



### ■ THE NEXT TEN YEARS

The 2012 Master Plan vision embodies the collective experience, knowledge and opinion of Planning Board members, Town officials and municipal employees, and the participating public. The Planning Board recommends the following general goals for the 2012 Master Plan:

Community character is maintained and nurtured

Economic vitality is encouraged and sustained

Natural resources are protected and conserved

The integrity of Fitzwilliam's historic past is preserved

Exceptional municipal service is provided to our residents.

### Goal #6: Support and Encourage Economic Development

In a Town with many home-based or small businesses, Fitzwilliam residents need access to high speed broadband internet and cell phone services, which is also essential to supporting and attracting new economic development. An Economic Committee was established in 2011 to investigate expansion and/or relocation of businesses in Fitzwilliam and act as an advocate for existing businesses.

### Goal #7: Support and Encourage Energy Conservation

Energy conservation can mean a number of things, from reducing the amount of fossil fuel one uses to using sustainable building and development practices. The Energy Committee focuses on the impact of climate change and evaluation of energy usage.

### ■ CONCLUSION

The Town of Fitzwilliam has been involved in land use planning for many years. The Planning Board held their first meeting on Wednesday evening, November 23, 1966. The first master plan was adopted in 1981 and in 1987 the first zoning ordinances were passed. The master plan was updated in 1995 and 2004. The 2012 Master Plan represents the Planning Board's best efforts to balance the diverse interests of the Town by recommending a land use strategy that it believes will further the vision of the residents for the future of Fitzwilliam.



# *“Growth is inevitable... ..and desirable, but destruction of community character is not.”*

THE QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER YOUR PART OF THE WORLD IS GOING TO CHANGE. THE QUESTION IS HOW.

— EDWARD T. MCMAHON, THE CONSERVATION FUND

As Fitzwilliam prepares to celebrate its 250<sup>th</sup> birthday, we remain a Town of historic architecture and natural beauty. Planning must balance protection of natural resources with accommodation of growth and economic development.

## ■ POPULATION, GROWTH AND HOUSING

Fitzwilliam has steadily gained population over the past 50 years, although the rate of increase has slowed. Fitzwilliam today has a declining population of children and young people and a growing population of older residents. The housing stock is predominantly single-family, most of which was built prior to 1970, and includes 285 historic properties.

Fitzwilliam residents, regardless of age or income, see the Town as being a good place to live, and they believe in equal opportunity for a variety of housing types.



## ■ FUTURE LAND USE

As in other small rural Towns, people are the heart and soul of the community and its most valuable resource, challenging the Planning Board and Town government to meet their needs and plan a future that is compatible with citizens' vision.

### Goal #1: Maintain Fitzwilliam's Rural Character

The Planning Board made some assumptions of what constitutes our rural character:

- Forested and Farm Lands
- Open Space
- Low Impact Commercial Development
- Stone Walls, Dark Skies, Scenic Roads

### Goal #2: Protect Water Supplies

The importance of protecting water supplies is self-evident because most people in Fitzwilliam



rely on groundwater as their primary water source. The Town continues to explore the possibility of community water and wastewater systems.

### Goal #3: Preserve Historic Sites and Buildings

By their very nature historic neighborhoods embody the principles of smart growth and sustainable development. For more than two and half centuries Fitzwilliam has invited homes, farms, businesses, municipal buildings and community organizations to exist side by side in a rural village setting.

### Goal #4: Preserve Fitzwilliam's Natural Resources

Protection and preservation of Fitzwilliam's natural resources is a principal theme that has emerged from various community planning efforts. A Natural Resources Inventory, published in 2009, was the first step in preserving the rural features of the Town.

### Goal #5: Support Affordable Housing Opportunities

Affordable housing options is an issue for individuals and speaks to the overall health and welfare of the community as a whole. The Town needs to consider provisions for aging-in-place, multigenerational families living together, and housing for its labor force.