

## **Chapter XII** **REGIONAL CONCERNS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

While the Pembroke Master Plan focuses on issues within the Town or within the control of the Town, some emphasis should be given to the outside influences that have an impact on the community. Within the Central NH Region and beyond, regional concerns such as environmental factors, population and housing growth, transportation pressures, and groundwater strongly affect the Town of Pembroke.

Partnerships opportunities are identified to foster good relations with neighboring communities on issues that affect multiple towns. Involvement in regional projects which include Pembroke will help the community better place itself in a larger context and participate in activities which will benefit the Town. In this Chapter, specific ideas about how Pembroke can become involved in those issues most important to the Town are given as well as a series of recommendations to help guide the Town in thinking how its actions can have an effect on the entire Region.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

These Objectives were developed as a result of analysis and interpretation of concerns raised from the Central NH Regional Planning Commission and Steering Committee members. They are listed in the beginning to give the reader the opportunity to view the results without reading through the entire Chapter.

- To partner with neighboring communities and local groups to enable Pembroke to improve the quality of life for its residents and be better able to respond to issues which affect the Town.
  - Hold discussions among all area town planners and planning boards to help facilitate the regional affordable housing dialogue. [Affordable and Senior Housing]
  - Work with the large abutting towns of Concord, Bow, Hooksett to better connect future commercial areas and plan for high density areas among the four municipalities. [Urban Sprawl and Smart Growth]
  - Hold Discussions with Concord and Allenstown to assist with the local support component of any CAT service expansion. [Concord Area Transit]
  - Obtain a copy of Hooksett's Master Plan to try to coordinate development when possible. [Hooksett Residential and Commercial Growth]

- Establish a regular regional dialogue, perhaps facilitated by the two regional planning commissions, among Pembroke, Allenstown, and Hooksett as commercial and residential growth in Hooksett will have an impact on Pembroke. [Hooksett Residential and Commercial Growth]
  - Establish a relationship with the Allenstown/Pembroke Old Home Day Committee and Meet Me in Suncook group to develop ideas for revitalizing Suncook. [Downtown Suncook]
  - Coordinate planning efforts with area Towns, including the regular use of the developments of regional impact statute, obtaining copies of Master Plans and regulations, and holding sub-regional planning conferences on a semi-annual basis. [Developments of Regional Impact]
  - Join the Suncook Area Residents Against Power Plant Pollution to keep abreast of the happenings at the Power Plant. [Public Service of New Hampshire Coal-Fired Power Plant in Bow]
- To become involved with state or regional groups, organizations, and agencies to form relationships and to take advantage of free or low cost services and information.
- Seek technical assistance money from the NH DOT through the I-93 Community Technical Assistance Program to facilitate regional planning efforts. [Urban Sprawl and Smart Growth] [I-93 Expansion]
  - Join the Friends of the Suncook River to address issues about the River, to promote the river, to lead clean-up days, and to hold River events. [Aquifer Protection] [Watershed Protection]
  - Provide regular active representation to the Upper Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee to help maintain the health of the river. [Aquifer Protection] [Watershed Protection]
  - Encourage landowners to take advantage of assistance from the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Merrimack County Conservation District to best learn the options for protecting agricultural resources. [Loss of Farmland and Agriculture]
  - Continue to work with the NH Department of Transportation (NH DOT) on roadway improvement projects in Pembroke. [US Route 3]
  - Maintain active representation on the Technical Review Committee and the Citizen's Advisory Task force for the I-93 Bow-Concord Study. [NH Route 106]

- Participate in any public information sessions held by the NH Department of Transportation for I-93 Bow to Concord and for I-93 Salem to Manchester, and remain updated via the online websites. [I-93 Expansion]
- Continue to meet with the CNHRPC and Concord Area Transit for updates to funding opportunities for a bus line. [Concord Area Transit] [Hooksett Residential and Commercial Growth]
- Research state and federal transportation funding programs available to small communities in the event that the CAT expansion goes forward. [Concord Area Transit]
- Continue to strengthen the lines of communication with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and the adjacent communities to help ensure future projects experience similar success. [Double-Decker Bridge Replacement]
- Work with the Highway District Engineer regarding road maintenance, winter plowing, and driveway permitting to pursue to continue strengthening relationships between the Town and NH DOT. [Double-Decker Bridge Replacement]
- Sustain the relationship with CNHRPC to ensure that Pembroke continues to learn how to utilize wise growth principles and techniques as the Town faces new development pressures. [Central NH Regional Planning Commission]
- Appoint two representatives to the CNHRPC's Regional Resource Conservation Committee (R2C2). [Regional Resource Conservation Committee]
- Appoint a representative to CNHRPC's Transportation Advisory Committee to ensure that the transportation interests of Pembroke are represented. [Transportation Advisory Committee]
- Encourage the Planning Board to subscribe to the free Plan-Link list serve to be kept abreast of issues other towns in New Hampshire are facing with respect to growth. [NH Office of Energy and Planning]
- Encourage Town officials to regularly visit the NH OEP website to view the calendar of educational planning workshops and events. [NH Office of Energy and Planning]
- Enhance the Town's use of NHMA's services to take full advantage of Pembroke's membership. [NH Municipal Association]
- Attend state and regional conferences on telecommunications issues to remain educated on the issues. [Telecommunications Towers]

- To take proactive action on regional issues which affect Pembroke.
  - Monitor air quality reports from the NH Department of Health and Human Services for the Public Service of NH Power Plant in Bow. [Public Service of New Hampshire Coal-Fired Power Plant in Bow]
  - Approach legislators to develop legislation which requires affordable housing be mandatory in all municipalities. [Affordable and Senior Housing]
  - Monitor regional growth patterns and consider implementing regulatory techniques, to help offset the effect the impacts generated by the area's more urban centers. [Urban Sprawl and Smart Growth]
  - Protect land abutting the Soucook, Suncook and Merrimack Rivers from development by: considering outright purchase, encouraging landowners to donate easements, or requiring developers to set aside the land at the plan approval stage. [Aquifer Protection] [Watershed Protection]
  - Seek easements on, purchase the rights of, or purchase outright agricultural use parcels to protect them from development. [Loss of Farmland and Agriculture]
  - Seek to find an alternative to Route 3, possibly by opening up one of the range roads. [US Route 3]
  - Stay apprised of the I-93 Bow-Concord Study when working to bring new business and infrastructure to Route 106. [NH Route 106]
  - Conduct a buildout analysis to guide the rewriting of pertinent regulations, including an emphasis on mixed use, encouraging infill and redevelopment, and strengthening the Route 3 corridor in Pembroke with pedestrian facilities and access management. [Hooksett Residential and Commercial Growth]
  - Lobby for complete cellular coverage in New Hampshire and the development of consistent regulations. [Telecommunications Towers]
  - Voice concerns over any significant expansion to the airport during the development of regional impact public input opportunity. [Concord Airport Expansion]

## **INFLUENCES ON PEMBROKE FROM NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES AND THE STATE**

Pembroke has a number of outside influences which may affect the Town but which the community has little control over. This section highlights the primary influences that Pembroke should be concerned about and offers suggestions about how the Town can get involved. A small amount of participation in these multi-town activities will ensure that Pembroke has a better “say” in what can happen. For many of these issues, Pembroke can similarly affect other communities with its own actions.

### **Public Service of New Hampshire Coal-Fired Power Plant in Bow**

The power plant in Bow is an electricity generation station owned by Public Service of New Hampshire (PSNH). Located one mile northwest of the Pembroke line, the plant is one of three fossil fuel-fired plants and nine hydroelectric facilities owned by PSNH in the State. From the PSNH website, all facilities combined are capable of generating more than 1,110 megawatts of electricity. The Merrimack Station has an output of 478 megawatts and supplies 189,000 customers.

The Merrimack Station is PSNH's prime base load plant, operating continuously to meet the state's significant electrical demand. The plant operates on two coal-fired steam turbines, and has two combustion turbines utilized only during great power demands. Initiatives at Merrimack Station have broken new ground in environmental technology, earning us numerous awards—including the Governor's Award for Pollution Prevention in 1996, and the EPA's Environmental Merit Award in 1996 and again in 1999. More than \$47 million has been invested in the plant for environmental initiatives since 1989.

The installation of a Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) system on Merrimack Station's Unit One boiler in 1999 caused nitrogen-oxide (NOx) emissions to be reduced by 90 percent—a reduction equivalent to removing 700,000 automobiles from the road. Today, Merrimack Station is one of the cleanest coal-fired plants in the Northeast.

There are several impacts the PSNH Power Plant, which provides the Town with electricity, has on the residents of Pembroke. Negative impacts are the result of the proximity of the power plant to the Pembroke town line. Plumes from smoke-stacks trail in the sky and particulates fall onto surfaces in the Suncook Village area and along Route 3. Pembroke is downwind from the facility, resulting in questions of the plant's impacts on air quality. Recent concerns from residents about respiratory health have resulted in the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (NH DHHS) performing a study to monitor air quality.

### **How Pembroke Can Get Involved**

The Suncook Area Residents Against Power Plant Pollution is a citizens awareness and lobbying group for Pembroke and Pembroke residents. The results of the NH DHHS air quality study should be obtained. Lobbying with local legislators and state senators could help with establishing a strong show of concern if air quality results are poor.

### **Aquifer Protection**

Pembroke is surrounded on three sides by aquifers underlying the Soucook, Merrimack, and Suncook Rivers. The Soucook aquifer begins at the north Loudon/Canterbury town lines and travels south through the middle of Loudon, down to the Concord/Pembroke border where it joins to the Merrimack River aquifer. High areas of transmissivity (feet per second) abound under the Soucook River. The Merrimack aquifer is connected to the Pemigewasset River aquifer in Franklin, flowing south through Boscawen and Concord in to Pembroke, Bow, Hooksett, and beyond beneath the Merrimack River. The Suncook River aquifer begins in Pittsfield and flows through Chichester and Epsom and into Pembroke/Allenstown, flowing into the Merrimack aquifer. A high level of transmissivity is found along the Pembroke/Allenstown border. The aquifers can be found on the *Water Resources Map*.

Pembroke's municipal drinking water is drawn from the Soucook and Suncook aquifers. The industrial area of Concord rests over the Soucook aquifer, as does Route 106. Routes 3 and 28 in Pembroke travel over the Merrimack and Suncook aquifers, respectively. Aquifers are a shared resource which must be protected in order to retain water quality for future use. Pembroke has an Aquifer Conservation District to help protect the groundwater.

From the **NATURAL RESOURCES CHAPTER**, in order to minimize potential opportunities for contamination of public water supplies, the NH Department of Environmental Services has implemented a regulatory strategy of limiting the types of land use activities which can occur in the vicinity of wellhead locations. This geographic area of limited land uses is known as a wellhead protection area. A typical wellhead protection area in New Hampshire is normally denoted by a 4000 foot radius around a public well location although it is not unusual for a wellhead protection area to have variable radii to suitably cover site specific local conditions. As may be seen on the *Potential Threats to Water Resources Map*, for example, most of the state-assigned protection areas for wells located in Pembroke have variable radii.

### How Pembroke Can Get Involved

Consideration of aquifer effects should be made when developing land throughout the town of Pembroke. Strong efforts need to be made to protect and manage those lands closest to the Suncook, Soucook, and Merrimack Rivers. This will help decrease the potential contaminants that may reach surface waters and groundwater.

The Friends of the Suncook River, a Suncook watershed group, has been established to discuss the concerns of the watershed with each involved community. Similar non-profit volunteer groups have been established in New Hampshire. Such groups are involved in community education, hold river clean up days, and hold recreation functions to promote the river(s). Pembroke should also have active representation on the Upper Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee to help maintain the health of the river.

**Affordable and Senior Housing**

Over the last four years, the lack of affordable (also known as “workforce”) and senior housing has remained a problem within many New Hampshire towns and has increased to a 1% overall housing vacancy rate in Merrimack County in 2003. Affordable housing is defined as housing that costs not more than 30% of a household’s income. Included in this category are manufactured housing and rental apartments.

Based on the regional affordable housing needs assessment conducted by the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC), Pembroke has an adequate amount of affordable housing. Though Pembroke contains ample “affordable” housing, several surrounding towns have not provided their theoretical share. Combined with the current housing market, many people in the Region cannot locate affordable housing.

Seniors in Pembroke and in the area are currently moving to apartments on Route 3 in Suncook Village. Property values are too high in Bow, Hopkinton, and many other area towns to allow seniors to be able to remain in their homes on a fixed income. This issue is also addressed in the HOUSING CHAPTER.

**How Pembroke Can Get Involved**

All towns in the Central NH Region should look to encourage affordable housing within their community to try and attain their “fair share.” The Town should approach legislators to develop legislation which requires this of all municipalities. Discussions should be held among all area town planners and planning boards to help facilitate the regional affordable housing dialogue.

**Urban Sprawl and Smart Growth**

Sprawl has become an increasing problem in many of the communities throughout New Hampshire. As population increases, the amount of land being developed increases. Often this development has been spread out throughout the landscape. The end result is often a greater reliance on automobiles, a loss of open space, and increased costs to the taxpayers through infrastructure extensions (police and fire service, road maintenance, utilities, etc).

The housing and population of Pembroke is concentrated along Route 3, in Suncook Village, along Buck Street and is interspersed throughout the remaining areas of Town. Although water and sewer infrastructure serves the urban areas of Town, homes in North Pembroke result sprawling pattern which is not easily served by infrastructure. Growth from southern and eastern New Hampshire is moving to the Central Region, and Pembroke will be affected by the transportation and development patterns from points south (Manchester area) and west (Concord area), and even east (seacoast area).

Motorists are increasingly using Route 3 to travel from Concord to Hooksett and Manchester. Having a prime commuting corridor is not an ideal situation in Pembroke, as the road is primarily residential. It is unlikely that additional businesses will be able locate to Route 3 to take advantage of the through-traffic and maintenance of the road and safety of the roadway for local residents is a concern.

Regional development has serious implications in the degradation and loss of prime wildlife habitats (including aquatic) and the expansion of invasive plant and animal species. Similarly, a loss of regional environmental quality can be expected as area water bodies and air quality negatively affected. These types of degradation can be attributed to many factors, including traffic pollutants to the area's air, land, and water resources.

Loss of the rural character of Pembroke and surrounding communities will continue if towns do not act upon this issue. Smart growth is a method of combating sprawl involving thoughtful planning for future growth. The lack of planning between towns results in the communities (often which are affected by the growth of another) enacting measures to address new growth pressures. These include decreasing lot size and setback requirements, encouraging mixed-use land development in appropriate areas, innovative zoning techniques (such as covered in the **EXISTING AND LAND USE CHAPTER**) and avoidance of open space and farmlands.

This issue is also addressed in the **EXISTING AND FUTURE LAND USE CHAPTER**. For Pembroke, the 2002 Smart Growth report recommended these and other techniques:

- Encourage revitalization of Suncook Village
- Enhance the traditional village character of Pembroke Street
- Create a new "suburban residential zone"
- Create a "traditional New England" village in one or two rural areas
- Create an open space preservation overlay zone
- General Zoning Changes

#### How Pembroke Can Get Involved

The Town should stay informed about regional growth patterns and consider implementing regulatory techniques, such as those outlined in the **EXISTING AND FUTURE LAND USE CHAPTER**, to help offset the effect the impacts generated by the area's more urban centers. Pembroke should work with the large abutting towns of Concord, Bow, Hooksett to better connect future commercial areas and plan for high density areas among the four municipalities. Seek technical assistance money from the NH DOT through the I-93 Community Technical Assistance Program to facilitate regional planning efforts.



**Watershed Protection**

A watershed is an area of land drained by streams or rivers and is a connected hydrologic system in itself, although it is always part of a larger watershed. Disturbances which affect the groundwater of an area can have an impact on the entire watershed. Pembroke lies within the Soucook River, Lower Suncook River, and Concord Tributaries of the Merrimack River watersheds.

The Soucook River watershed is located on the west side of Pembroke, at the confluence of the Merrimack and Soucook Rivers and spanning north to the west of Cross Country Road. This watershed is shared by Pembroke, Concord, Chichester, Loudon, Canterbury, Northfield, Belmont, and Gilmanton.

The Lower Suncook River abuts the Soucook River watershed on the east side of Pembroke. It spans from the confluence of the Merrimack and Suncook Rivers on north, east of Cross Country Road. The watershed is shared by Pembroke, Hooksett, Allenstown, Candia, Deerfield, Northwood, Pittsfield, Barnstead, Loudon, and Gilmanton.

The smallest watershed within Pembroke, the Concord Tributaries, encompasses the span of the Merrimack within Pembroke to just south of 4<sup>th</sup> Range Road and east of Brickett Hill Road. The watershed is shared by Pembroke, Bow, Concord, Dunbarton, Hopkinton, Canterbury, and Loudon.

The Pembroke Water Works draws municipal drinking water from these watersheds. It used to draw water from the Suncook River until it was discovered that Pittsfield discharged their treated wastewater into the river. Pembroke provides drinking water to Allenstown and a portion of Hooksett. The industrial zone of Concord, which rests over the Soucook River aquifer, can have a negative impact on the water quality of the entire watershed. The increasing recreational use of the Merrimack, Suncook, and Soucook Rivers will eventually result in degradation of the water, embankments, and aquatic habitat.

**How Pembroke Can Get Involved**

Consideration of watershed effects should be made when developing land throughout the town of Pembroke. Strong efforts needs to be made to protect and manage those lands closest to the Suncook, Soucook, and Merrimack Rivers. This will help decrease the potential contaminants that may reach surface waters and groundwater.

The Friends of the Suncook River, a Suncook watershed group, has been established to discuss the concerns of the watershed with each involved community. Similar non-profit volunteer groups have been established in New Hampshire. Such groups are involved in community education, hold river clean up days, and hold recreation functions to promote the river(s). Pembroke should also have active representation on the Upper Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee to help maintain the health of the river.

**Loss of Agriculture and Farms**

There has been a steady decline of agricultural and farm lands in New Hampshire over the past several decades. Like most New Hampshire communities, Pembroke was once an agrarian and forestry-based community. Presently, two active farms have been identified in Pembroke. One farm is a dairy farm, and the other produces corn and vegetables. The decline of agricultural lands and farms have resulted in the loss of lands that are economically, aesthetically, and ecologically important. Some benefits of farmlands are that they provide food for people, wildlife habitat, and flood control.

The most common reason for the loss of this land is development. Increasing development of farmlands occur due to the poor economic return for agricultural products combine with the ease of converting farmland to development. This trend is not unique to Pembroke, but combined with similar Regional and State occurrences, little agricultural land remains in active use in New Hampshire. When neighboring communities practice the same type of development of farm lands, the scenic rural quality that makes the State unique and cherished by its residents is no longer there.

The lack of agricultural lands in a community is directly attributed to residential growth. In Pembroke, these farmlands are located primarily on 4<sup>th</sup> Range Road.

**How Pembroke Can Get Involved**

The Natural Resource Conservation Service is available to assist communities and landowners, usually free of charge, with issues related to retaining farmlands. Pembroke should take advantage of their assistance to best learn the options for protecting this precious resource.

Fields should be placed into conservation easement as readily as those lands which are forested. The Town should actively seek easements on, purchase the rights of, or purchase outright agricultural use parcels to protect them from development.

### **US Route 3**

In the Central NH Region, US Route 3 spans from Franklin to Hooksett and beyond. Within Pembroke, Route 3 runs from the Concord to the Allenstown town lines via Pembroke Street. Route 3 is a heavy commuting corridor for area residents traveling to Concord, Franklin, and points south. Presently, there is heavy commercial use occurring along the entire roadway. Extremely heavy concentrations are found within Concord.

Regarding safety, the main speed limit for most of Route 3 within the Central NH Region is between 30 and 40 miles per hour. Pedestrian crossings are found in Concord, at strategic places (such as Pembroke Academy), and at selected intersections. An alternative to Route 3 in Pembroke is necessary. Vehicles speed on the straight-aways, and traffic is at a stand-still at the traffic lights. Route 3 is the only collector road in the area, with both NH Route 106 and Route 28 feeding into the Route 3. All along Route 3, heavy commercial traffic travels from points north and south, with the only residential neighborhoods along the entire stretch of road in Pembroke. See also the **TRANSPORTATION CHAPTER** for more information.

#### How Pembroke Can Get Involved

Increased traffic volume from Pembroke, neighboring communities, and within the State should be expected on Route 3. Pembroke should continue to work with the NH Department of Transportation (NH DOT) on roadway improvement projects. The Town should also seek to find an alternative to Route 3, possibly by opening up one of the range roads.

### **NH Route 106**

Route 106, which connects Concord and Pembroke, is the main commercial area in Pembroke. The route connects Laconia, Belmont, Gilford, Northfield, Gilmanton, Loudon, Concord, and Pembroke and channels traffic onto Route 3.

The volume of traffic has increase on Route 106 in Pembroke due to Loudon Road (Concord) congestion, and widening is being considered in the future. The prime commercial area for Pembroke is on Route 106, but it rests over the Soucook River aquifer.

The I-93 Bow to Concord Study is underway in Phase A, and will provide alternatives to how to alleviate traffic via a potential connector to Route 106 after the Study concludes in approximately 2008. This recommendations of this study may further impact Route 106. Pembroke has a representative on the Technical Review Committee and the Citizen's Advisory Task Force (see also **I-93 Expansion**). The focus of additional business growth, including the installing new water and sewer, will need to consider how a potential connector will affect economic development.

#### How Pembroke Can Get Involved

The Town should maintain its representatives on the Technical Review Committee and the Citizen's Advisory Task force for the I-93 Bow-Concord Study. The Economic Development Committee should stay apprised of the I-93 Bow-Concord Study when working to bring new business and infrastructure to Route 106.

## I-93 Expansion

### *Salem - Manchester*

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was released in April 2004. According to the EIS, the basic purpose of the project is to *“improve transportation efficiency and reduce safety problems associated with this approximately 19.8-mile segment of highway from the Massachusetts/New Hampshire state line to Manchester.”* If the current schedule is adhered to, construction will begin in 2005 and be completed by 2015.

The EIS examined a wide range of alternatives, ranging from the “no-build”, the baseline established for the project, to a four-lane expansion for the project length. Also included in the analysis were expanded bus service in the corridor and Transportation Demand Management initiatives such as employer-based incentives to change travel patterns. The Selected Alternative involves a combination of techniques: expanding the existing two-lane highway to four-lanes in each direction, numerous improvements at Exits 1 through 5, the construction of three park and ride lots with bus facilities, the implementation of variable message signs and other intelligent transportation system measures along the corridor, and the allocation of right-of-way for a future commuter rail corridor from the state line to Exit 5. The entire project, including mitigation, is estimated to cost \$421,400,000.

Of particular importance to Pembroke was the section of the EIS that examined the potential effect of the I-93 expansion on the five communities abutting the corridor, as well as 24 other communities within the “Secondary Impacts Study Area.” Pembroke is a primary impact community. This examination attempted to project increases in population and employment in each community due to the Salem to Manchester project by convening a wide-ranging panel with participants from local planning boards, real estate representatives, experts from the University of New Hampshire and the University of Massachusetts, local and regional planners, environmental policy groups, and experts in finance, law and economics.

The projections prepared by the panel estimate that in 2020, and additional 700 people will live in Pembroke due to the project, along with approximately 160 new jobs. This growth would be in addition to the more than 1,900 people (and 950 jobs) that are expected to be added to the Town’s population and employment base even if the project were not to be undertaken.

As part of the project mitigation, the NHDOT is planning to initiate the Community Technical Assistance Program to assist communities within the study area to better manage growth and advance conservation efforts through initial five-year funding through federal and state transportation funds. Although the program is not yet in place, it is envisioned that funding will be available for technical assistance to support planning and conservation; for innovative projects proposed by the towns; for training and education of officials; for marketing campaigns; analyses of future growth scenarios; and for the development of specific tools and materials to support local planning and conservation efforts.

### *Bow to Concord*

The I-93 Bow to Concord improvement project was added to the New Hampshire Ten Year Transportation Program (Ten Year Plan) in 2001, with the initiation of construction not expected until after 2010. The project will necessitate study of a wide range of options and issues between the I-89/I-93 interchange and Exit 16, including the number of lanes, improvements to exits within the study area, safety improvements, the protection of a future rail corridor, and traffic demand measures. The study is currently underway and the first phase, Phase A, is anticipated to be completed in 2005.

### How Pembroke Can Get Involved

Pembroke should participate in any public information sessions held by the NH Department of Transportation for both Salem to Manchester and Bow to Concord, and remain updated via the online website at [www.i93bowconcord.com](http://www.i93bowconcord.com). When funds become available for I-93 Salem-Manchester mitigation, the Town should take advantage of the opportunity to develop planning tools to handle anticipated growth.

### **Concord Area Transit**

Concord Area Transit, in cooperation with the Central NH Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC), surveyed all households in Allenstown and Pembroke in 2001 regarding their interest in future bus service between Concord and the two communities. With the generally favorable results of the survey, CAT sought federal funding to undertake a trial expansion of service through Pembroke into Pembroke.

Unfortunately, while the funding for this trial was supported by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration did not support the proposal and the funding was not approved. In 2003, CAT and CNHRPC began undertaking a broader CAT expansion study to develop a long-range route expansion plan. It is envisioned that this study, in conjunction with the earlier survey results, will emphasize the demand for enhanced transit service in central New Hampshire, thus supporting future requests for federal assistance for route expansion. The issue of regional bussing should be revisited on a regular basis.

### How Pembroke Can Get Involved

Pembroke should continue to meet with the CNHRPC and Concord Area Transit for updates to funding opportunities. Discussions with Concord and Allenstown will assist with the local support component of any CAT service expansion. The Town should educate itself with state and federal transportation funding programs available to small communities in the event that the expansion goes forward.

**Hooksett Residential and Commercial Growth**

The population of Hooksett was 11,271 with the number of dwelling units at 4,150 in 2000. This results in 2.8 persons per household. In 1990, the population was 9,002, which is an increase of 33.7%. To put this in proportion, Pembroke's growth from 1990 to 2000 was 4.2%. With its high degree of commercial development along Route 3, Hooksett is a regional destination for area residents. Routes 3 and 3A are the primary travel corridors and traffic does not often flow freely.

The Town of Hooksett recently updated its Master Plan, which was last developed in 1989. One projection is that prime residential development in specific locations of Hooksett could increase number of homes by 1,650 by 2015 in these areas alone. Many housing options were explored in their new Master Plan, including cluster development, cost of housing, types of housing, and lot size. Economic considerations were also examined, such as conflicts between a downtown and a village and incentives for new businesses to locate to Hooksett. The Town presented the updated Master Plan to the public for review in late spring 2003.

With increasing population and housing trends, growth pressure from Hooksett may extend into Pembroke. Increased population in Hooksett will result in additional commuters. In addition, commercial growth will bring more through-traffic to Pembroke via Route 3. Sprawl from Hooksett may also result from further development as available land in Hooksett decreases.

The Central NH Regional Planning Commission, of which Pembroke is member, and the Southern NH Regional Planning Commission, of which Hooksett is a member, can serve as facilitators for communication on regional growth.

**How Pembroke Can Get Involved**

Pembroke should obtain a copy of Hooksett's Master Plan to try to coordinate development when possible. A regular regional dialogue should occur among Pembroke, Allenstown, and Hooksett as commercial and residential growth in Hooksett will have an impact on Pembroke, perhaps facilitated by the two regional planning commissions.

A buildout analysis should be conducted to guide the rewriting of pertinent regulations. Rewrites should include an emphasis on mixed use; encouraging infill and redevelopment; strengthening the Route 3 corridor in Pembroke with pedestrian facilities and access management.

The opportunities for bus service through the Concord Area Transit should be reevaluated on a regular service. At some point in the future, it may be able to connect Concord and Hooksett.

**Double-Decker Bridge Replacement**

The double-decker bridge crossing the Suncook River between Allentown and Pembroke is a key feature of the transportation network in the area. The bridge is also much more than simply a transportation feature, it is historic, it is unique in design, and it links two communities together. The decision to replace the bridge was not one made easily by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, but after examining the structural elements of the bridge, it was decided that building a new bridge was the best avenue to pursue. The US Route 3 bridge is currently scheduled to be replaced in 2006, although that date may still change in the future.

US Route 3 carries a large amount of traffic traveling between two large commuting destinations, Hooksett and Concord. It also carries a large amount of traffic between the Town of Pembroke and the Town of Allentown and is in fact, both communities' busiest roads. With approximately 10,000 vehicles per day traveling the corridor, the importance of the double-decker bridge is clearly evident. One of the most difficult elements of any road improvement project is managing traffic during the construction, particularly when 10,000 vehicles are involved. The New Hampshire Department of Transportation explored detouring traffic on adjacent local streets while the construction was taking place, but did not find this option suitable from a safety standpoint. The most reasonable option remaining is to construct the new bridge separate from the existing bridge on the southern side.

After hearing at several meeting from both the Town of Pembroke and the Town of Allentown, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation heard clearly that both communities would like to preserve the unique character that the existing double-decker bridge has. At this time, the preferred alternative includes constructing the new bridge as a double-decker bridge in an attempt to preserve as much of that character as possible. The new bridge, just as the old bridge does now, will include a lower-level local connector street with sidewalks. Changes are also planned for the intersection of Turnpike Street with US Route 3 to improve safety in the area. The existing open access from Turnpike Street to US Route 3 will be closed, requiring vehicles to access US Route 3 via School Street.

While the preferred alternative has been outlined by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, opportunities for public input and involvement still exist. The Department will hold a Public Hearing at some point in the months to come regarding the project. Any input received at the meeting will need to be considered by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation before a final design is settled on. The new US Route 3 bridge will function as a safe and efficient component of the transportation network and hopefully, it will also continue to have a unique character reminiscent of the original bridge.

Installation of the new bridge will disrupt traffic flow and will require an alternate route for water pipes for approximately one year.

### How Pembroke Can Get Involved

While the public involvement process for this project has been thorough, the Town of Pembroke should continue to strengthen the lines of communication with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and the adjacent communities to help ensure future projects experience similar success.

Working with the Highway District Engineer regarding road maintenance, winter plowing, and driveway permitting is one avenue to pursue to continue strengthening relationships.

### **Developments of Regional Impact**

At the time of plan acceptance, the individual Planning Boards of New Hampshire communities should determine whether or not the project before the Board is a development that has regional impact. As provided in RSA 36:55, a development would be considered as having regional impact if the project could reasonably be expected to impact a neighboring community because of its size, proximity to the neighboring community's transportation networks, proximity to aquifers, and if facilities such as schools and solid waste are shared. If the Planning Board concludes that a project is a development having a regional impact, notice has to be provided by certified mail to the respective regional planning commission and the affected municipality. All recipients will have the status of abutters for the purpose of being provided notice and giving testimony.

### How Pembroke Can Get Involved

Pembroke and area communities should regularly coordinate their planning efforts, including the regular use of the developments of regional impact statute, obtaining copies of Master Plans and regulations, and holding sub-regional planning conferences on a semi-annual basis.

### **Telecommunications Towers**

The dependence on and installation of cell towers are becoming prevalent in New Hampshire, including in the Central NH Region. Some communities do not permit telecommunications towers while neighboring towns actively promote them. Areas of "holes" exist where cellular reception is lost, and coverage is spotty at best. There is a level of inconsistency among towns, some of which regulate the placement and aesthetics of towers which are erected.

Pembroke has the telecommunications regulations to provide a uniform and comprehensive set of standards for the development of telecommunications facilities and the installation of towers and antennas and are designed to protect and promote public health, safety, community welfare and the aesthetic quality of the Town. Other goals of this ordinance include maximizing the use of existing towers and buildings to accommodate new antennas, retaining local responsibility for use of public-rights-of-way and ensuring compliance with FCC regulations on radio frequency exposure guidelines.



### How Pembroke Can Get Involved

The Town should attend state and regional conferences on telecommunications issues to remain educated on the issues. Representatives can lobby for complete cellular coverage and the development of consistent regulations.

### **Concord Airport Expansion**

Concord Airport serves the Central NH Region and welcomes corporate and private flyers with aircraft as large as a Boeing 727 and the military C-130 transport aircraft. The airport has 35,000 square feet of heated hangers and a dozen private T-hangers. A maintenance shop and an avionics shop are located on the field, as is a Hertz car counter. Several small aircraft are available for hourly rental to qualified pilots. Photo-survey flights are also provided. Concord hosts visiting candidates during the US Presidential primary season. Twice a year, Concord Airport is home to the NASCAR "Air Force" delivering drivers, owners, sponsors and officials to the New Hampshire International Speedway racetrack in Loudon.

Future expansion to the airport will increase the amount of noise pollution already experienced in Pembroke and the surrounding communities. As the size of the Manchester airport grows and its flight paths are changed, the Concord airport will also need to modify its routines and operations.

### How Pembroke Can Get Involved

Any significant expansion to the airport would normally be considered a development of regional impact by the City. Pembroke should take the opportunity to voice its concerns at this time.

## **OPPORTUNITIES OF PARTNERING WITH NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES**

These opportunities are not the influences reviewed in the previous section but offer a chance for Pembroke to join with other Towns to develop a project or produce a legacy. Regionally, towns may accomplish together what they could not accomplish alone because of funding, increased resources, or because of the sheer size of the goal. Pembroke should take advantage of the following special opportunities that will make a lasting a difference to the community.

### **Downtown Suncook**

Downtown Suncook is officially located in Pembroke right across the Suncook River from Allenstown. The entire area was more economically and characteristically united from 1735, when a bridge was built across the Suncook River, to the industrial age of the late 1800's and early 1900's. Mills were built along the banks of the River and provided employment for area residents. Once the use of the Old Meeting House was discontinued in 1876, community meetings were held at Hayes Hall in the Pembroke downtown area just south of the bridge. Culturally, Bartlett's Opera House opened in Suncook, at the same time as the use of the Hayes Hall commenced as a gathering place, hosting numerous grand performances by professional traveling companies.

Today, Suncook is a beautiful, quaint, and underutilized resource and commercial center. In recent years, revitalization efforts have repaired the Clock Tower and attracted businesses to the area. The Post Office, which proudly boasts the name, is situated in Suncook. The Suncook River offers scenic views. It has the potential to become a destination for residents of Pembroke, Allenstown, and travelers wanting to walk and shop in a historic downtown setting.

The Town of Allentown is looking to “streetscape” its Main Street using historically styled lighting, benches, signage, and street trees. A unique opportunity is available for Pembroke to culturally and visually connect to the existing Downtown Suncook in Pembroke by employing the same streetscaping methods.

#### How Pembroke Can Get Involved

Pembroke has a number of active groups that work hard to promote and revitalize Suncook. Pembroke should contact the Pembroke-Allenstown Old Home Day Committee and the Meet Me in Suncook group to establish interaction and begin a commitment to extend the “look and feel” of Suncook into Pembroke.

### PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The benefits to being involved with regional groups are a heightened awareness of how outside actions will have an impact on Pembroke and the ability to take advantage of the services and knowledge that is available to members or representatives. The shared pool of resources is an asset waiting to be tapped. In addition to the regional groups and organizations mentioned in the previous sections, solid relationships with the following entities should also be developed.

#### **Central NH Regional Planning Commission**

The Central NH Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC) is a voluntary member-driven planning advisory entity in the Concord area. Twenty communities are served. Membership to the CNHRPC provides access to free or low cost planning services such as Master Plan development, development review assistance, traffic counts, zoning ordinance revision, educational workshops, geographic information system mapping, information on latest available programs, grant projects, and statistical data.

#### How Pembroke Can Get Involved

The Town of Pembroke is currently a member of the CNHRPC. The Town is fully represented and takes advantage of the services CNHRPC offers. The Town should sustain its relationship with CNHRPC to ensure that Pembroke continues to learn how to utilize wise growth principles and techniques as the Town faces new development pressures.

**Regional Resource Conservation Committee**

The Regional Resource Conservation Committee (R2C2) is an advisory committee of the CNHRPC that meets quarterly. Comprised of Conservation Commission, Planning Board, and Board of Selectmen representatives from the 20 towns in the Central NH Region, the group discusses issues which affect their communities and holds guest speaker presentations to inform the R2C2 about the latest environmental or land preservation topics.

How Pembroke Can Get Involved

Pembroke does not have representatives to the R2C2, possibly because of a turn over in Conservation Commission members. The Town should appoint two representatives to the CNHRPC's R2C2.

**Transportation Advisory Committee**

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) is an advisory committee of the CNHRPC which is comprised of local appointed representatives from communities within the region as well as members from other local, state, and federal agencies. The official purposes of TAC are to provide technical advice and policy recommendations regarding transportation planning issues. The TAC organizes and recommends projects for the Regional Transportation Improvement Program, the State Transportation Improvement Program, and ranks Transportation Enhancement and Congestion Mitigation-Air Quality grant applications for funding. TAC meets quarterly.

How Pembroke Can Get Involved

Pembroke does not currently have a representative to the TAC. The Town should appoint a representative to CNHRPC's TAC to ensure that the transportation interests of Pembroke are represented.

**NH Office of Energy and Planning**

The Office of Energy and Planning (NH OEP) – formerly the Office of State Planning - is based in Concord and is legislatively required to plan for the orderly development of the state and the wise management of the state's resources; compile, analyze, and disseminate data, information, and research services to advance the welfare of the state; encourage and assist planning, growth management, and development activities of cities and towns; administer select federal and State grant-in-aid programs; and participate and advises in matters of land use planning regarding lakes and rivers management programs. The Office of Energy and Planning typically does most of its work with communities through the regional planning commissions.

How Pembroke Can Get Involved

The Town should be aware of the projects and services that the OEP offers. Particularly, the Planning Board should subscribe to the free Plan-Link list serve to be kept abreast of issues other towns in New Hampshire are facing with respect to growth. The NH OEP website should be regularly visited to view the calendar of educational planning workshops and events.

**New Hampshire Municipal Association**

The NH Municipal Association (NHMA) was formed over 50 years ago by a group of concerned local officials who felt that by pooling resources and concerns, New Hampshire communities could better work together with a common voice. Today, NHMA represents 233 of the 234 Granite State communities and offers legal and technical assistance, legislative representation, training and workshops, and personnel services.

How Pembroke Can Get Involved

Pembroke is currently a member of the NHMA. The Town should enhance its use of NHMA's services to take full advantage of its membership.

**Concord Area Trust for Community Housing**

Since 1989, the Concord Area Trust for Community Housing (CATCH) has been helping families to become homeowners or find a stable, affordable apartment in the Concord area. Their mission seeks to increase the supply of affordable apartments, searching beyond city limits to expand housing choices, educating and empowering families to take control of their finances, and nurturing neighborhoods through quality local management. To date, 142 dwellings have been built or rehabilitated and 350 people have gained access to decent and affordable housing.

How Pembroke Can Get Involved

From the **HOUSING CHAPTER**, Pembroke expressed interest in housing rehabilitation and should contact CATCH to find out if the organization can assist the Town. CATCH also offers homebuyer education programs and may be able to provide assistance to potential residents or current renters looking to purchase a home in Pembroke. Their brochures and information should be made available in Town Hall for residents to pick up when visiting.

**SUMMARY**

Although every community, including Pembroke, is faced with its own internal issues and concerns, Town governments need to be aware that it may not have much control over another whole set of issues that will affect the Town from the outside. Many different regional influences, from transportation growth to environmental threats to population and housing influxes, will exert degrees of pressure on Pembroke. Pembroke needs to be adequately prepared to handle these exterior demands by becoming involved in the regional processes and therefore being in a better position to respond positively to forthcoming pressures or problems. Establishing a relationship with regional groups and abutting communities will ensure that communication lines are open and that Pembroke finds itself in the best position to influence whatever demands come this way.