glow." This is to be supported by town ordinances

### **Community Facilities and services** (2007)

- Assess and consider the purchase, lease, consolidation, sale, development, construction, renovation and/or expansion of physical facilities to accommodate more efficiently the following Town departments and services:
  - Records storage
  - Fire Department
  - Public works department
  - Recreation department
  - Town Office
- Place increased emphasis on matters of conservation, resource management, energy efficiency and "green" approaches when it comes to public investment in building and remodeling, and in purchasing guidelines and facilities operation.
- As an ingredient in any implementation strategy to accomplish the above, assess and consider the potential for increased regional and multi-town sharing of facilities and services as a strategy to more efficiently and cost effectively meet the needs of the citizens, businesses and institutions of Jaffrey.

### **Recreational Resources** (2007)

- Create a formal recreation resources map for use by residents as well as visitors. Include Class VI roads and Rails to Trails as valuable resources.
- Planning Board should incorporate policies regarding development along Class VI roads as well as view sheds into Subdivision & Site Plan review process. Also consider Class A trails opportunities.
- Continue the development and improvement of Jaffrey's recreational facilities including Shattuck Park, Humiston Field, Rails to Trails, and the Community Center.



### **Historical and Cultural Resources** (2007)

- Include in the Site Plan and Subdivision review processes and in the building codes a review and comment process for historic interests (e.g. Village Improvement Society, Historical Society, and Historic District Commission).
- Create a historical resources map including stone walls, cellar holes, and cemeteries.
- Advocate for regulations to control development impacting public view sheds or Jaffrey's scenic hillsides and protect the slopes and view sheds of Mt. Monadnock, our community's single most treasured feature.
- Adopt and promote the statewide barn tax abatement program
- Acknowledge and protect the uniqueness of historic areas, such as Squantum and Cheshire Village, by promoting the establishment of Neighborhood Heritage Districts.
- Recognize the historical and cultural significance of Jaffrey cemeteries by continuing a high-quality level of grounds maintenance and repair, as well as ensuring that landscaping beyond a cemetery's bounds does not impinge upon or otherwise compromise the usual and traditional solemnity and respectful nature expected of a cemetery.
- Recognize the value of scenic roads in retaining Jaffrey's rural character.

### **Natural Resources** (Natural Resources Inventory 2009, Open Space Plan – 2010)

- Develop a plan for open space and agriculture designed to protect Jaffrey's natural resources, open spaces, and rural character.
- Create a natural resources section in the new zoning ordinances. Review all ordinances pertaining to these natural constraints and seek expert opinion on how best to protect them.
- Develop a 3-tiered map, 1st tier Unfragmented Rural Land, 2nd tier Other Rural Lands, including agricultural lands, and 3rd tier Targeted Development Areas. This could be done in conjunction with the JCC and would be a helpful guide for decisions concerning conservation and development.
- Direct mixed-use development to the downtown hub area (possibly enlarging it to accommodate residential and commercial expansion).
- Consider a criterion for Open Space Development Plan that any proposals should include consideration of sensitive land.

**Land Use** (Downtown Plan 2009, Downtown Charette 2011)

- Jaffrey Downtown
  - Consider creation of a Central Downtown District consisting of mixed use development that will facilitate housing and commercial expansion in the coming decade and beyond.
- Rural Periphery
  - Clarify and specify the rules governing what constitutes “developable land”.
  - The Planning Board is responsible to review the adequacy of ordinances concerning current roadside buffer zones and setbacks around sensitive environmental assets and viewsheds, especially for the protection of surface water, wetlands, floodplains, visual character, and natural forest vegetation.
- Industrial District
  - Encourage industrial park development in areas currently zoned Industrial through improvement of infrastructure (e.g. water, sewer, communications).
- Preserve and protect the natural resources, open space, and rural character of Jaffrey's by encouraging Open Space Development Plans.