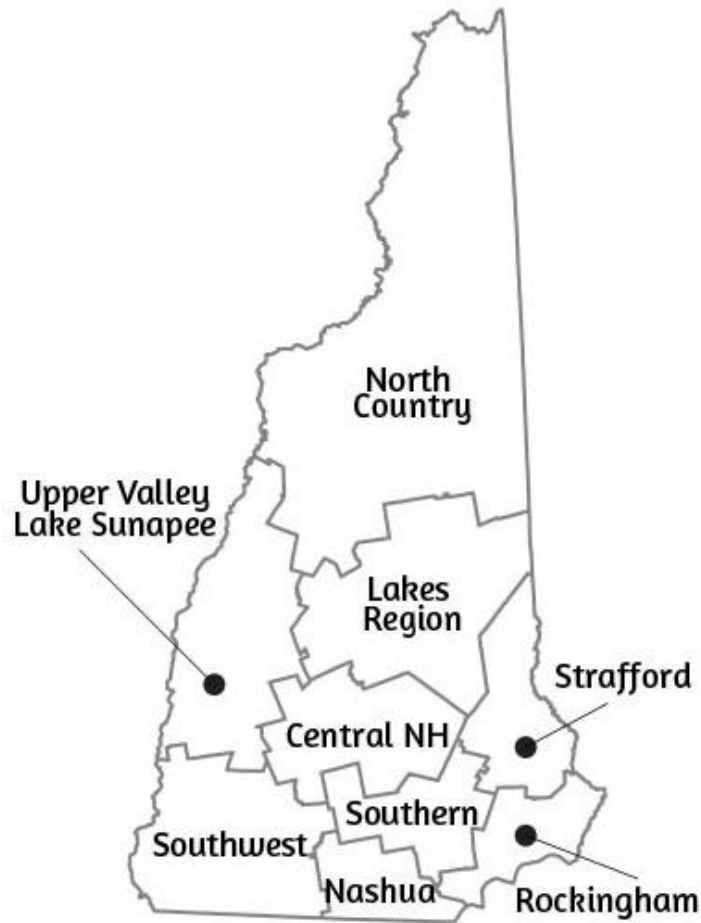


# Discussion Guide

Spring 2013 Regional Community Conversations

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Claremont Dover Plymouth Manchester Littleton Keene Berlin Pembroke Nashua Laconia Kington

## How Can We Make Our Community the Best Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play?

*A conversation about the future of our communities, our region, and our state.*

**Everyone Welcome!**

Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*

## Welcome and thank you for joining today's conversation ~

We look forward to your questions, concerns, ideas, and hopes for the future of our communities, our region, and our state and we welcome all perspectives. What do those of us who live and work here in New Hampshire want for the future of our communities? How can we keep what we value, meet the opportunities and challenges of our changing demographics, and increase economic vitality and opportunity? These are the kinds of questions at the heart of our conversation today.

This project asks us all to consider the critical question: How should we plan for the future? What core considerations should be the basis of planning for a thriving future? UNH Cooperative Extension and NH Listens have been asked by NH's nine regional planning commissions to design and host an opportunity for ***neighbors to talk with neighbors*** to identify local assets, local needs, and ways to effectively use limited government resources.

### Here is the general outline of our evening:

<b>6:00 – 6:30 PM</b>	<b>Registration and refreshments</b>
<b>6:30</b>	<b>Welcome and Purpose</b>
<b>6:45</b>	<b>Small group conversations</b>
<b>8:40</b>	<b>Large group summary reports</b>
<b>8:55</b>	<b>Next steps</b>
<b>9:00 PM</b>	<b>Closing</b>

**This guide is the same for all participants. The facilitators will help guide the conversation but we are all responsible for making sure the group is productive.**

**Thank you!**

**NH Listens** works to strengthen New Hampshire communities by helping citizens participate directly in discussions about policies that affect their daily lives. Established in 2011, we engage NH residents in local, regional, and statewide conversations on a broad range of topics to bring about informed, innovative solutions to complex issues. At the core of our work, we organize fair, nonpartisan discussions, help communities establish their own local Listens organizations, and train facilitators for public engagement. For more information see: [www.NHListens.org](http://www.NHListens.org)

UNH Cooperative Extension provides New Hampshire citizens with research-based education and information, enhancing their ability to make informed decisions that strengthen youth, families and communities, sustain natural resources and improve the economy. The community development staff works with citizens and civic leaders to strengthen community decision-making, engagement and local leadership development. For more information see: [www.extension.unh.edu](http://www.extension.unh.edu)

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## Detailed Outline

### 6:00 - 6:30    Registration

- Welcome and sign in at registration table
- Time to review the discussion guide and view maps displayed throughout the room
- Please join your small group circle for the introduction and to start the dialogue immediately thereafter. We encourage you to review the background information starting on page 8.

### 6:30 - 6:45    Welcome

- Welcome from a Regional Planning Commission Representative.
- Welcome and information from UNH Cooperative Extension and NH Listens Coordinators: Molly Donovan, Michele Holt-Shannon, and/or Bruce Mallory
  - The issues local leaders face are many, including public health, transportation, economic development, infrastructure, water, housing, land use, energy, cultural, historic, and natural resources, education and more.

***The goal of this conversation is to gather input from NH residents on their values and priorities related to:***

- New Hampshire's unique beauty and character
  - Local assets important to a lasting prosperity for all
  - Public infrastructure investment and maintenance
  - Local needs for capital investments.
  - Natural, social and financial resources
  - And any other relevant input from NH citizens on how we realize and accomplish shared priorities
- About the process: This conversation is...
    - Designed to focus on what is important to you related to these issues in your local community.
    - Designed for participants to be here the whole time (please do what you need to do to be most present: Feel free to take a break or step outside for a phone call if needed).
    - About a constructive focus and looking forward to desired actions and solutions.
    - Intended to augment and support traditional forms of government, not replace them.
    - Organized to allow the greatest possible time for everyone to both speak and listen, which is why we use small facilitated groups where ideas can be explored, differences understood, and preferences for action expressed.
  - Group agreements for a productive conversation:
    - Share “air time”
    - If you disagree, consider asking a question rather than arguing to prove your point

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- It's OK to disagree, but don't personalize it. Stick to the issue, not the person who is disagreeing with you
- Speak up if the process doesn't seem fair
- Speak for yourself, not for others and not for an entire group (use "I" statements)
- Personal stories stay in the group unless we all agree we can share them outside of the group \*
- We all share responsibility for making the group productive
- Be respectful and use respectful language
- Respect the facilitator's role
- Listen first...

*\* We are delighted to have this event covered by the press and local bloggers and want to balance that with a participant's ability to express an incomplete or experimental thought as a part of this process. We respectfully request all representatives of the news media (formal and informal) to ask permission to tape, photograph, identify or quote an individual participant directly. We are happy to answer any questions about this request.*

### **6:45 - 7:00    Introductions in small groups**

- Your small group has a neutral facilitator whose role is to:
  - Help with the process and keeping time
  - Serve as a reminder of our agreements to be fair and respectful
  - Make sure everyone gets a chance to participate, and
  - Assure recording of key information to submit in your small group's report
- Reminder: Your group will need someone to **report out** to the large group at the end.
- **Introductions:** One benefit of these conversations is to be in groups with people whose experiences and perspectives are different from your own. As a way to get to know each other a bit, please share your:
  - Name
  - Hometown
  - A few roles you have in your community (parent, business owner, elected official, teacher, retiree, student, etc.)
  - One reason you decided to spend this evening talking about the future of NH...

### **7:00 - 7:10    Our Task**

The scope of this project is enormous, including aspects impacting our daily lives from our health and safety, to the ways we preserve and enhance our quality of life, to making sure we are making smart decisions with limited resources to support shared goals.

### **Information Review**

Take the time to look over the information section (starting on page 8) about current trends related to issues traditionally considered in planning documents as well as issues that are connected to "livability" or quality of life. This is a lot of information and is not meant to be all-

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inclusive. While we won't be able to cover each area in depth, we will focus on each issue area with an emphasis on what participants find important to discuss.

There are pages of research on any and all of these issues in NH so we realize this can be overwhelming. For our purposes, we will be asking you “*what do you notice?*” or “*what is most important to you about this information?*” No one is expected to absorb all of this information tonight.

Take a few minutes to read and allow for clarifying questions.

**7:10 – 7:45    What do you notice? A brainstorm**

To simplify a very complicated set of topics, we will **take each focus area in turn** and ask you about each: *What do you notice? What is most important to you about the information?* We will do this briefly by area and then we will determine how best to spend our discussion time based on what you find important. (About 7 minutes for each focus area)


Focus 1: Who Lives in New Hampshire and How we are Changing:  
Aging, migration, and attracting people to live or stay in the State

Focus 2: How we Use Land and the Impacts of Our Choices:  
Land use, development, proximity to services, and community centers

Focus 3: Where We Live and How We Move Around:  
Housing, transportation, and the infrastructure for both

Focus 4: Your Community's Natural Environment, Climate Impacts, and Energy Efficiency:  
Including preservation of natural resources, energy diversity, and climate change adaptation

Focus 5: Community and Economic Vitality:  
Including poverty rates, unemployment, and educational opportunity

 **Group Report:** *Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.*

**7:45 - 8:45    Patterns and Biggest Challenges**

Next, consider the framing question: *How can we make our region the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?* Given your priorities when you came in and the information we have just reviewed:

- what are the **most important topics and issues** to be discussed?
- Do you see any **patterns** across the focus areas?
- What do you see as our **biggest challenges**?

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Consider some of these key questions listed below:

- Regarding our changing population how would our policies and practices need to change if we wanted to attract the 20-something's or 30-something's to the state? How do we need to prepare communities for the ultimate retirement of NH's substantial middle-aged population in the workforce? What infrastructure will we need to support our aging population?
- Regarding land use and community centers, what is the appropriate role for local planning and zoning?
- Regarding housing and transportation, are workers satisfied with their housing and transportation options relative to their work? Are there barriers to having diverse land uses such as housing, businesses, and offices in the same location? If so, what are they? Who is most impacted by these barriers? What would change if more people of various income levels had access to a variety of modes of transportation?
- Regarding our natural resources and climate, what is needed for us to keep NH as good or better for future generations? What are the most important long range decisions we need to make as a region and a state?
- With employers looking for strong, educated labor pools, access to contemporary information (broadband) and transportation infrastructures, what needs to be done to keep us competitive economically?



**Group Report:** Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.

### 7:45 - 8:15

#### **Values and Actions**

Based on the key issues your group has identified, you can choose to talk more in depth about a focus area. If your group seems stuck here, it is ok to continue to identify a variety of solutions to a variety of issues. The group decides. If one or two topics are of interest, help the group first explore aspects of the issue:

- What are the issues, barriers, challenges, opportunities related to this topic?
- What actions need to be taken over the next 25 years?
- What actions would move us forward on the issues of concern to you?



**Group Report:** Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.

### 8:15-8:35


#### **Final Priorities**

Based on your group conversation, *“Are there any common thoughts or ideas in this group? If so, what do we want to say at the end of the evening about each of the three focus areas? If not, what diverse points of view do we want to convey?”*


A single consensus is not expected, but if one emerges, or perhaps if the group wants to put forward two or three primary points of view, that is fine. These will represent your key recommendations and comments to the large group and to the Regional Planning Commissions.

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Your group will need to prioritize their top insights to report out to the large group and *select someone to speak*. The reporting out should include no more than **two or three** specific statements. To arrive at this point, the group should take a step back and look for *both the unique and recurrent ideas*. Group related ideas together, but don't lose track of the unique ones. The **written** small group report will convey a more complete view of your ideas (this **will not be edited or changed** and will be included directly in the report *as finalized by your group*). You will likely not have time to represent **all** of your ideas in the large group report out (two minutes!).

 **Group Report:** *What are your group's specific recommendations for making your community the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?*

If you have time...

 **RECORD:** *Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and regional planning commission Staff.*

**8:40 – 8:55**    **Reporting Out**

Each group will be asked to provide a VERY BRIEF summary of their most important findings, concerns or recommendations. If you are asked to speak for your group, please be brief and share what has been compiled *by your group*, including common ground and divergent views. (You will have two minutes!)

**8:55 – 9:00**    **Wrap up comments**

NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension Staff

- Please fill out the evaluation – it matters to us! We read these and always work to incorporate your feedback. Thank you!
- Next steps

**Thank you for participating!**  
**To keep in touch with the project go to:**

<http://www.GraniteStateFuture.org>

You can access information on your region at: [www.GraniteStateFuture.org](http://www.GraniteStateFuture.org)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ● Central NH Regional Planning Commission | ● Southern NH Planning Commission        |
| ● Lakes Region Planning Commission        | ● Southwest Region Planning Commission   |
| ● Nashua Regional Planning Commission     | ● Strafford Regional Planning Commission |
| ● North Country Council                   | ● Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC          |
| ● Rockingham Planning Commission          |  |

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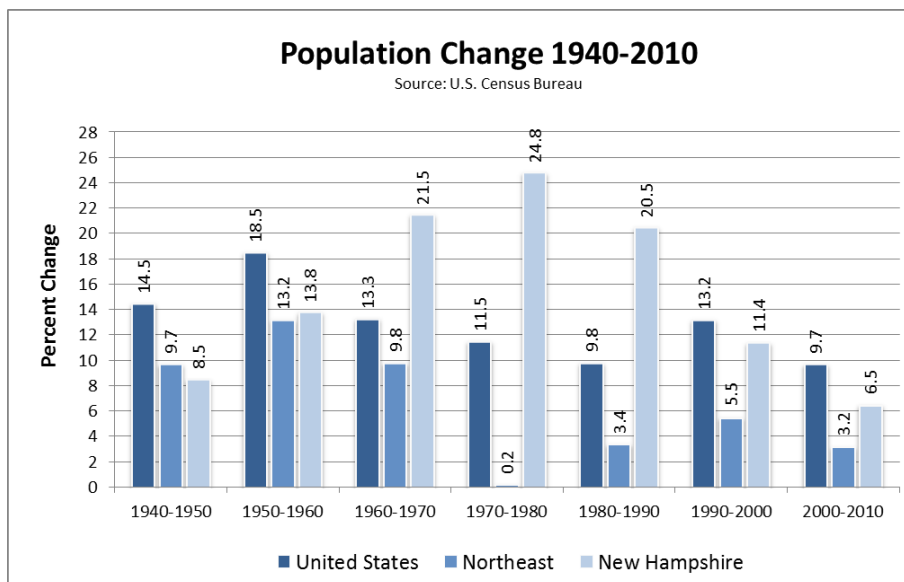
## Background Information

All material in this background summary can be found on the Granite State Future website at: [www.GraniteStateFuture.org](http://www.GraniteStateFuture.org). Several partners and sources contributed to the compilation of materials on this site and all full references are available there. In the following section, some materials have been adapted. They have been shortened and reformatted. This web address was sent out in advance to all who registered electronically.

The regional planning commissions (RPCs) were formed by New Hampshire's legislature in 1969 with a duty (among other things) to prepare advisory regional plans and provide an opportunity for coordination among municipalities. Each RPC is tasked with working with local communities and seeking direct input from citizens when developing the regional plan. The intent is to ensure a democratic process and to develop regional plans that reflect local voices. The plans created by each regional planning commission are advisory only, ensuring that local land use decisions remain local.

### Issue 1: Who Lives in New Hampshire and How are We Changing: Aging, migration, and attracting people to live or stay in the State

- New Hampshire is still growing but not nearly at the same rates of change that were seen in the past six decades.
- New Hampshire's increase of 80,700 persons between 2000 and 2010 predominantly occurred in the first half of the decade.
- Nearly half of the population growth in the last decade was from net migration into the State: 35,400 from migration and the remaining 45,300 was natural population change (births minus deaths).



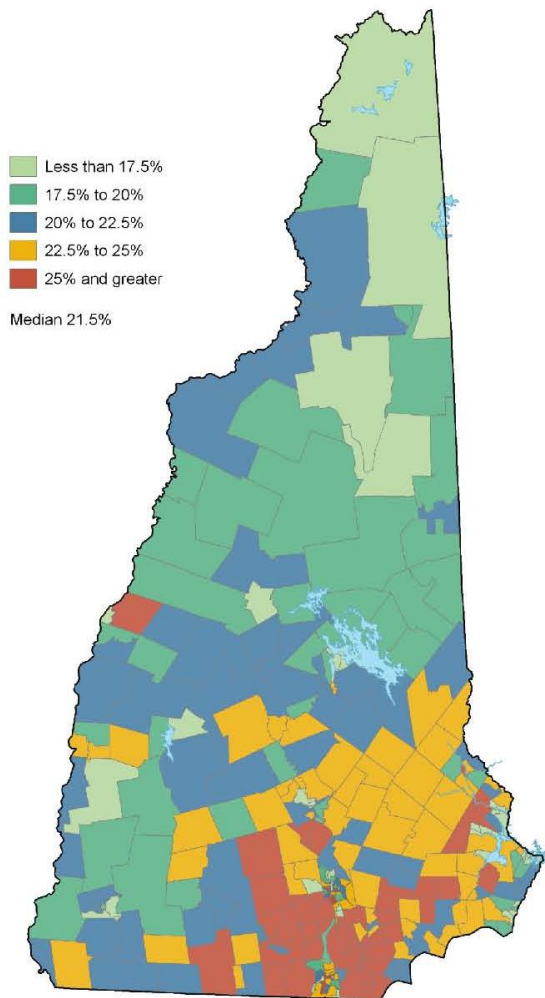
- New Hampshire's has a high proportion of its workforce near traditional retirement age, its population is growing older, and families are having fewer children.

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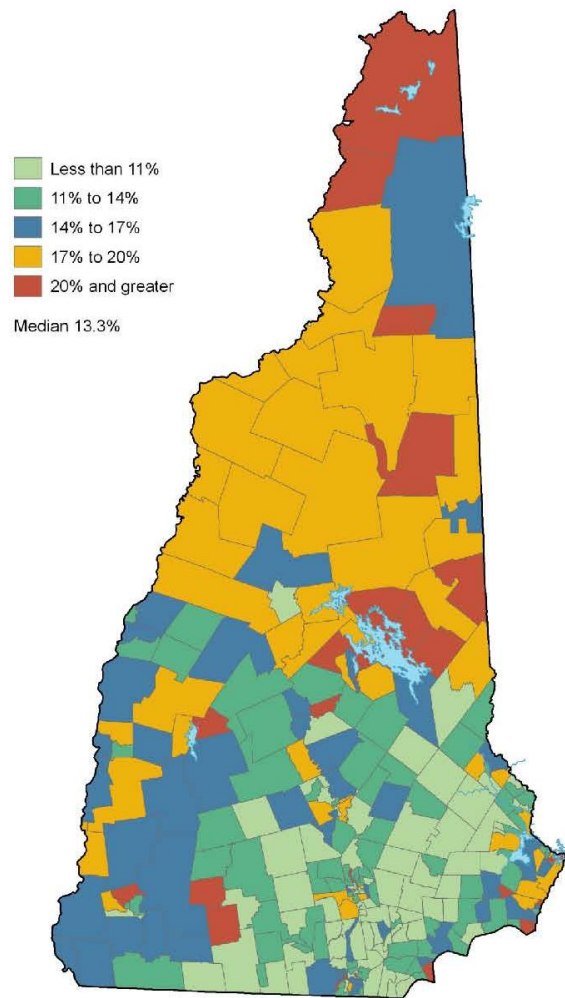
- New Hampshire has the 5th highest median age relative to other states (2005-09 American Community Survey).
- New Hampshire is the 31st highest state for population over the age of 65 (2005-09 American Community Survey).
- Past high rates of migration into New Hampshire that shifted the state away from having a high native born population have declined, losing both residents and the State’s workforce.
- The state will soon be facing a rapid increase in the size of its oldest population cohorts.
- Between 1990 and 2000, the state experienced a net out-migration of those between 20 and 29 (> 5,000 persons) and a net in-migration of those aged 30 – 39 (>15,000).

FIGURE 12A. PERCENT OF POPULATION AGE LESS THAN 18, 2010



Source: U.S. Census 2010

FIGURE 12B. PERCENT OF POPULATION AGE 65 AND OLDER, 2010



Source: U.S. Census 2010

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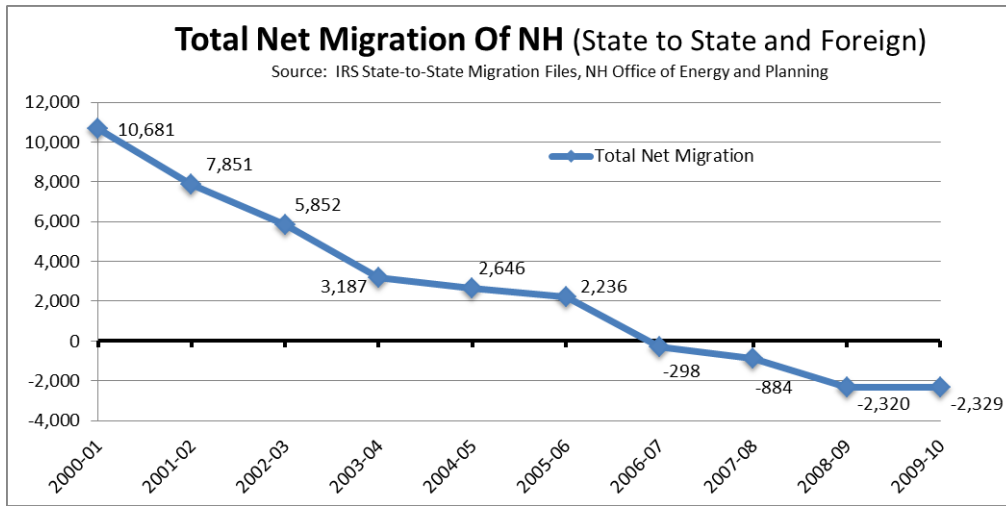
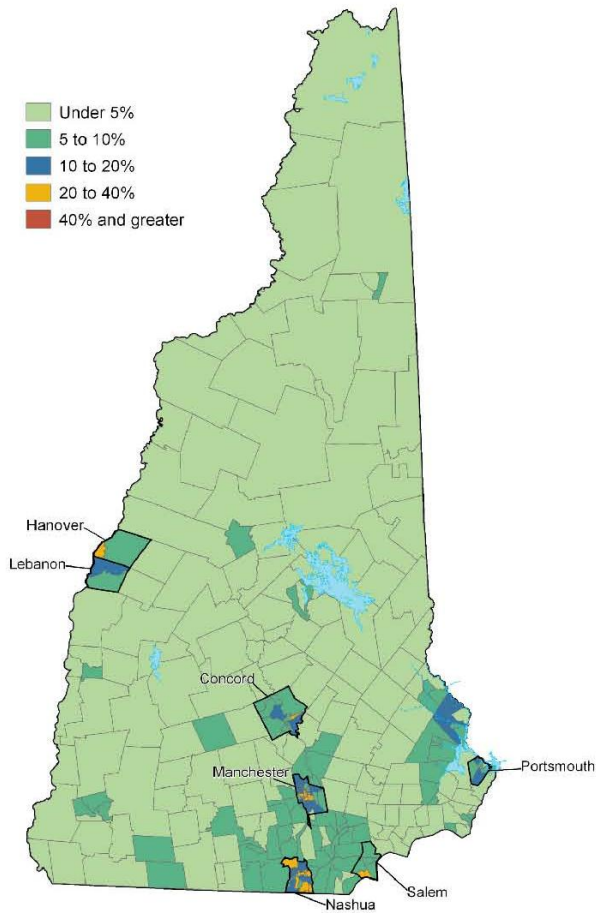
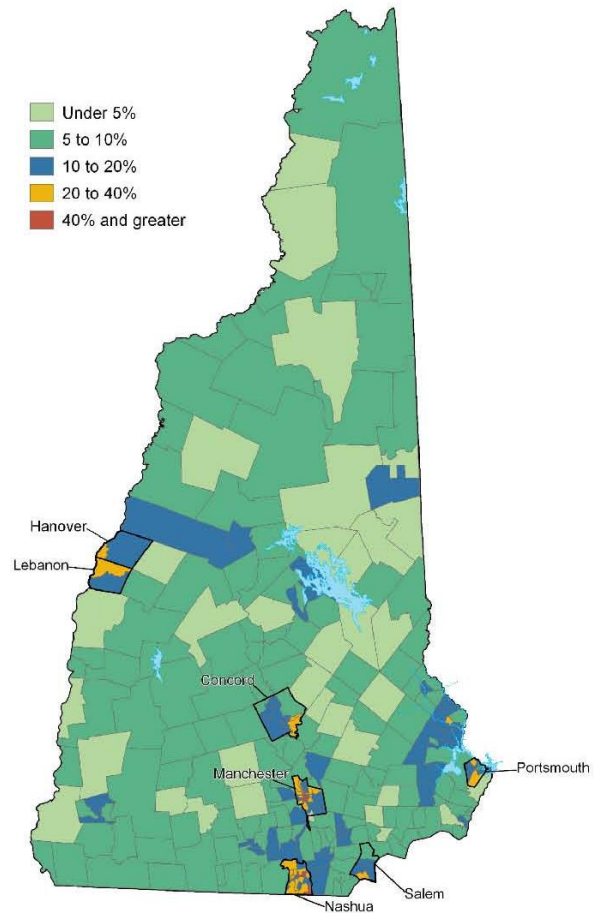


FIGURE 16. PERCENT MINORITY BY CENSUS TRACT, 2010



Source: U.S. Census 2010

FIGURE 17. PERCENT MINORITY UNDER 18 BY CENSUS TRACT, 2010



Source: U.S. Census 2010

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## **Issue 2: How we Use Land and the Impacts of Our Choices: Land use, development, proximity to services, and community centers**

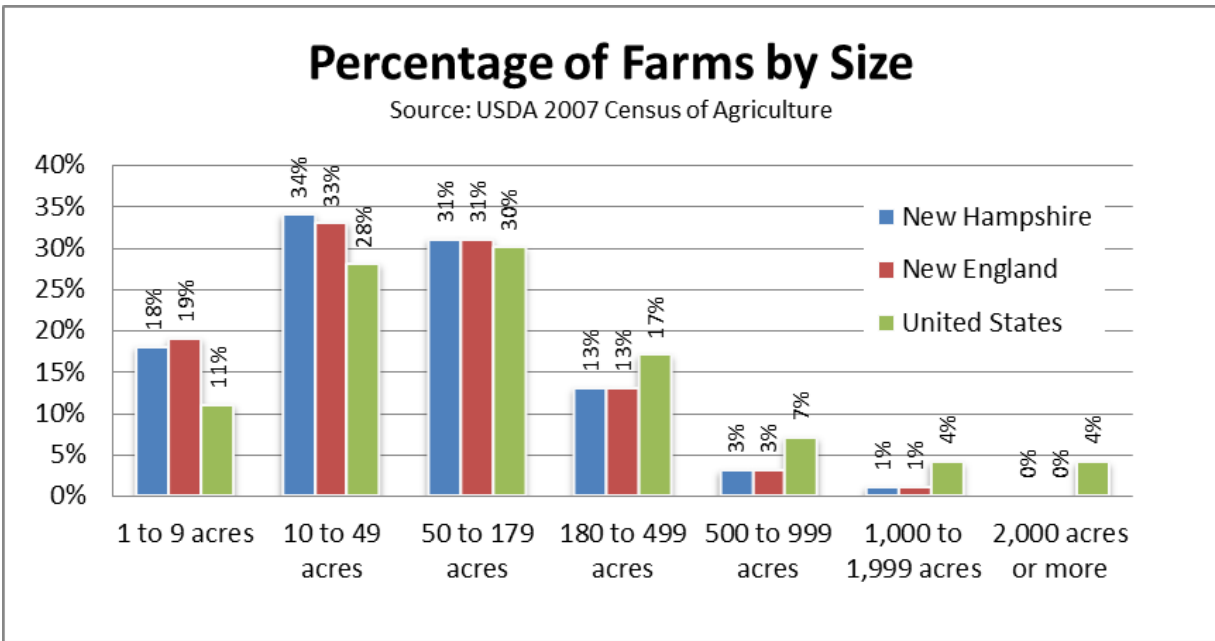
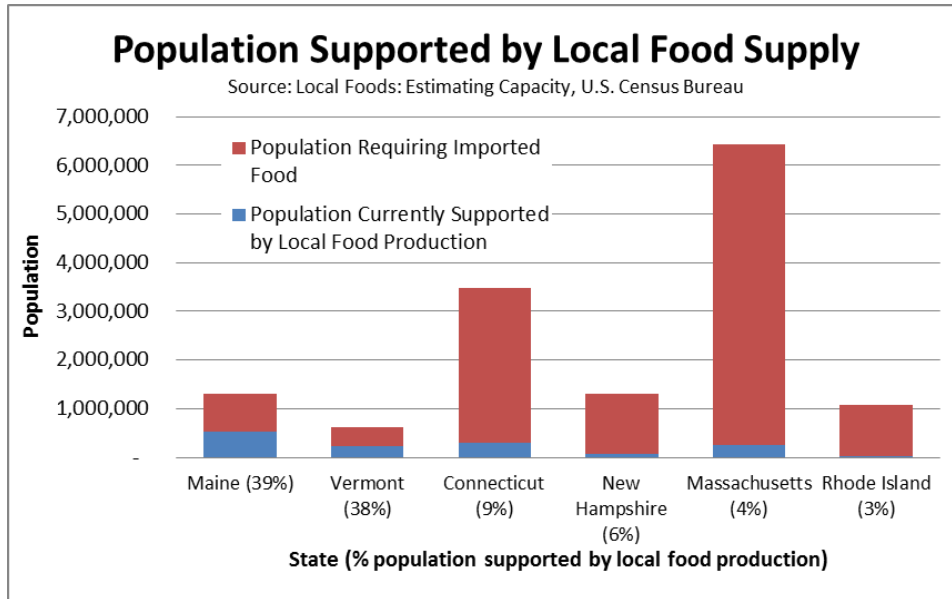
### *Development*

- New Hampshire's regions each have a mix of development patterns including rural, suburban and urban that each present different opportunities and costs for residents and businesses.
- Proximity to full-service grocery stores varies greatly across the State requiring some to drive longer distances to purchase healthy food for their families.
- Across the State, nearly all households pay on average 50% of their income for their combined housing and transportation costs.
- Over the last 20 years New Hampshire's urbanized areas have expanded, growing from 269,874 acres in 1990 to 412,185 in 2010.
- Beyond the SE portion of the state, much of the rest of the state still contends with high property values (land prices have risen 61% since 1998), lower incomes and long drive times, which make these areas less affordable.
- From 1960 to 2010, NH's population more than doubled from about 600,000 to over 1.3 million people. This resulted in a loss of open space (approximately 17,500 acres of forestland every year) and for many communities this can represent a loss of the rural landscapes that drive NH's economy and define a sense of place.
- Most notable expansions of urbanized area corresponded with those areas that saw the greatest population gains – Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties which grew from 336,073 and 245,845 persons in 1990 respectively to 400,721 and 295,223 in 2010, and where the urbanized land areas expanded from 74,700 and 88,922 acres in 1990 respectively to 125,915 and 165,783 acres in 2010. This represented a 19% population growth and 69% increase in urbanized land area for Hillsborough County and a 20% population growth and 86% increase in urbanized land area for Rockingham County.

### *Open Space, Habitat, and Diverse Landscapes*

- New Hampshire is the second most forested state in the nation with 84% or 5.95 million acres of its landscape forested.
- While the federal government has preserved the most acres, nearly 46% of all conservation land in the state, over the last 10 years private acquisition of land has seen the greatest increase in conserved acres.
- From 2006 to 2010 land preserved by private owners increased by 37,093 acres, a 13% increase and all preserved land increased from 1.67 to 1.72 million acres over the same time frame, a 2.9% increase.
- There is a strong and growing interest in local food production in New Hampshire and preserving local agriculture, which can ultimately contribute positively to the State's food security, environment, health, and nutrition system.

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**Water**

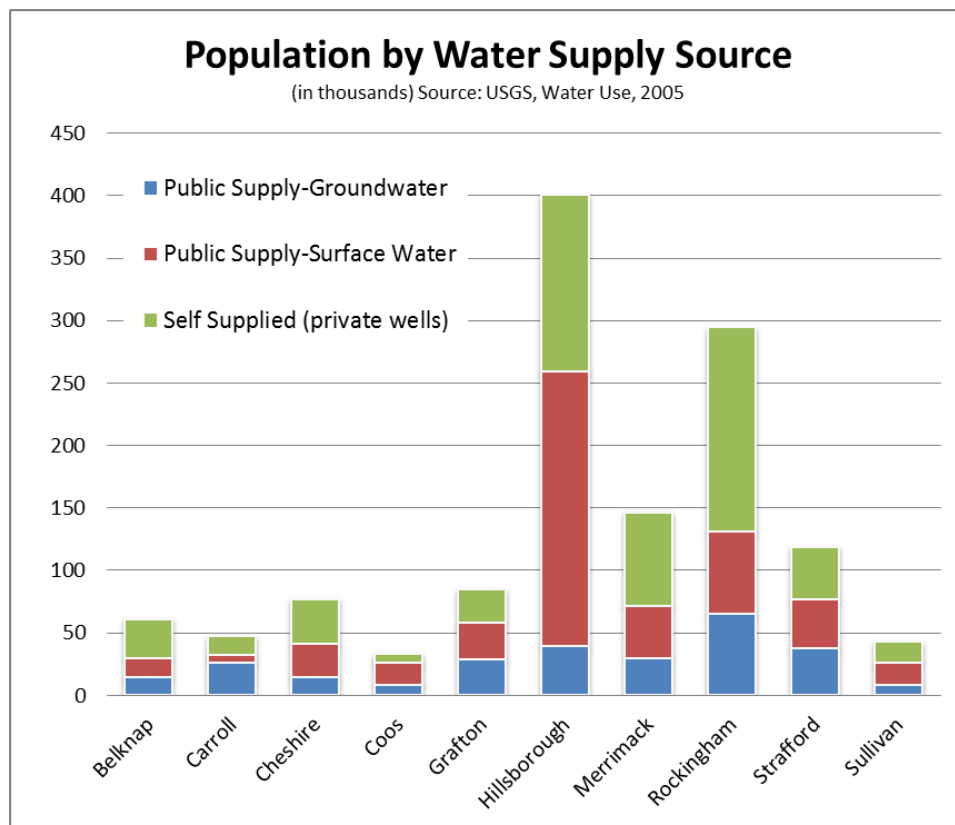
- **Vulnerable Water Supply:** Only 58% of NH residents are served by public water systems. The majority of these systems (82%) are small community systems serving fewer than 500 residents. The other 42% rely on private wells with over 4,700 new wells constructed each year. Significantly, just 10% of the most critical lands around public water supply wells and aquifers are protected.
- Compared to the national average of 14% of the population dependent on private wells, in 2005 42% of NH’s population relied on private wells, which was a 54% increase over 1985 levels in state.
- The high proportion of self-supplied water sources in NH compared to national averages may be largely attributable to the state’s more rural nature, however, within the state, the most rural county, Coos,

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has the smallest percentage of its population served by private wells (21%) and Rockingham County, the greatest share of its population supplied by private wells (54%).

- From 1985 to 2005 the amount of water withdrawn from private wells has doubled from 21.65 million gallons per day to 41.65.
- New Hampshire has 16,984 miles of rivers and streams, 164,615 acres of lakes and ponds, and nearly 1,000 lakes greater than 10 acres.
- While the State’s coastline is only 18-miles long, there is a strong seacoast environment with a balance between ecology and tourism.
- Tourists are estimated to have spent \$775 along the Seacoast in 2010 (*New Hampshire Fiscal Year 2010 Tourism Satellite Account*, Plymouth State University).
- 83% of impaired water is due, in part or in whole, to stormwater runoff pollution (source: NHDES Section 305(b)/303(d) Water Quality Assessment Report)
- Clarity of NH Lakes has declined by 1% per year since 1985 (Source: NHDES Water Quality Program)
- Currently NH has a 2.3% chance of a beach advisory for poor water quality any given day (Source: NHDES Water Quality Program)
- The total sales generated by recreational uses (i.e., boating, fishing, swimming) of New Hampshire's freshwaters, and by public drinking water supplies, range from \$1.1 billion to as much as \$1.5 billion annually. (Source: NHDES Lakes program)



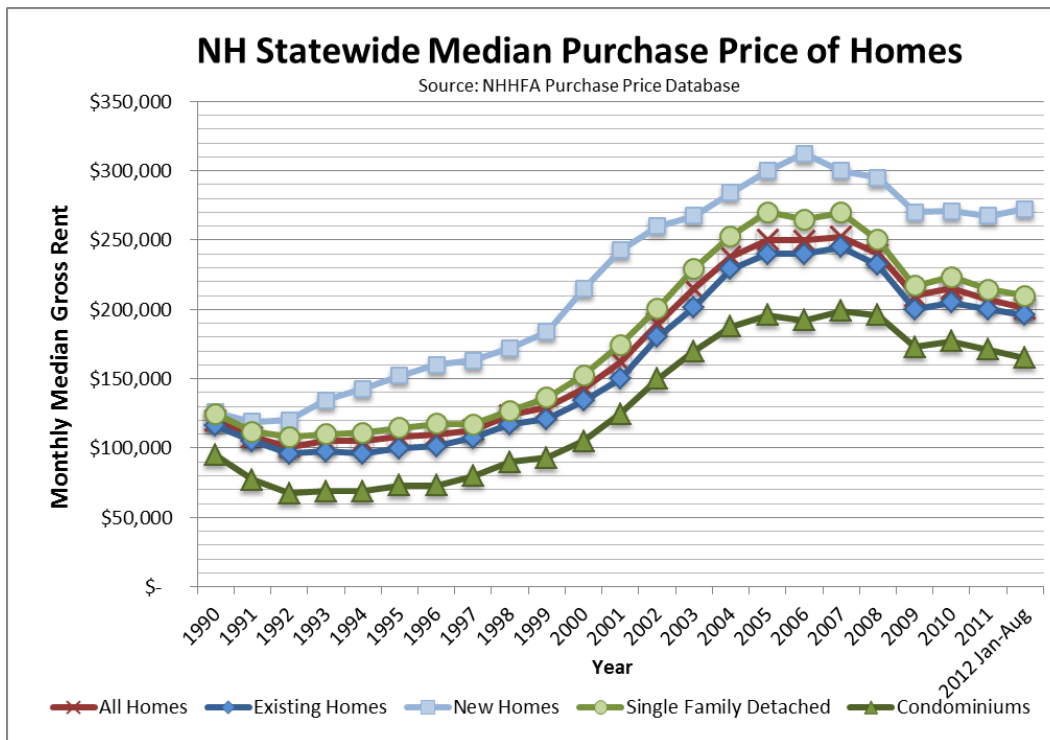
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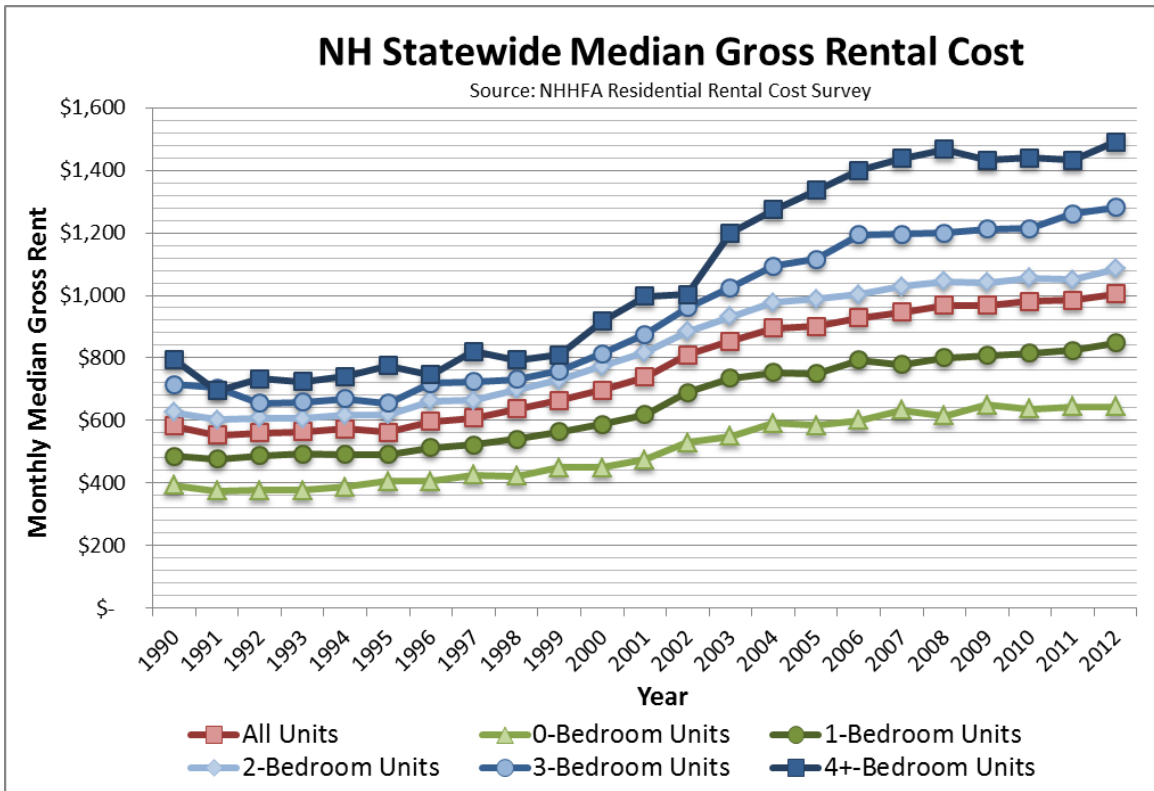
### Issue 3: Where We Live and How We Move Around: Housing, transportation, and the infrastructure for both

#### Housing

- A variety of housing choices ensure that everyone, no matter what their income level, has convenient and affordable choices in where they live. This includes a variety of housing options and ownership types that appeal to people at any stage of life and is convenient to where they work, shop, and play.
- According to the US Census American Community Survey, NH is ranked 5th highest nationally in housing costs. In 2007, while the average housing cost as a percentage of income in the US was 37.5, NH's housing cost as a percentage of income was 40.5.
- NHHFA reported a record number of foreclosures in March of 2011, the highest monthly number recorded (543 foreclosure deeds) - an increase of 21% over foreclosure deeds recorded in March 2010.
- NH's housing stock is predominantly comprised of owner occupied single-family housing, with little diversity and little growth over the last decade.
- New Hampshire saw its largest drop in median home prices in 2009 – down to \$210,000. While there was a modest gain in 2010, a median home price of \$215,000, home prices have since continued to decline to a low of 200,900 median purchase price for January to August of 2012. (*Purchase Price Trends*, NHHFA, October 2012)



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Percent of Homes Affordable to Households Earning 80% of the Area Median Income		
Region	Renter	Owner
Central NH Planning Commission	54.0%	11.0%
Lakes Region Planning Commission	55.0%	13.9%
North Country Council	55.4%	22.3%
Nashua Regional Planning Commission	52.6%	7.3%
Rockingham Planning Commission	49.6%	38.8%
Southern NH Planning Commission	56.3%	9.0%
Southwest Region Planning Commission	52.0%	15.0%
Stafford Regional Planning Commission	59.1%	13.9%
Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Com.	49.0%	14.0%
<b>New Hampshire</b>	<b>54.2%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>

Source: HUD Community Planning and Development Maps, 2005-2009 ACS, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data

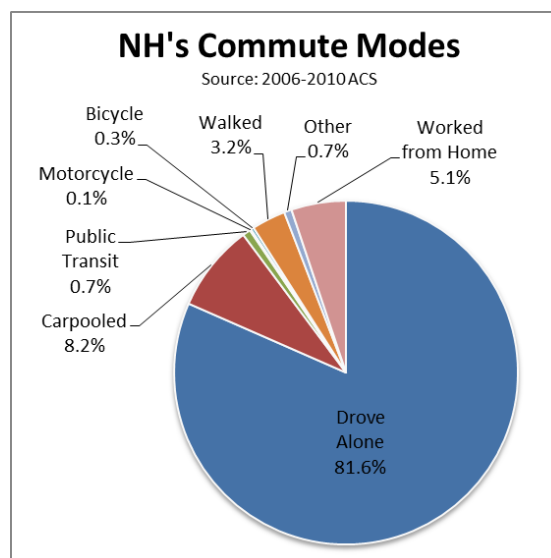
### Transportation

- Transportation choices provide a number of options that help people safely and efficiently get where they need to go, whether it is by walking, driving, biking, public transportation, carpooling, or taking a train or plane. Transportation networks should make it easy to get from one place to another, and should also allow the efficient movement of goods to support the economy (commercial freight, rail, and air transport).

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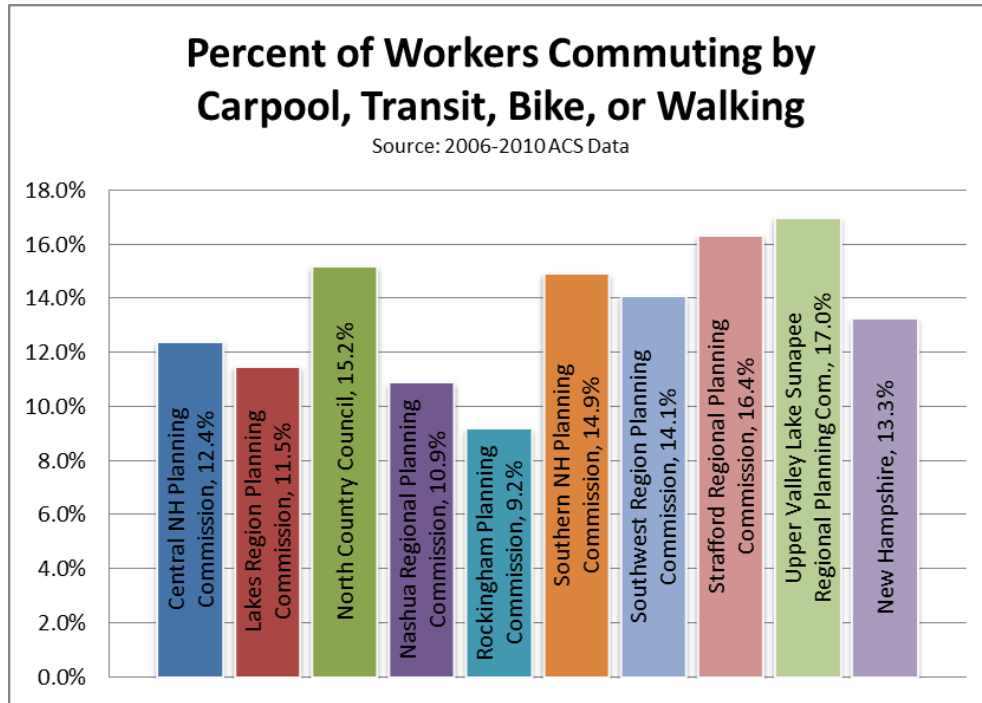


- Traffic on NH highways has increased at nearly double the rate of population growth between 1960 and 2000. Approximately 90% of commuting trips in NH are by automobile (95% in rural counties). Most of the rest is accounted for by intra-city bus transit in a few urban areas including Manchester, Nashua, Concord, and Hanover-Lebanon with comprehensive community routes and service to select locations in Portsmouth, Dover, Durham, Newington, Rochester, and Somersworth (11 out of the State’s 234 municipalities).
- Inter-city bus connections are available between major shopping centers on the seacoast, as well as, Concord, Manchester, Londonderry, Nashua, Portsmouth, and Boston and train service connecting Dover, Durham and Exeter with Portland, Maine and Boston. Otherwise, NH is lacking in comprehensive alternative transportation options and for the vast majority of residents their car is the only option.
- In 2009, 82% of all work commutes were by single occupant vehicle. In a survey conducted in 2008 by the Southwest RPC, the lowest-income households spent over 30% of their income on transportation, largely the cost of maintaining an automobile and fuel.
- New Hampshire is projected increase in the share of the population over the age of 65, and some counties more so than others. This creates an increased demand for transportation options, transit, and emergency services.
- New Hampshire’s residents are highly dependent on personal vehicles, yet despite the greater percentage of individuals driving their own vehicles to work every day, we are safer drivers.
- Drivers in New Hampshire own slightly more than the national average number of vehicles per licensed driver (1.68 compared to 1.61) however, overall the number of vehicles registered in New Hampshire has decreased over the last 5 years.
- NH has one of the lowest rates of public transit ridership in the nation (0.7%) compared to the national average of 5% and one of the highest shares of drivers who ride alone (82% compared to 76% nationally).
- Most people outlive their driving ability – men by an average of six years and women by an average of 10 years – and ability to operate personal automobiles may become limited due to declining vision and decreasing reaction times. The resulting reduction in mobility increases the demand for regional transportation services.



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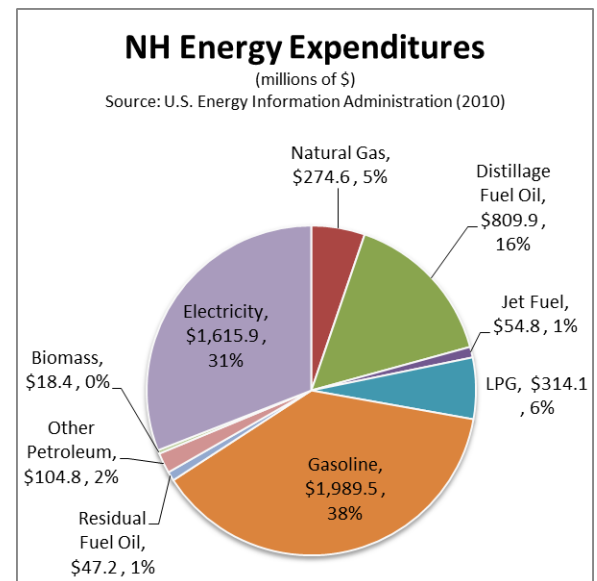
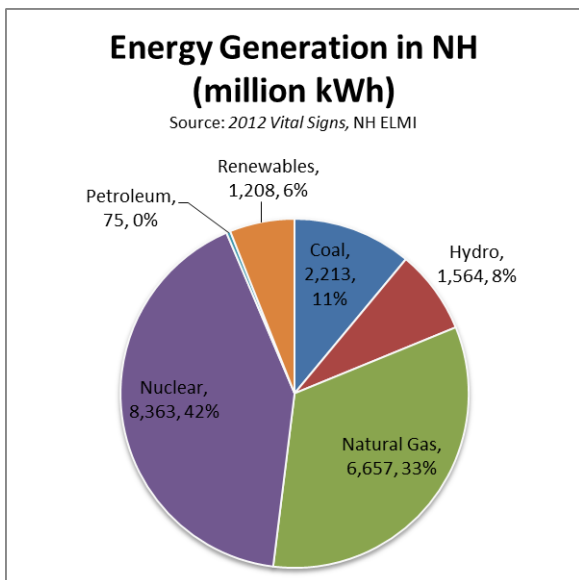
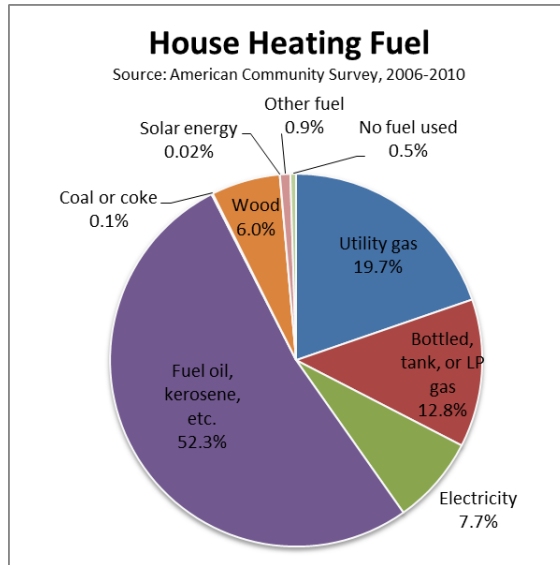
State Highway Pavement in Good or Fair Condition	2,695 miles
Red Listed State Bridges	149 bridges (6.9%)
Rail Lines Capable of Speeds of 40mph	103 miles
Airport Runway Surface Average Conditions	Good
Remaining Useful Life of Transit Buses	49% of life remaining
<b>2011 Measures of State Transportation Mobility</b>	
Transit Ridership	3,415,291 riders
Rail Ridership	210,231 riders
Air Ridership	2,831,673 enplanements & deplanements
Total Freight Shipped via all Modes	68,667,213 tons
Average Level of Service on Selected Highway Segments	C (.68) level of service

#### **Issue 4: New Hampshire’s Natural Environment, Climate Impacts, and Energy Efficiency: Including preservation of natural resources, energy diversity, and climate change adaptation**

- In recent decades, New Hampshire has seen an increase in extreme storms and flooding coupled with steadily rising fuel and energy prices.
- New Hampshire depends on foreign oil and home heating can be costly, however, there are great opportunities to lower State energy dependencies and become more efficient.
- New Hampshire nationally ranks as the 44th lowest for total energy consumed per capita, 224 BTU compared to a high of 948 in Wyoming and a low of 187 in Rhode Island. (U.S. Energy Information Administration)
- New Hampshire was the eighth lowest per capita consumer of energy among the States in 2010.

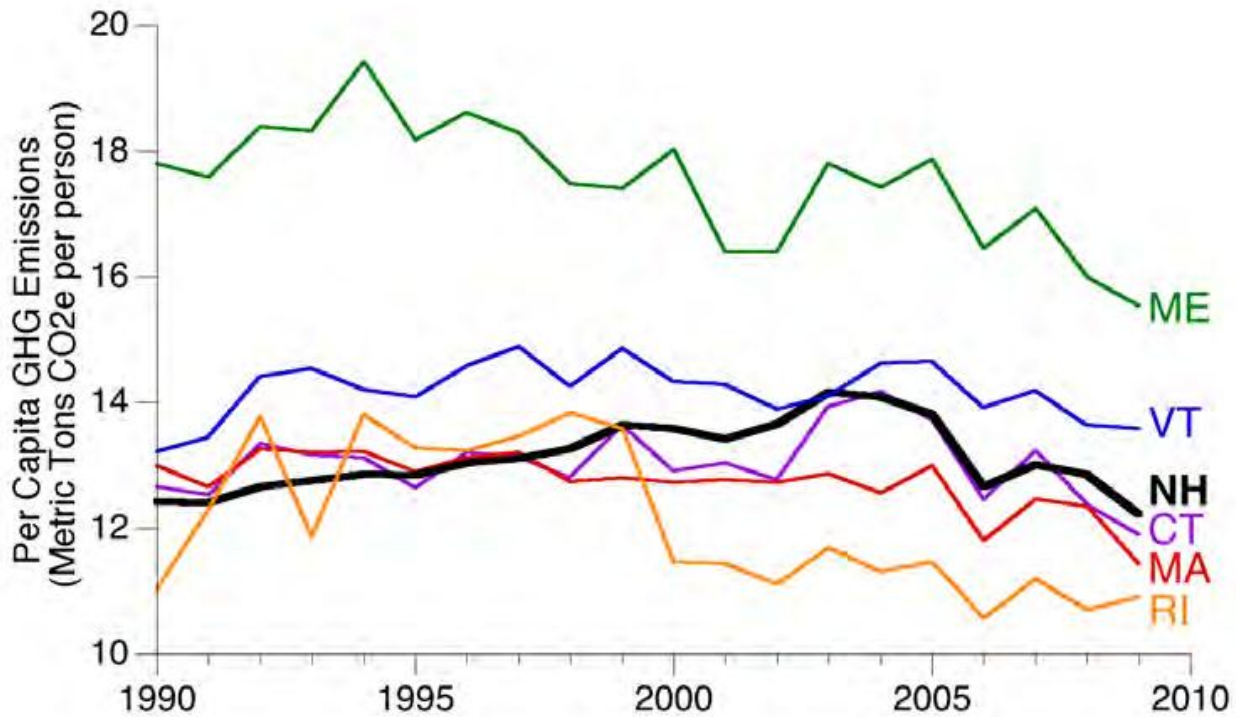
**Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension**

- The transportation sector accounted for 36 percent of the State’s energy consumption in 2010. (U.S. Energy Information Administration)
- From 2005-2008, average household expenditures on thermal (heating) and electrical energy increased from \$2,823 to \$3,210 (in 2009 dollars). It then decreased in 2009 to \$2,818. Most of this was a reflection of change in the price of heating oil. (NH’s Energy, Environmental, and Economic Development Benchmark Report, NH Energy and Climate Collaborative, 2012, p. 19)



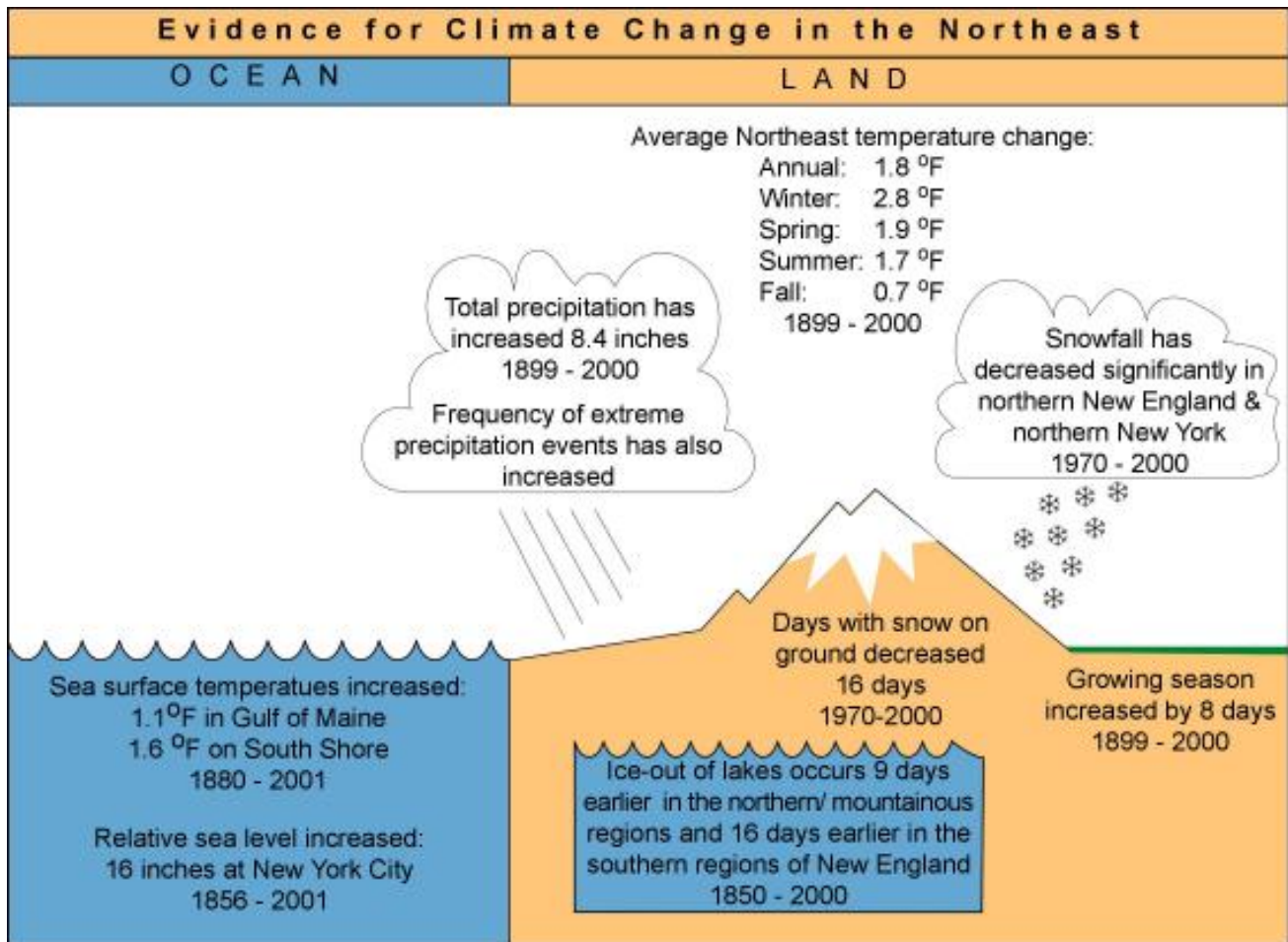
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- From 2005-2009, NH's per capita emissions of GHG from in-state energy consumption for electrical, thermal, and transportation uses decreased from 13.8 to 12.2 metric tons of CO2 emissions, mimicking trends in other New England states. (*NH's Energy, Environmental, and Economic Development Benchmark Report*, NH Energy and Climate Collaborative, 2012, p. 17)
- Changing climate and emergency management influence how we shape future land use patterns.



Source: *NH's Energy, Environmental, and Economic Development Benchmark Report*, NH Energy and Climate Collaborative, 2012.

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Source: *Indicators of Climate Change in the Northeast 2005, Clean Air – Cool Planet* and Cameron Wake, *Climate Change Research Center, University of New Hampshire*.

**Issue 5: Community and Economic Vitality:**  
**Including poverty rates, unemployment, and educational opportunity**

Community and Economic Vitality often means financial investment to attract and retain economic opportunity to foster community growth and ensure the highest quality of life for New Hampshire residents.

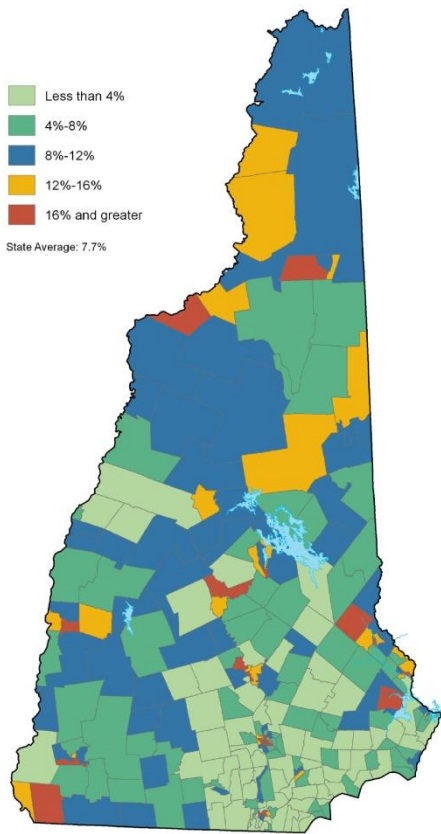
- The six most rural of NH’s ten counties, comprising approximately 27% of the state’s population have an average per capita income (PCI) of \$40,000, below the state average. Four of the State’s counties, representing the northern and western most areas of the state, are below both the state and national average PCI.
- Access to childcare, healthcare and basic services is a critical issue for non-driving residents of the state. A NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) report estimates that while childcare accounts for a near equal share of state GDP and jobs as travel and tourism, childcare centers operate under a chronic 35% deficit, making this critical component of the state’s economy tenuous for working families to identify quality and consistent childcare near employment centers.

**Compiled by NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension**



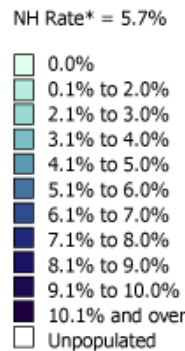
- New Hampshire residents, as a whole, have more wealth compared to the overall national averages; however, there are pockets within the state where poverty levels are rising.
- NH's jobless rate peaked in 2009 at just over 7% (nationally peak was just over 10%)
- NH's current unemployment rate is approximately 5.4%, still above pre-recession rate of just over 4%. The current national rate is just below 10%.
- NH's 2011 average unemployment rate is the 4th lowest nationally – 5.4% compared to 8.9% nationally.
- NH's 2011 per capita personal income was \$45,881, which was above the national level of \$41,560; however, below that of New England (\$51,274).
- NH's 2011 unemployment rate was highest in Coos County (7.6%) and lowest (4.5%) in Grafton County. (Bureau of Labor Statistics)
- According to the 2009 American Community Survey, 5.5% of New Hampshire families were below the poverty rate, nearly half the national level, and its median household income was \$60,567, which was 120% of the national average.

FIGURE 21. PERCENT POVERTY



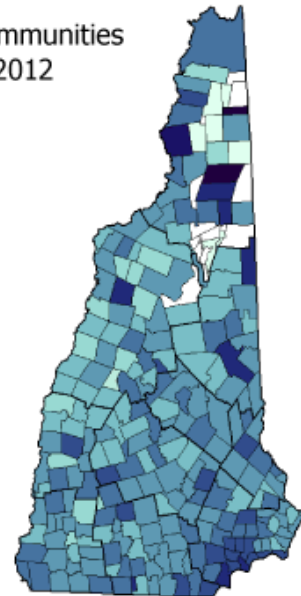
Source: U.S. Census 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Unemployment Rates\* for NH Communities  
Preliminary September 2012



\*preliminary, not seasonally adjusted

Source: Economic & Labor Market Information Bureau, NHES  
25-Oct-12  
Next Scheduled Update: Nov-12



Compiled by *NH Listens* and *UNH Cooperative Extension*

**Granite State Regional Community Conversations: Small Group Report**

Location: (circle one)

- Berlin          Claremont          Dover          Greenland          Keene          Kingston          Laconia  
Littleton          Manchester          Nashua          New London          Pembroke          Plymouth  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Small Group Facilitator Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Letter: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people in your small group: \_\_\_\_\_

Each group is asked to provide a written summary of their deliberations including the following information and any additional information the group desires to add (feel free to use the reverse side). Please be sure this report is finalized by your group prior to dispersing:

1. Finalize a list of the key topics raised by your group for each focus area and note the issues your group wants to address/discuss.
2. Group Report: Chart the most important issues, patterns and challenges as identified by your group.
3. Chart the topics and solutions/actions identified by your group.
4. What are your group’s specific recommendations for making NH the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?
5. Please add any additional information that your group feels is important to pass along to local decision makers and Granite State Future Project Staff.

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