FACT SHEET

In Francestown, according to our current zoning, the following situations exist:

- There are 2 districts – Village and Rural
- Dimensional requirements (minimum lot size, minimum frontage) are identical for both districts – 3 Acres, 2 buildable acres, 300' of road frontage,
- With a few exceptions (agriculture, home offices, home-based businesses..) non-residential uses are permitted only if the Applicant receives both a special exception from the Zoning Board AND site plan approval from the Planning Board
- Mixed Use: (eg. A retail shop on 1st floor/residential above – or retail store and professional office in same building) Although mixed use is not *prohibited* in our current zoning ordinance and some mixed use is allowed (home occupation, home based business, etc.), there is no mixed use designation/district in our current zoning.
- There are no requirements/protections for historic structures (town-wide) in our current laws.
- There are no provision for less cumbersome permitting, like conditional use permits, for uses with minimal impact.

In the June 25th Visioning Workshop, we heard a number of diverse comments and suggestions. A number of them were focused on re-vitalizing the Village and revising our zoning to allow for a greater variety of uses, while protecting the charm and historic integrity of the village (comments, pages 4-6).

Of course, any proposed changes to the town's zoning will have to be approved by ballot vote of a majority of voters. As we have these discussion, it is important to remember that the decisions we make could have a significant impact on our town. We should be asking ourselves a number of questions and looking at a number of options:

Definitions:

Mixed Use:
Mixed-use development is—in a broad sense—any urban, suburban or village development, or even a single building, that blends a combination of residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, or industrial uses, where those functions are physically and functionally integrated, and that provides pedestrian connections.

Conditional Use Permitting:
Conditional Use Ordinances allow applicants to get approval for certain minimal impact uses by application to and approval from the Planning Board. Criteria for Conditional Use Permits are established by local laws and regulations.

Questions:

Should we continue to have town-wide residential/agricultural zones with most other uses permitted only by special exception and site plan approval OR should we have some areas of towns where specific types of commercial use is permitted by planning board approval or by right?

If we are going to have areas of town where commercial/business uses are permitted conditionally or by right, where should those area be and why? What concern would have to be addressed (e.g. parking, signage, impact on abutters, etc.)

Should we continue to have the same dimensional requirements (lot size, setbacks) town wide OR should we have several districts with different lot size and setback requirements?

With a few exceptions such as agriculture or home businesses, mixed use (more than one type of use per building or lot) is not specifically permitted by right. Should we continue this practice OR should we allow multiple uses per lot?

What types of business do we want to attract, where do we want new businesses to locate, and what changes in the zoning ordinance might help accomplish that objective?

If commercial use was permitted by right (or with minimal permitting) on Main Street, should there be any restrictions on architectural changes, demolition, etc. If so, what?

Conditional Use Permitting

- Conditional Use (CU) Ordinances allow applicants to get approval for minimal impact uses by application to and approval from the Planning Board ONLY.
- Criteria for CU ordinances, while similar to special exception criteria, are established by local ordinance rather than state law.
- Although CU has been recommended for several years by our town attorney, and several area towns have such permitting, in Francestown there are no provisions for approval of non-residential uses other than by special exception & site plan review.
- There are a number of uses permitted by special exception that may be appropriate for CU permitting

Ordinances allowing for conditional use permits vary and the appropriate language for Francestown would need to be determined, but generally CU permits require the planning board to determine:

1. The development in its proposed location will comply with all requirements and specific conditions or standards established in the Zoning Ordinance for the particular use;
2. The use will be compatible with the neighborhood and with adjoining or abutting uses in the area in which it is to be located;
3. The use will not have a substantial adverse impact on vehicular or pedestrian safety;
4. The use will not have a substantial adverse impact on the appearance and visual quality of the surrounding neighborhood. In evaluating visual impact, the Planning Board may consider architectural and design elements; and
5. The use will be adequately serviced by necessary utilities, private or public, and by community facilities and services of a sufficient capacity to ensure the proper operation of the proposed use.

Comments from June's Visioning Workshop – grouped by topic

Village:

bring cafés, a farmers market and business to the village center
town center must stay the way it is, but should accommodate an aging population
limited commercial growth/expand available commercial district
protect/utilize the village center, create and maintain a vibrant town center: farmer's market, community dances, café, other events
preserve its character
utilize historical buildings while preserving their beauty
no Dunkin Doughnuts
need something to do at night
Schott house should be turned into a b&b
more entertainment and arts
post office back to center of town
maintain the town's historic character
need controls to protect the historic character of the town center-special exception and historic district
need to promote local farms/organic farming-establish a farmers market in the town center
design development guide lines for village center
make the downtown attractive to encourage activity and to ensure vacant buildings get filled
need to find adaptive reuses for vacant historic housing in the village center area
need to address the "edges" (the areas adjacent) of the town center-overlay zone
need to identify the area of the town center
address perceived parking issues
provide support for trade and service providers; identify areas where development should take place and provide a balance use
provide co-working/incubator spaces for start-up companies and individuals; explore using some of the library space; need for all age groups
a vibrant library and elementary school

Zoning:

General: we should relax zoning
determine what kind of town we are and want to be
involve younger generation in town and planning issues
begin with changes in planning and zoning
need to grow in a sustainable manner-need to be aware of long term impacts

Use: allow for additional uses on private property
encourage out-of-home type of businesses
explore the opportunity of an office/light industrial park in area where it would be appropriate
provide co-working/incubator spaces for start-up companies and individuals; explore using some of the library space; need for all age groups
provide support for trade and service providers; identify areas where development should take place and provide a balance use

Housing: encourage multi-family homes
more affordable housing
housing for the elderly

need affordable housing for elderly

Agriculture: support a rural and agricultural lifestyle

need to protect farmland for the future

need an agricultural overlay zone to protect farm land

need to promote local farms/organic farming-establish a farmers market in the town center

Other: consider different density districts

don't be so concerned about development, land has natural limitations which will ensure that rural character will be maintained

make sure lot sizes do not go from 10 acres to 3 acres

if a major subdivision is being developed, it should be clustered

need to encourage cluster housing as a way to preserve/protect the open space and farmland

more challenging zoning ordinances to limit growth

Infrastructure and Government

how can we improve high speed internet access and coverage

public transportation

workout issues/limitations with septic systems, especially in town center

need a reliable power supply-electrical and natural gas; need to improve utilities infrastructure

a vibrant library and elementary school

consider regionalization of services to reduce costs

need to improve telecommunication infra-culture-high speed internet and broadband

better utilize public spaces and buildings

current recreation fields/facilities do not meet town's population – need better maintenance and more playground equipment

never shut down the elementary school no matter how small the attendance gets/ensure an excellent educational program

sell town-owned buildings and combine town services into one building to reduce costs

find ways assist elderly (i.e.,transportation) so that they can age in place

need to provide services for the towns aging population-medical, transportation, housing, social

expand the library to incorporate new technology and provide space for a music and art center, integrating all ages

replace existing impervious surfaces and parking areas with permeable paving

need a bike path and connect it with adjacent towns bike paths

work with county and state agencies to provide social services to teens and young adults-adults on recent suicides

need to have a better balance between the active and passive recreational areas and better utilize existing recreational and gathering areas and provide better interconnection and access to them; better linkages to the town center

need to connect snow mobile trails with other communities' trails and crotched mt.

provide street trees in the town center

Marketing and PR

better outreach to property sellers on what they can do with the land

work with crotched mt. to see how their visitors spend time/money in Francestown

promote both recreational and cultural/historical tourism

need to promote and market the town and its events, get the word out

hire a "non-related" professional to promote the town

work with other adjacent communities on economic development and tourism

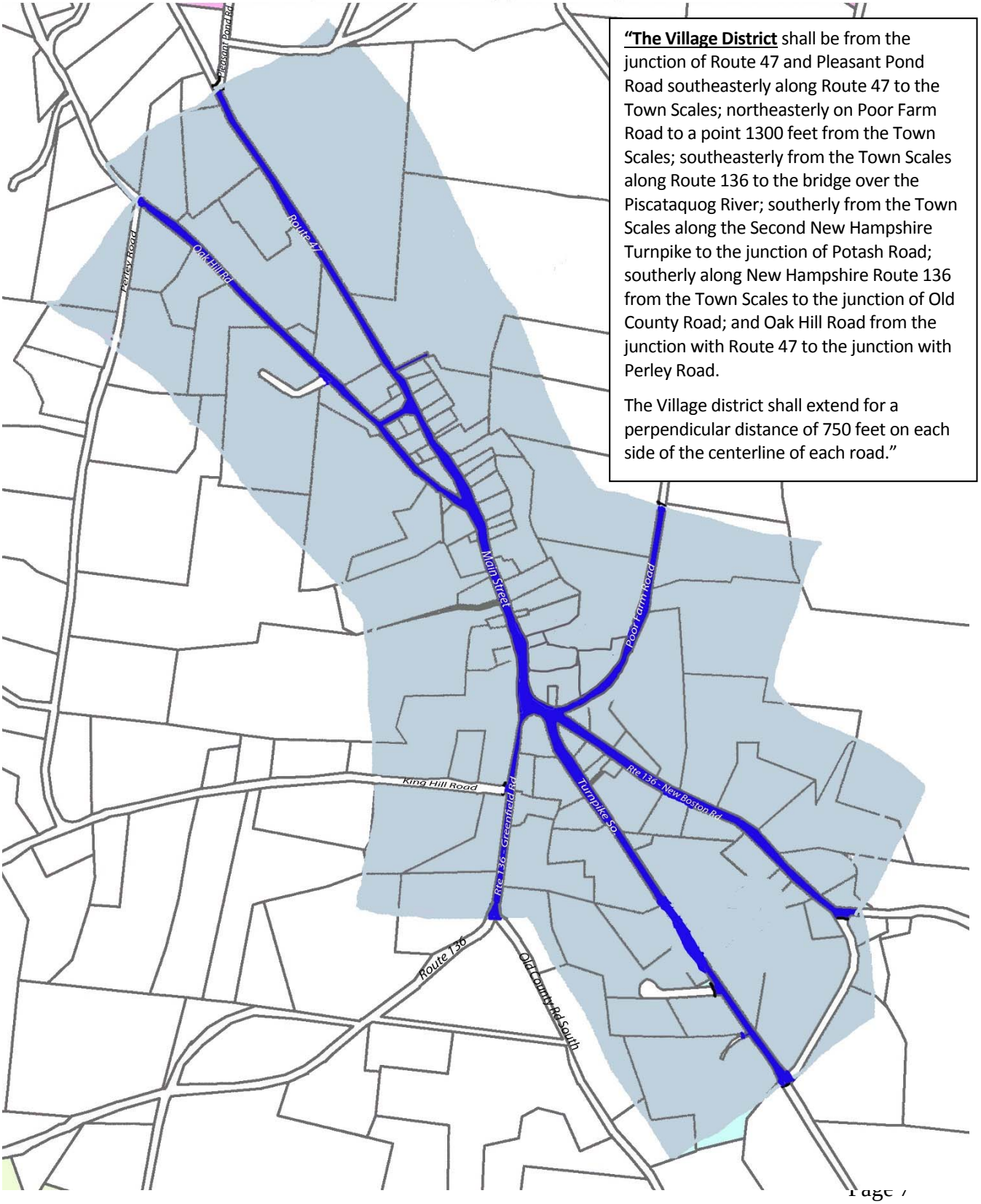
need to promote local farms/organic farming-establish a farmers market in the town center

Conservation:
continue and expand protection of open space
focus conservation on the most important pieces
does putting land into conservation result in higher taxes
preserving as much land as possible for future use
protecting natural resources
make a better conservation plan
connecting existing conservation pieces
need to deal with the evasive plants along state highways

General and Other:
verify cost of development, i.e. is single family development more expensive than elderly housing due to reduced costs
educate citizens about planning and land use issues
keep Francestown compact
how do we define growth
Friday night dances
determine what kind of town we are and want to be
increase volunteer opportunities and take the time to appreciate volunteers
keep the town taxes level so town remains affordable
learn from neighboring town successes such as hollis
jointly owned coop
town should promote the harrisville general store owned by a non-profit
labor day celebration
craft shows
need to find common ground for the diverse interest of the community
need to make the town more appealing for young people-need to explore an art and music area
bring back the ski area on the town side of crotched mt.
limit the amount of land that's donated to the town
compare trends in Francestown to national trends
verify cost of students (was suggested cost per student is $20,000)
encourage younger people to stay
keep the youth here
curb any population growth
understand the local impacts of regional changes such as loss of business in neighboring towns
keep population diverse
improve the employment opportunities
need to population projection/demographics model to better inform town

Village District

(Measurements approximate)



"The Village District shall be from the junction of Route 47 and Pleasant Pond Road southeasterly along Route 47 to the Town Scales; northeasterly on Poor Farm Road to a point 1300 feet from the Town Scales; southeasterly from the Town Scales along Route 136 to the bridge over the Piscataquog River; southerly from the Town Scales along the Second New Hampshire Turnpike to the junction of Potash Road; southerly along New Hampshire Route 136 from the Town Scales to the junction of Old County Road; and Oak Hill Road from the junction with Route 47 to the junction with Perley Road.

The Village district shall extend for a perpendicular distance of 750 feet on each side of the centerline of each road."

TABLE 2: PERMITTED USES AND SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS [1] (page 1 of 2)

P= Permitted Use | PS= Permitted subject to performance standards as Specified in the applicable section of the Ordinance | E = Permitted by Special Exception | N = Not Permitted | *= See Article 2-A

Use	Underlying District		Conservation Overlay District					
	Village	Rural	Steep Slope 15-25%	Steep Slope >25%	Wetland	Shore-land	Aquifer	Flood Plain [2]
Accessory Building or Use								
Accessory Dwelling Unit								
Lots of 3 acres or more	PS	PS	PS	N	N	N	PS	PS
Lots of < 3 acres	E	E	E	N	N	N	E	E
Dwelling Unit in Detached Building	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Other Accessory Buildings	P	P	PS	N	N	PS	P	PS
Agriculture (excluding fur ranching)	P	P	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS
Aircraft Landing Areas	N	E	N/E	N/N	N/N	N/N	N/E	N/E
Animal Care Facilities	N	E	N/E	N/N	N/N	N/N	N/E	N/E
Auto Service Station	E	E	E	N	N	N	N	N
Bed & Breakfast	E	E	E	N	N	N	E	E
Children's or Family Camps	E	E	E	N	N	N	N	E
Churches/Schools/Day Care Centers	P	P	PS	N	N	N	N	PS
Commercial Recreational Facilities	N	E	N/E	N/*	N/N	N/N	N/E	N/E
Farm Roadside Stands	P	P	P	N	N	PS	P	PS
Forestry	P	P	PS	PS	PS	PS	P	PS
Home Business (Section 3.9.1, 3.9.2 uses)	PS	PS	PS	N	N	PS	PS	PS
Hotel. Motel, Inn								
New Construction	N	E	N/E	N/N	N/N	N/N	N/N	N/E
Interior Alteration	E	E	E	N	N	N	N	E
Light Industry	N	E	N/E	N/N	N/N	N/N	N/*	N/PS
Manufactured Housing (See Article VI)	N	PS	N/PS	N/N	N/N	N/PS	N/PS	N/PS

[1] When the underlying districts have different designations, two designations, separated by a slash are provided in the overlay district section of the table; the first designation applies to the Village District, the second to the Rural District.

[2] Any Use in the Flood Plain District requires a permit from the Building Inspector. See Section 2-A.4 and FLOOD HAZARD BUILDING CODE.

Uses other than single family and two family residences may require Site Plan approval by the Planning Board. Please consult the Site Plan Regulations.

TABLE 2: PERMITTED USES AND SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS [1] (page 2 of 2)

P= Permitted Use | PS= Permitted subject to performance standards as Specified in the applicable section of the Ordinance | E = Permitted by Special Exception | N = Not Permitted | *= See Article 2-A

Use	Underlying District		Conservation Overlay District					
	Village	Rural	Steep Slope 15-25%	Steep Slope >25%	Wetland	Shore-land	Aquifer	Flood Plain [2]
Multi-Family Housing								
New Construction	E	E	E	N	N	N	N	E
Conversions	E	E	E	N	N	N	N	E
Open Space Development								
Single Family Residential	PS	PS	PS	N	N	PS	PS	PS
All Other Uses	E	E	E	N	N	E	E	E
Personal Service Businesses/Professional Offices and Agencies	E	E	E	N	N	N	N	E
Plant Nurseries/Florist Shops/ Commercial Greenhouses	E	P	E/PS	*	*	*	*	E/PS
Restaurants								
New Construction	N	E	N/E	N/N	N/N	N/N	N/N	N/E
Interior Alterations	E	E	E	N	N	N	N	E
Rest/Convalescent Home	E	E	E	N	N	N	N	E
Retail Business	E	E	E	N	N	N	N	E
Sand & Gravel Excavations	N	E	E	N	N	N	E	E
Sawmills	N	E	N/E	N/N	N/N	N/N	N/E	N/E
Single Family Dwellings	P	P	PS	N	N	PS	P	PS
Solar or Wind Operated Devices	E	E	E	N	N	N	E	E
Stables & Riding Academies (Commercial)	N	P	N/PS	N/N	N/N	N/N	N/*	N/PS
Two-Family Dwellings								
New Construction	E	P	E/PS	N/N	N/N	N/N	E/P	E/PS
Article 3.12 Conversions	N	P	N/PS	N/N	N/N	N/N	N/P	N/PS
Article 7.2.2 Conversions	E	E	E	N//N	N/N	N/N	E	E
Wireless Communication Systems	N	E	N/E	N/N	N/N	N/N	N/E	N/E