



1

Introduction

Welcome to our Sustainability Master Plan.

We are excited to share with you the results of our 2 years of work to update our 2003 Plan. We asked for your input, listened, and hope you enjoy this result. Everyone in town will need to pitch in to help us attain our vision for the future.

- Hanover Planning Board and Master Plan Advisory Committee

We gratefully acknowledge the N'dakina on whose ancestral homelands we live, work and play, as well as the members of diverse and vibrant Native communities who make their home here today.

The Town of Hanover, chartered in 1761, has grown and developed over two-plus centuries alongside its local institutional partner, Dartmouth College. All the while it has maintained many desirable attributes typical of a small New England town, such as a vibrant downtown center, small village centers, and a rural landscape dotted with homes and defined by open fields, wooded hillsides, stone walls, clear streams, uncluttered hilltops and ridges, and unimpeded views of the night sky. These attributes, together with the town's employment opportunities and access to a wealth of resources in the Upper Valley Region, attract residents and visitors alike.

The Town of Hanover began its update of the 2003 Master Plan in March 2021. The town launched this process with robust public engagement not only to explore ways to protect and enhance its character and quality of life for all of its residents, but also to support its 2017 pledge to work toward the goals of 100 percent renewable electricity by 2030, followed by 100 percent renewable fuel for transportation, heating, and cooling by 2050, and to address the town's sustainability more broadly. Accordingly, this master plan update is titled the **Hanover Sustainability Master Plan**.

It is important to acknowledge that this *Sustainability Master Plan* would not exist without the efforts of the town's Planning Board and the Planning Board-appointed Sustainability Master Plan Advisory Committee, as well as the engagement of the town's many residents, students, and other community stakeholders in the planning process despite limitations presented by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. The town thanks you for your participation! A summary of public engagements and their outcomes can be found in [Appendix A](#).

The town invites the entire Hanover community to immerse themselves in the contents of this Plan, beginning with the Vision Statement and Goals (presented in this chapter), as well as its Strategies and plan for implementation in [Chapter 11](#), to understand where the town is headed. The community's ongoing support for this Plan is pivotal to getting the town to where it wants to be over the next decade.



Town Meeting 2020 as seen from a drone



The Hanover Improvement Society's Ferguson Field

- ▶ Is guided by New Hampshire statute (RSA 674:2), which requires communities to address at a minimum the community's vision for the future and future land use. However, master plans often cover an additional range of topics that impact quality of life (for example, transportation, economic development, and recreation).
- ▶ Articulates the means of achieving the best and most appropriate future development for the community.
- ▶ Is the basis upon which local planning boards and staff design land use regulations and ordinances, with the aim of achieving the vision articulated in the plan such as smart growth and resource protection.
- ▶ Typically covers a period of 10 years but because of changing community needs and opportunities, shorter-term updates are advantageous.

- Considers social, environmental, and economic concerns more comprehensively than a typical master plan. This can include a focus on mitigating and preparing for and adapting to climate change.

“Meeting the needs of the town and region in the present without compromising abilities of future generations to meet their own needs in consideration of changing climate conditions. Supporting a cohesive community that can take action to balance the environment and economics, with a strong focus on justice and equity.”



The Community's Thoughts on Hanover's Greatest Strengths (top) and Their Greatest Wishes (bottom) for the Town

Vision Statement

Our community came to consensus on the following Vision Statement to define the town's future. This Vision Statement set the tone for the development of this Sustainability Master Plan, including the determination of its Goals and Strategies. It is comprised of eight value statements that serve as the basis for the core chapters of the Plan.

Founded in 1761, Hanover is a community that boasts the activity of a downtown center, the charm of a small New England college town, and a commitment to preserving our natural environment. We will build upon this unique identity and our heritages by leveraging the passion and resources of our community, including students, businesses, and civic leaders. Our vision for the future is centered around the following value statements that guide our Sustainability Master Plan and will inform ongoing development and decision-making. We welcome visitors and new residents and appreciate the diversity they bring to Hanover.

Expanding Housing Opportunity – *We will promote economic and cultural diversity through improved housing choice and affordability. We strive towards enabling people of all economic means to live in and travel within Hanover.*

Fostering Inclusive Economic Resilience – *We will work to build a more resilient, sustainable, and diverse economy for our region with emphasis on ensuring equitable access to economic resources and opportunity. The economy of our future will be resilient to future shocks and stresses and be consistent with our renewable energy vision.*

Celebrating Our Character – *We value the contributions of, and interplay between, our built and natural environments. We will enable*

these environments to continue to evolve while maintaining their health and distinctive attractions and benefits.

Advancing Multi-Modal Transportation – *We will better connect persons living, working, studying, and recreating in Hanover and throughout the Upper Valley by designing, developing, and managing a transportation system that prioritizes safety, accessibility, affordability, and zero-emission modes, and connects persons to key regional resources.*

Promoting Downtown Vibrancy – *Our downtown will be a dynamic mix of locally beneficial businesses and cultural assets, a variety of housing types and mobility options, and ample public spaces available for community gatherings.*

Addressing Climate Change – *We will continue to be a model community by reducing our energy consumption and making bold transitions to rely solely on renewable sources of electricity by 2030 and renewable sources of fuel for heating and transportation by 2050. We recognize the potential adversity being brought about by climate change and will commit our resources to preparing and adapting local and regional systems and resources.*

Improving Health and Well-Being for All – *We will strive to meet the needs of all residents for physical activity, education, mobility, social interaction and sense of community, healthy food, health care, and public safety. We will do so by helping residents where their needs are the greatest.*

Being Accountable and Collaborative – *Our municipal government will provide high-quality public services in a manner that is equitable, transparent, and consistent with all other values in our Sustainability Master Plan, and by engaging in local and regional partnerships to achieve mutually shared goals and objectives.*

Goals

The following goals define the general direction in which we will strive to achieve our Vision. These goals are organized by the value statements found within the Vision. Goal identifiers (#-#) depict their associated chapter numbers. Neither goals nor value statements are presented in terms of priority.

Expanding Housing Opportunity

3-1. Based on the 2023 assessment of need, Hanover will facilitate the development of approximately 800 new housing units between 2020 and 2040.

3-2. The Town's **attainable** and **affordable housing** stock will be expanded.

3-3. Hanover's housing stock will be improved to be more energy efficient and to include more accessibility features.

3-4. Educational resources and opportunities will expand the public awareness of Town housing initiatives, issues, and opportunities.

Fostering Inclusive Economic Resilience

4-1. Hanover will be a place where business owners want to locate and where their businesses will thrive.

4-2. The nexus of property tax, housing and transportation costs, and income will be balanced to assure sustainable living.

4-3. The diverse economy will support many types of lifestyles and needs.

4-4. Hanover will prosper in the regional economy.

4-5. The local labor force will meet the needs of employers.

4-6. Economic centers will continue to be located in the water and sewer service area; residences will accommodate people working from home, business start-ups, and traditional home occupations.

4-7. The Town's economic resiliency policies and regulations will foster a stable and sustainable economy.

4-8. The Town's economy-supporting infrastructure will be enhanced.

4-9. Hanover will achieve a circular, low carbon economy, focusing on material selection, source reduction, and material reuse, with recycling as a last resort.

4-10. Hanover will support the development of jobs and businesses that align with the principles of a Green Economy.

Celebrating Our Character

5-1. Natural resources supporting healthy ecosystems and scenic beauty will continue to define Hanover's sense of place.

5-2. Ecological integrity and biodiversity will be honored and protected to ensure the air, water, soil, flora, and fauna continue to provide life-sustaining, carbon-sequestering, public health and wellness benefits, and diverse natural communities and wildlife habitat.

5-3. Publicly-accessible outdoor recreational opportunities for people of all ages will be available within a five-to-ten-minute walk from every residence.

5-4. Hanover’s historic character will be widely recognized through a variety of architectural styles and scenic landscapes.

5-5. The Town’s cultural offerings will be expanded to ensure they continue to evolve to reflect the community’s **diversity**.

Advancing Multi-Modal Transportation

6-1. Town-wide walking and biking accessibility and safety will be improved.

6-2. Partners will be engaged in enhancing local and regional transit and carpooling options.

6-3. Sustainable living and safe zero-emission modes of travel will be reinforced with complementary land use patterns and transportation infrastructure.

6-4. The transportation network will be updated to address emerging transportation and community needs.

Promoting Downtown Vibrancy

7-1. A diverse commercial base will be fostered.

7-2. More dwellings will be built and concentrated in and around the greater downtown.

7-3. Business owners will be supported enabling their ventures to grow and prosper.

7-4. Public gathering spaces in the downtown will be enhanced.

7-5. Universally-accessible, people-centered means of transportation will be fostered in, around, to, from and through the downtown.

7-6. Arts and culture will be appreciated every day.

7-7 Using the highest standards for sustainable urban design, improvements will be implemented in the greater downtown.

Addressing Climate Change

8-1. Hanover’s programs, policies, and regulations will move the Town closer to its 2017 Ready for 100 Pledge and mitigate effects of climate change.

8-2. Municipal energy consumption will be reduced to the greatest extent practicable.

8-3. Local renewable energy generating capacity will be increased and contribute substantially to Hanover’s clean energy targets.

8-4. Community-based greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions will be enabled through partnerships and education.

8-5. Hanover will be more resilient to climate change.

Improving Health and Well-Being for All

9-1. Health and well-being will be integrated into municipal decision-making, with a focus on providing for the equitable distribution of services.

9-2. Physical activity and other beneficial health behaviors will be prioritized.

9-3. Partnerships will provide better outcomes with regard to determinants of community health, well-being, **equity, diversity, and inclusion**.

9-4. Town-owned recreational facilities and Town-run programs will be enhanced.

Being Accountable and Collaborative

10-1. The **diversity** of individuals contributing to Town decision-making and operations will be expanded.

10-2. The Town's focus on promoting excellence in governance standards and practices will be continued.

10-3. Municipal departments will be supported in providing outstanding public services.

10-4. The Town will continue to collaborate with local and regional entities including Dartmouth College and Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.