

# ECONOMIC BASE

For the Town of Hillsborough

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The combination of a location at a regional crossroads, abundant conservation lands and trails, a historic Central Business District that hosts a business community of services, restaurants, and a strong mix of large regional employers and small businesses offers a strong reason for confidence in the Hillsborough’s economic future.

With this confidence comes a need to implement an Economic Strategic Plan that addresses some of the concerns that residents expressed during the Master Plan development process, from parking in the Central Business district to the need to improve sidewalks, assess and improve the Town’s water and sewer infrastructure, and improve the condition of some of the Town’s housing stock and commercial structures.

The Economic Base chapter reviews the results of the Community Survey and Visioning Session, examines recent economic indicators, summarizes the results of the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and then outlines the Economic Strategic Plan which outlines a number of short, medium, and long-term proposals. It is hoped that the proposed projects included in this chapter can serve as the working agenda for a very active Economic Development Commission over the next several years.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

### OBJECTIVE 1:

Promote “quality of life” economic development that capitalizes on Hillsborough’s location, Central Business District, and available infrastructure.

### OBJECTIVE 2:

Educate and make use of available economic development incentives that serve to focus commercial development in suitable areas of Hillsborough.

### OBJECTIVE 3:

Provide the impetus and support for local funding for varied infrastructure projects such as improved sidewalks, water/sewer expansion/improvements and the redevelopment of local brownfields parcels.

### OBJECTIVE 4:

Emphasize how non-traditional economic development activities such as the formation of a Trails Committee, the development of the Kemp Memorial Park, and the development of a Regional Community Center can serve to promote the Town’s overall image, thus enhancing its economic development opportunities.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Hillsborough, like many communities in the Central NH Region, has a long history of residents with strong ties and commitment to their community. Keeping the community's residents able to age in place while welcoming new residents is important to a future where there continues to be ties to Hillsborough's rich history and sense of community.

The Community Survey yielded favorable results supporting additional commercial development. Retail, restaurants, and major grocery chains were a few of the most highly desired commercial developments within the community.

### WHAT WE HEARD...

*"Like to see a walk-in medical clinic so we don't have to travel to Concord for medical emergencies."*

*"Promote Hillsborough as a place for businesses to settle because it is a catchment area between Concord and Keene."*

*"Town preserve its natural character, more small businesses, farm open fields, and produce locally grown food."*

*"Encourage businesses and events as destination for tourists."*

*"Encourage activities and events to attract New England College Students."*

*"Refresh downtown to add more businesses and renters."*

**Community Survey Question 8:**

Where are you employed?

Q. 8	Total	Percent
Hillsborough	99	66.9%
Concord	28	18.9%
Manchester	15	10.1%
Keene	10	6.8%
Peterborough	5	3.4%
Claremont	0	0.0%
Other	114	100.0%

**Community Survey Question 9:**

Do you work from home?

Q. 9	Total	Percent
Yes, full time	36	39.1%
Yes, part time	56	60.9%
Total	92	100.0%

**Community Survey Question 11:**

Should Hillsborough promote rehabilitation of vacant/dilapidated buildings?

Q. 11	Total	Percent
Yes	266	84.4%
No	22	7.0%
No Opinion	27	8.6%
Total	315	100.0%

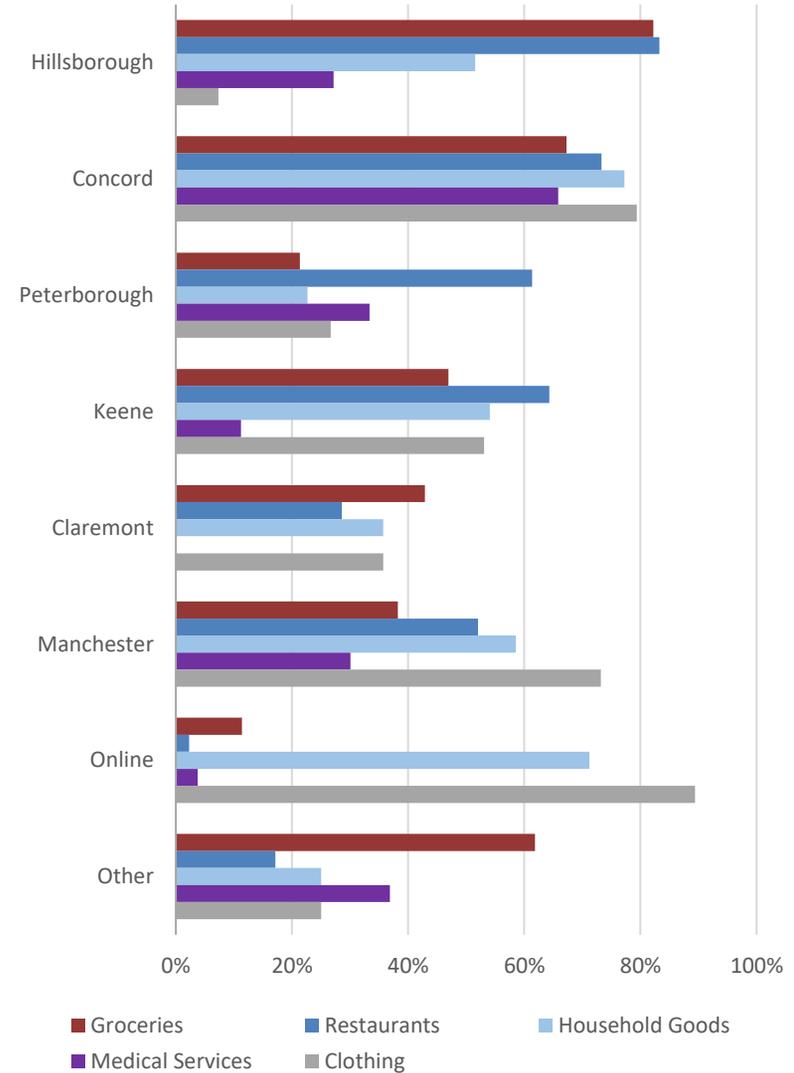
**Community Survey Question 12:**

Should Hillsborough promote infill development?

Q. 12	Total	Percent
Yes	231	73.6%
No	37	11.8%
No Opinion	46	14.7%
Total	314	100.0%

**Community Survey Question 10:**

In which community do you shop/use services?



**Community Survey Question 13:**

Which of the following commercial enterprises would you like to see within Hillsborough?

Q. 13	Like	Dislike	No Opinion	Total
Professional Offices	72.2%	2.4%	25.5%	298
Light Industrial Parks	64.4%	14.8%	20.8%	298
Heavy Industrial parks	21.8%	52.1%	26.1%	280
Retail	93.3%	2.9%	3.8%	313
Restaurants	87.8%	3.6%	8.6%	303
Services	86.6%	1.0%	12.4%	299
Home Businesses	66.2%	3.6%	30.3%	281
Recreational Businesses	78.8%	3.0%	18.2%	297
Motels/Hotels/Inns	63.4%	11.6%	25.0%	292
Major Shopping Malls	48.2%	41.4%	10.4%	297
Major Grocery Store	87.1%	5.8%	7.1%	309
Tourism-related Businesses	69.6%	6.9%	23.5%	289
Agricult.-related Businesses	77.0%	1.7%	21.3%	291
Big Box Stores	52.0%	34.6%	13.4%	298
Other	58.2%	3.0%	38.8%	67

**Community Survey Question 14:**

What should the Town do to encourage revitalization or growth in the Central Business District/Downtown?

Q. 14	# of Responses	Percent*
Increase/improve parking	95	31.7%
Remove/repair existing buildings	51	17.1%
Tax incentives	50	16.7%
Enhance landscape & overall Town image	32	10.7%
Encourage small businesses/retail shops	20	6.7%
Community center & events	18	6.0%
Reduce second hand shops	11	3.7%
Reduce regulations	9	3.0%
Encourage box stores	8	2.7%
Lower rents	7	2.3%
Enhance along river area	6	2.0%
Restaurants	5	1.7%
Increase advertising	3	1.0%
Hotels	2	>1%
Lower water & sewer rates	1	>1%

*\*Based upon 299 responses*

**Community Survey Question 15:**

What should the Town do to encourage revitalization or growth in the Commercial District?

Q. 15	# of Responses	Percent*
Tax incentives	40	13.9%
Improve Town image, landscape & sidewalks	18	6.3%
Reduce regulations/streamline planning	16	5.6%
Box stores	15	5.2%
Encourage small, local businesses	14	4.9%
Increase/improve parking	14	4.9%
Remove/repair existing buildings	13	4.5%
Improve signage & advertising	12	4.2%
Grocery stores	5	1.7%
Create development plan for Town	5	1.7%
Light Industrial Zone	4	1.4%
Shopping Center/Strip Mall	4	1.4%
Movie Theater	4	1.4%
Restaurants	4	1.4%
Infrastructure improvements	4	1.4%
Improve roadways	3	1.0%
Medical offices	3	1.0%
Public transportation	2	>1%
Improve education	2	>1%
Appearance codes & enforcement	2	>1%

\*Based upon 288 responses.

**Community Survey Question 16:**

Do you feel that the availability of parking in the Central Square area is a concern?

Q. 16	Total	Percent
Yes	225	70.5%
No	69	21.6%
No Opinion	25	7.8%
Total	319	100.0%

**Community Survey Question 38:**

Should the Town investigate the development of WiFi broadband access in the Central Business District?

Q. 38	Total	Percent
Yes	115	39.8%
No	73	25.2%
No Opinion	101	35.0%
Total	289	100.0%

**Community Survey Question 39:**

Should the Town investigate the development of WiFi broadband access throughout Hillsborough?

Q. 39	Total	Percent
Yes	120	42.5%
No	86	30.5%
No Opinion	76	27.0%
Total	282	100.0%

**Community Survey Question 46:**

What do you see as Hillsborough’s strengths?

Q. 46	# of Responses	Percent*
Natural resources	55	32.5%
Rural character/beauty	45	26.6%
Historic character	44	26.0%
People/community spirit	41	24.3%
Location	38	22.5%
Retail/small business	10	5.9%
Town services	9	5.3%
Events/festivals/tourist attraction	8	4.7%
Restaurants	8	4.7%
Volunteerism/local organizations	7	4.1%
Downtown area	6	3.6%
School system	6	3.6%
Large employers	4	2.4%
Untapped potential	4	2.4%
Children programs	3	1.8%
Library	3	1.8%
Churches	1	>1%
Farmers market	1	>1%

\*Based upon 169 responses

**HILLSBOROUGH VISIONING SESSION**

Residents who attended the Hillsborough Visioning session actively advocated for further commercial development in the Central Business District. Attendees want to see Hillsborough take on further commercial development in a responsible, balanced way that does not jeopardize the Town’s rural and historic character. It was suggested by several participants for an urgent care center to be developed within Town to provide local healthcare options and additional employment in the area.

It was also felt by attendees that the downtown area of Hillsborough needs to undergo a beautification project. This would clean up some of the eyesores and attract businesses and customers to the area. It was also mentioned that further expansion of the sidewalk network would also greatly benefit the downtown and surrounding area.

## COMMON THEMES

There are some common themes that emerged from the community's comments on the economy and include:

- *Available incentives should be used where applicable to foster suitable economic development in the Town's commercial zones.*
- *The improvement of the Town's image through a variety of measures including sidewalk improvements, rehabilitation of dilapidated buildings, and improved signage.*
- *The availability of parking in the Central Square and the overall Central Business District is a key issue that should be addressed.*
- *The combination of Hillsborough's location at a regional crossroads, available infrastructure, and a classic New England downtown area highlight the great opportunities related to economic development in the future.*

### *ECONOMIC BASE VISION STATEMENT*

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*"Hillsborough supports responsible economic development with an emphasis on the Central Business District and other commercial zones that result in increased employment opportunities, an increase to the variety of available commercial enterprises, and leads to an enhanced local image."*

## ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Economic indicators for Hillsborough and surrounding communities are shown in Table 4.1. These indicators include population data from 2010 and 2015, showing Hillsborough's population with a slight decline that would be classified as stable by demographers, given the margin of error with estimates. Hillsborough's population is keeping pace statistically with the slow or no growth of its surrounding communities. With the exception of Windsor, Hillsborough's median household income is the lowest of the surrounding communities and also reflective of its poverty rate at 11.8%, highest among the six other communities shown in Table 4.1. Unemployment rate is decreasing from 2014 to 2015 for all surrounding communities as well as Hillsborough, reflective of the better employment picture in New Hampshire.

Employment and Wages indicators found in Table 4.2 include Average Covered Employment, Average Weekly Wage and Annual Average Employed Civilian Labor Force. Annual Average Covered Employment is reported by employers (excluding self-employed) and shows a gain for Hillsborough from 2010 to 2015, with surrounding communities mixed with some gains and some losses. Similar to Hillsborough, New Hampshire shows a gain in Annual Average Covered Employment from 2010 to 2015. New

**Table 4.1: Area Economic Indicators**

	Population		Median Household Income (ACS 2010-2014)	Individuals Below Poverty Level (ACS 2010-14)	Unemployment Rate (NH EMI)	
	2010 Census	2015 Estimate			2014	2015
Antrim	2,637	2,633	\$63,618	10.6%	3.9%	3.0%
Bradford	1,650	1,659	\$58,452	6.4%	4.0%	2.9%
Deering	1,912	1,918	\$74,750	10.0%	3.7%	3.2%
Henniker	4,836	4,875	\$65,867	9.3%	3.4%	2.8%
<b>Hillsborough</b>	<b>6,011</b>	<b>5,955</b>	<b>\$55,574</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
Washington	1,123	1,126	\$59,375	7.5%	5.3%	4.6%
Windsor	224	226	\$51,667	5.4%	4.7%	4.2%
NH	1,316,47	1,330,38	\$65,986	8.9%	5.8%	3.4%

Source: NH Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau (NH EMI), U.S. Census Bureau

**Table 4.2: Employment and Wages**

	Annual Average Covered Employment		Average Weekly Wage (Covered Employment)		Annual Average Employed Civilian Labor Force	
	2010	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015
Antrim	387	331	\$552.62	\$631.65	1,319	1,331
Bradford	337	360	\$579.92	\$548.73	906	916
Deering	359	388	\$717.10	\$780.55	1,017	1,053
Henniker	1,684	1,648	\$594.99	\$652.64	2,600	2,684
<b>Hillsborough</b>	<b>1,535</b>	<b>1,605</b>	<b>\$844.20</b>	<b>\$828.22</b>	<b>2,770</b>	<b>2,840</b>
Washington	82	*	\$647.61	*	499	480
Windsor	152	*	\$506.64	*	141	182
NH	600,540	626,567	\$883.88	\$983.96	695,135	715,727

Sources: NH Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau (NH EMI),

\* Does not meet NH ELMI data disclosure standard

Hampshire also experienced a higher annual weekly wage than Hillsborough, as well as all of Hillsborough's surrounding communities.

**Table 4.3: Jobs by Industry Sector**

	Hillsborough	Antrim	Bradford	Deering	Henniker	Washington	Windsor
<b>Total Jobs - 2014</b>	<b>1,635</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>1,848</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Goods-Producing Industries</b>							
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2	9	0	0	1	8	0
Mining, Quarrying, & Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0	0	0	27	0	0
Utilities	10	0	0	0	10	0	0
Construction	55	33	44	3	98	3	0
Manufacturing	667	14	22	0	189	6	0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Service Producing Industries</b>							
Wholesale Trade	28	5	0	1	42	2	0
Retail Trade	288	66	9	0	113	2	0
Transportation and Warehousing	0	1	50	0	19	0	0
Information	6	0	12	5	1	0	0
Finance and Insurance	27	3	7	1	23	0	0
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	0	1	0	0	3	0	0
Professional, Scientific, and Technical	26	28	10	26	53	4	3
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0	0	0	3	1	0
Admin. & Support, Waste Mgt. & Remediation	24	70	17	4	38	0	10
Educational Services	12	2	127	239	549	19	0
Health Care and Social Assistance	163	33	36	57	43	0	71
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	5	0	0	0	334	0	0
Accommodation and Food Services	156	25	63	2	211	0	6
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	38	12	2	2	33	0	0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>773</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>1,465</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Public Administration</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3</b>

Source: NH Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau

Average Weekly Wage statistics from 2010 to 2015 show a slight decrease for Hillsborough from \$844.20 to 828.22, the only decrease compared to surrounding communities. However, it is important to note that the weekly wage in both of these years is the highest when compared to the other communities. As would be expected with a decreasing unemployment rate, Hillsborough's number of employed in the civilian labor force has increased from 2,770 in 2010 to 2,840 in 2015.

Jobs by industry sector for Hillsborough and surrounding communities are shown in Table 4.3 for the year 2014. These sectors include good-producing industries, such as

utilities, construction, and manufacturing, and service producing industries, such as wholesale trade, finance and insurance, and education services. Public administration is also included as an industry sector within the table.

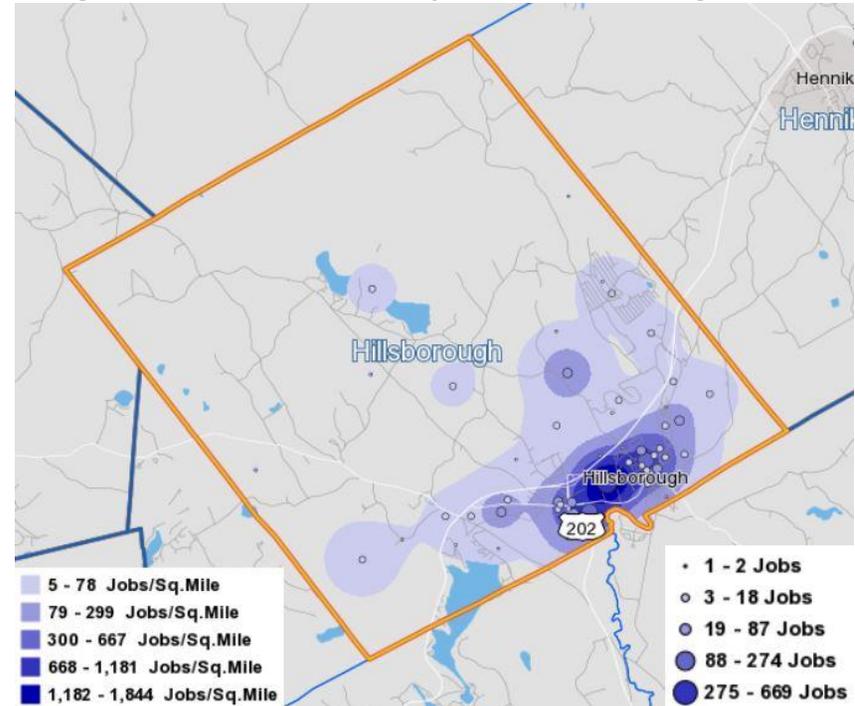
The highest amount of jobs within Hillsborough is within the manufacturing sector, with nearly 670 jobs, followed by retail trade and health care and social assistance. Of the surrounding communities, Henniker had the highest number of jobs within the educational services sector, with a high portion contributed by New England College.

### THE CENTRAL/SOUTHERN NH COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDs)

The 2014 Central/Southern New Hampshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) was prepared in coordination with the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC). The CEDs represents a significant in-depth analysis of the regional economy and the development of regional economic development strategies for the area that includes all 20 CNHRPC communities as well as five communities from SNHPC. These include Bedford, Goffstown, Hooksett, New Boston, and Weare. Major tasks completed during the CEDs process included:

- Preparation of an industry cluster analysis,
- Preparation of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis,
- Development of a regional economic vision statement, goals and measurable five-year objectives by the Strategy Committee, and

**Figure 4.1: Location and Density of Jobs in Hillsborough, 2014**



Source: OnTheMap, U.S. Census Bureau

- Development of a plan of action and priority project and activity lists by the Strategy Committee.

The selection of priority projects began with the development of criteria. An application form and cover letter were developed and sent to key stakeholders including municipalities, businesses and not-for profits across the region. The projects were then scored and ranked in eight categories: Education, Energy, Sewer/Water, Studies, Municipal, Recreation and Other. In total, 39 projects were included in the CEDs document, including five in Hillsborough and one in the Hillsborough area.

Of Hillsborough’s five projects listed in the CEDS, four were classified as municipal projects and one as a water/sewer project. These projects are all located within Hillsborough’s downtown area. A sixth project was included for the Hillsborough area, including the Towns of Antrim, Bradford, Deering, Henniker, Hillsborough, Stoddard, Washington, Weare, and Windsor, and was classified as an education project.

Another important benefit of the CEDS is that it is an important prerequisite for the region to be designated by U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) as an Economic Development District (EDD). A designated district enables municipalities and counties to qualify for EDA funding under EDA’s current public works, economic adjustment and planning grant programs.

The update of the 2014 Central/Southern New Hampshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is scheduled to be completed in 2018.

**Table 4.4: 2014 CEDS Projects located within Hillsborough**

Community	Project	Location	Project Description
Hillsborough area	Mobile/Regional Technology Program	Antrim, Bradford, Deering, Henniker, Hillsborough, Stoddard, Washington, Weare, Windsor	A mobile, regional technology outreach program for schools, businesses and nonprofits.
Hillsborough	Woods Woolen Mill Hazardous Waste Cleanup	Near Downtown Hillsborough	Assessment and cleanup activities for abandoned mill.
Hillsborough	Hillsborough Downtown Revitalization	Downtown Hillsborough	Downtown cleanup, revitalization and building reuse analysis.
Hillsborough	Upgrade Downtown Sidewalks	Downtown Hillsborough	Upgrade downtown sidewalks that are damaged, expand current sidewalk system, expand needed right-of-way.
Hillsborough	Create a Community Center	Downtown Hillsborough	Create a community center to provide the greater Hillsborough area with a facility for health and wellness of all ages and a gathering place.
Hillsborough	Water and Sewer Improvements Downtown	Downtown Hillsborough	Build out sewer and water infrastructure in Downtown Hillsborough.

*Source: Central/Southern NH Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2014*

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

### PLAN OF ACTION

The following Plan of Action includes a wide variety of projects, some that are not typical economic development related projects, but instead related to the quality of life and culture of the Town of Hillsborough. Many of the projects have been submitted for inclusion in other documents such as the regional CEDS.

The projects have been categorized into short, medium and long-term categories.

#### ***Short-Term (through 2018)***

- Downtown Parking Improvements/Agreements
- Brownfields Program Assessments
- Water/Sewer System Improvements Feasibility Analysis
- Continued Economic Development Commission Activities
- Formation of Hillsborough Trails Committee

#### ***Medium-Term (2018-20)***

- Downtown Revitalization
- Sidewalk Improvements
- Kemp Memorial Park Development

#### ***Long-Term (2021 and longer)***

- Woods Woolen Mill Cleanup
- Hillsborough Regional Community Center Development
- Water and Sewer Expansion/Improvements

## HILLSBOROUGH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The Economic Development Strategic Plan (beginning on page 4.12) presented in this chapter outlines a long-term approach to enhance Hillsborough's economic future. The projects and initiatives involve numerous local groups and Boards, and notes the importance of future Economic Development Commission (EDC) activities.

The EDC has worked to initiate a Business Retention and Expansion Program with assistance from the UNH Cooperative Extension. The continuation of this effort will assist in identifying opportunities for growth and highlighting issues that are of concern to existing businesses. Other EDC efforts include the preparation of Town of Hillsborough promotional materials and a summary of the development process that can be found on the EDC website at [discoverhillsboronh.com](http://discoverhillsboronh.com).

### PROJECT SUMMARIES

#### ***Short-Term Projects***

##### Downtown Parking Improvements/Agreements

The availability of parking in the Central Business District/Downtown area has been a point of consistent discussion in Hillsborough in recent years. In 2014 the Hillsborough Economic Development Commission asked CNHRPC to undertake an analysis of parking utilization to quantify the use of on and off-street parking in Town and make recommendations regarding potential improvements. The results of the study were a series of short-term

recommendations to improve the visibility and use of existing parking spaces throughout the area.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Depot Street Improvements - High parking demand, coupled with an awkward traffic pattern and an opportunity to improve the aesthetics for the gateway into the Central Business District resulted in the preparation of Depot Street Improvements Plan. Consideration of the improvements, possibly in two phases, is recommended.
2. Improved Parking Signage - The existing parking signage in the Central Business District is dated and sometimes improperly located. The installation of updated signage based upon the proposed Municipal Parking Signing Study Plan (see Appendix A) is recommended.
3. Municipal/Church Parking Memorandum of Understanding - The parking lot behind the Valley Bible Chapel is generally underutilized from Monday through Saturday. The development of an agreement between the Town and the Valley Bible Chapel would allow public use of the lot when the spaces are not in use by the Chapel. The agreement would also stipulate conditions including any necessary improvements and/or maintenance by the Town.
4. Review/modify private overnight use of municipal spaces - It is understood that the West Main Street municipal lot is used for overnight parking by some local residents. The Central Street/Myrtle Street lot would be more appropriate for overnight use. The preparation of an agreement/regulation

that clarifies the use of municipal lots for overnight use is recommended.

#### BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM ASSESSMENTS

In June 2015 CNHRPC was awarded funding to assess, and conduct reuse planning for sites with suspected petroleum contamination and hazardous material contamination throughout the region. CNHRPC was awarded additional brownfields assessment and planning funding in 2017.

*“A brownfield is defined as: real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. The 2002 Brownfields Law further defines the term to include a site that is: contaminated by a controlled substance; contaminated by petroleum or a petroleum product excluded from the definition of ‘hazardous substance,’ or mine-scarred land.”*

*-U.S. Environmental Protection Agency definition*

In short, a brownfield is a site that remains undeveloped because it is contaminated (or thought to be contaminated). These properties not only are underdeveloped leading to under realized economic development, but also pose a threat to the health of those who live and work nearby.

The first step in the eventual redevelopment of the Woods Woolen Mill is further assessment under the CNHRPC Brownfields program, and other sites throughout the Town of Hillsborough may be eligible for the program as well.

Work on the 2016 Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment of the Woods Woolen Mill properties at 23 and 25 West Mill Street was completed in the Fall of 2016. Phase 2 assessments of the Woods

Woolen Mill properties as well as the former rail right of way that bisects the two properties will be completed in 2018.

#### WATER/SEWER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS

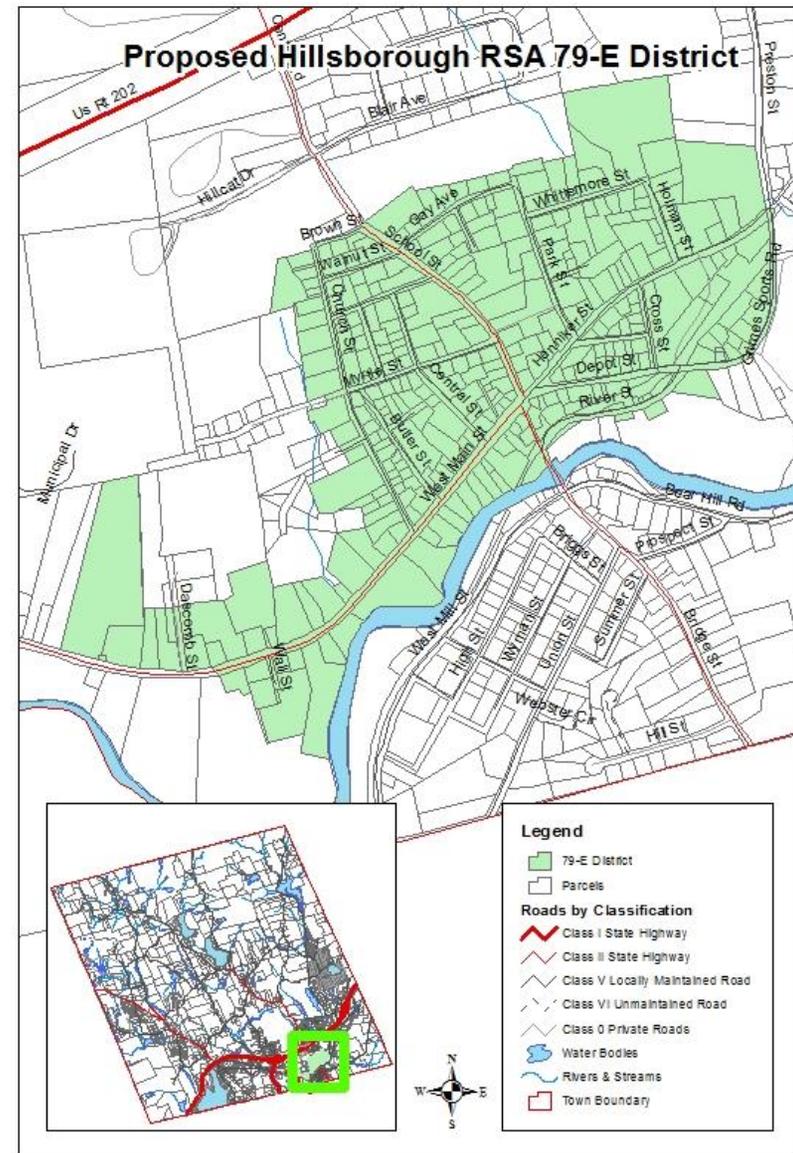
The first step in the future improvements/expansion of both the Hillsborough Wastewater Treatment Facility and the Hillsborough Water Works will require the development of a feasibility study. As outlined in the CEDS, the feasibility study will seek to undertake the following tasks:

**Phase 1** – Discuss the future buildout of downtown and work with engineers to create a plan reflecting water and sewer expansion that will cover the community’s future needs.

**Phase 2** – Secure all necessary rights-of-way as well as conduct community outreach. Community buy in is important because this project will cause inconvenience and could take longer than expected.

#### CONTINUED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

- Continue development of the Business Retention and Expansion Program.
- Continue to update/improve the Hillsborough EDC website at <http://www.discoverhillsboronh.com/>.
- Participate in regional economic development/marketing programs such as periodic updates of the regional CEDS and the identification of parcels for inclusion in *the Certified Sites Program*.
- Examine opportunities for Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District implementation.
- Market the availability of the RSA 79-E Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentives.



- Seek Economic Revitalization Zone (ERZ) approval from the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development. Market the availability of ERZ tax credits.

#### AVAILABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

Several tools are available in New Hampshire which provide either local property tax relief or New Hampshire Business Profits Tax credits. The following is a summary of the two programs, and the recommended areas for their use in Hillsborough.

#### Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive (NH RSA 79-e)

The provisions of NH RSA 79-E were adopted in Hillsborough at the 2007 Town Meeting. In communities that have adopted RSA 79-E, the Board of Selectmen have the authority to delay any *increase* in taxes for property owners in the Downtown if they replace or substantially rehabilitate their property. Its goal is to encourage the rehabilitation and active reuse of under-utilized buildings.

How it works:

- A property owner who wants to substantially rehabilitate a building located in a designated district may apply for a period of temporary tax relief.
- The temporary tax relief, if granted, would consist of a finite period of time during which the property tax on the structure would not increase as a result of its substantial rehabilitation. In exchange for the relief, the property owner grants a covenant ensuring there is a public benefit to the rehabilitation.
- Following expiration of the finite tax relief period, the structure would be taxed at its full market value taking into account the rehabilitation.

#### Economic Revitalization Zones (ERZs)

The Economic Revitalization Zone (ERZ) program is enabled in the State of New Hampshire through NH RSA 162-N. The program allows municipalities to establish certain zones in a community where a business can then seek a credit on its New Hampshire Business Profits Tax. To establish a zone or zones, the Town may apply to the program (administered by the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development) following a process outlined in NH RSA 162-N:8.

To be eligible for the program, a designated zone must meet one of the following requirements:

- (a) Unused or underutilized industrial parks; or
- (b) Vacant land or structures previously used for industrial, commercial or retail purposes, but currently not as used due to demolition, age, relocation of the former occupant's operations, obsolescence, deterioration, brownfields, or cessation of operation resulting from unfavorable economic conditions either generally or in a specific economics sector.

The ERZ program currently has \$825,000 available per year for tax credits throughout the State of New Hampshire.



Tasks of a Trails Committee may include:

- Map existing trails, formal “official” trails and informal trails and paths
- Map public lands where trail building is likely to be permissible
- Identify connections between disconnected trail systems
- Identify routes and methods to connect trails to people and destinations
- Communicate with private land owners over permissions for public trails on private property
- Assist the town in raising private and public funds for the purpose of trail development
- Look for how trails can serve economic development purposes
- Develop a vision for a trail system in Hillsborough. An early look at the potential for trails in Hillsborough shows a few significant opportunities:
  - Make Connections between existing trail networks (Fox Forest, etc.).
  - Connect existing trails to neighborhoods, developed areas, and especially the Downtown.
  - Promote trails providing access to the Contoocook River (The River Walk).
  - Continue the Hillsborough Recreation Trail into town to Grimes Field and towards Henniker.

For more information on trails please see the Transportation Chapter.

### **Medium-Term Projects**

#### **DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION**

The 2014 CEDS Project submittal related to downtown revitalization

outlined a number of potential phased steps to enhance the Central Business District. Initial proposed work includes an overall cleanup of the downtown area, including West Main Street and portions of School Street. This would include improved signage for parking and areas of interest (with some of these improvements addressed in the short-term project to address downtown parking).

The next phase addresses the future of several underutilized buildings at 2 and 8 Bridge Street and 10 West Main Street, and would likely require a planning charette/feasibility study of the existing structures to plan for their renovation and/or the redevelopment of the parcels.

This project is of regional significance, and it is targeted specifically to help achieve Hillsborough’s Economic Development goals. It is expected that this revitalization will improve or remove dangerous and eyesore structures, increase downtown walkability, provide additional parking to meet growing demand, and create additional opportunities for new business by rehabilitating empty commercial properties. The downtown area is pivotal to the Town’s charm, and due to the number of regional and statewide events occurring in Hillsborough, revitalization of this area has a potential to promote the region as a whole.

#### **SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS**

The regional CEDS also included a phased project to repair existing sidewalks and expand the walkways to run from NH 31 to the Park and Ride just off the Hillsborough bypass exit on Old Henniker Rd. Repairing the sidewalk will provide pedestrians with safer access to recreation, businesses, and downtown residential neighborhoods. Improving sidewalk conditions will better connect the downtown area to the commercial end of town, as many people walk to work.

The first step in the process to improve the sidewalk network in Hillsborough was reflected in the submittal of a proposal to the NH Department of Transportation's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to improve existing sidewalks and construct new sidewalks along West Main Street (NH Route 149) beginning at the new municipally constructed sidewalk just west of Church Street, and ending at Shaw's Supermarket. This vital link will connect dozens of businesses, as well as many residents to employment and retail businesses located in the commercial district.

This project was approved in January of 2017 in the amount of \$663,456 including \$530,765 in Federal funding. This award requires a 20% local match in the amount of \$132,961. This project was identified as the number one priority in the CNHRPC region and was the only project approved in the 2016 grant round within the CNHRPC region. Planning and engineering for the project is now underway.

The project will entail the engineering and construction of a new ADA compliant five-foot sidewalk (4,550 linear feet) with granite curbing, crosswalks and a grass buffer where the right of way is wide enough. The project will also include engineering and construction for an existing culvert head wall and upgrading drainage along West Main Street (NH 149).

The residents of the Town of Hillsborough voted at the 2016 Town Meeting to establish a Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) for the purpose of building and maintaining sidewalks. At that time \$40,000 was placed in the fund.

#### [KEMP MEMORIAL PARK DEVELOPMENT](#)

The Kemp Park Development Committee has been working since 2010 to develop a park and memorial on land along the Contoocook River that was the site of the 1852 celebration of Franklin Pierce's presidential nomination. The two parcels that make up the planned park area were given to the Town by the estate of Richard Kemp and by Evelyn Camp, and include many historical artifacts including the Pierce barbeque oven.

The Kemp Park Development Committee hopes to improve the historic structures on the site and restore the Hanson Cottage for use as the park's multi-use building.

#### ***Long-Term Projects***

##### [WOODS WOOLEN MILL CLEANUP](#)

This project is designed to continue remediation efforts started by a 2007 Brownfields grant of \$200,000 and further assessments completed under the CNHRPC Brownfields Assessment Program. The mill site sits across three lots, and includes access to a rail bed currently owned through the NH Department of Economic Recreation Development Division of Rail Trails. While the 2007 Brownfields Grant addressed issues with the Warehouse Buildings, the "Boiler House" and "Office Building" remain in question. Long-term, this project's goal is to remove the structures, convert the area to a public park, and reconstruct a covered bridge that once spanned the river. However, in the short term the town of Hillsborough would like to eliminate risks to public welfare and environmental pollution, as this mill is located on Contoocook River and contains asbestos and lead based paint.

This project ties into Hillsborough's long-term economic development as it removes a hazardous eyesore and replaces a park, providing space for recreation, public gathering, and river access. Its proximity to downtown, and the reconstruction of the

covered bridge, tie the area together, further linking both sides of the river and providing additional parking for downtown businesses.

#### WATER AND SEWER EXPANSION/IMPROVEMENTS

The goal of this project is to expand the water and sewer services of Hillsborough to fit the future need. Based upon the results of the Feasibility Study (Phases 1 and 2 above in Short-Term Projects), the anticipated work as described in the CEDS includes the following:

**Phase 3** – Construction work will begin on the project. This phase is anticipated to last 3-4 years due to costs and work load. Renovating and expanding the water and sewer services will help achieve Hillsborough’s Economic Development goals. It would address issues of potable water supply, and lower costs for all users. Having a strong infrastructure is important for attracting business, new residents, and driving job growth.

#### HILLSBOROUGH REGIONAL COMMUNITY CENTER

The goal of this project is to create a Community Center that the greater Hillsborough region could also make use of. This project addresses the need of Hillsborough, and neighboring towns, to have a facility for health and wellness, senior programming, and community interaction. The anticipated facility will include a swimming pool and locker rooms, in addition to offices for Hillsborough’s Park and Recreation Board and significant meeting space for both the town and local community.

The project site would be between the current Grimes Athletic Fields and Hillsborough’s downtown area, along the banks of the Contoocook River. The land in this area is already owned by the town, and construction of such a facility would tie into plans for further downtown redevelopment and greater regional economic development strategies. It is anticipated that neighboring localities could potentially be involved in the project, helping to provide

funding and continued support for a facility that their residents could also make use of. These potential towns include Antrim, Bradford, Deering, Henniker, Stoddard, Washington, Weare, and Windsor.

This project can be separated into three phases:

**Phase 1** - Obtaining and surveying land, hiring a design team, and gathering public input for the building’s design.

**Phase 2** - Obtaining a price for construction, and then getting partner buy-in from neighboring towns and raising the appropriate local funding necessary via Town meeting.

**Phase 3** - Construction of the facility.

## CHAPTER OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### OBJECTIVE 1:

Promote “quality of life” economic development that capitalizes on Hillsborough’s location, Central Business District, and available infrastructure.

- Move forward in a concerted effort to promote and revitalize the Central Business District and continue to highlight how Hillsborough is a welcoming community for business and new residents.
- Emphasize both traditional and non-traditional economic development projects as outlined in the Economic Development Strategic Plan beginning on Page 4.12.
- Undertake Downtown Parking Improvements/Agreements.

### OBJECTIVE 2:

Educate and make use of available economic development

incentives that serve to focus commercial development in suitable areas of Hillsborough.

- Promote the use of Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive (NH RSA-79-e) in the Downtown area.
- Consider the designation of specific areas as Economic Revitalization Zones (ERZs).

#### OBJECTIVE 3:

Provide the impetus and support for local funding for varied infrastructure projects such improved sidewalks, water/sewer expansion/improvements and the redevelopment of local brownfields parcels.

- Provide support to the Water and Sewer Commission to develop (1) A Water/Sewer System Improvements Feasibility Analysis, and (2) undertake future expansions/improvements based upon the recommendations of the Feasibility Analysis.
- Continue the assessment and redevelopment planning activities related to the Woods Woolen Mill as supported by the CNHRPC regional brownfields assessment program.
- Continue to develop the West Main Street sidewalk through funding provided through the NHDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

#### OBJECTIVE 4:

Emphasize how non-traditional economic development activities such as the formation of a Trails Committee, the development of the Kemp Memorial Park, and the development of a Regional Community Center can serve to promote the Town's overall image, thus enhancing its economic development opportunities.

- Support the formation of the Hillsborough Trails Committee.
- Continue planning activities related to Kemp Memorial Park.
- Initiate long-term planning to create a Regional Community Center.

#### SUMMARY

Many of the recommendations found in the Economic Base chapter can also be found elsewhere in the Master Plan. From the revitalization of the Central Business District to proactive approaches to improvements to infrastructure, the chapter provides an outline of future steps to continue to promote Hillsborough as a great place to live and work. The Town has already made use of tools and programs such as the Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive and the Brownfields Assessment Program, and there is much work still to be undertaken by the Town and other local committees and groups to implement some of the proposals contained in the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

In sum, there is great reason for optimism in Hillsborough. The recommendations contained in this chapter as well as other chapters of the Master Plan can serve to emphasize the Town's role as a regional employment center and ultimately continue to promote quality of life in the community.