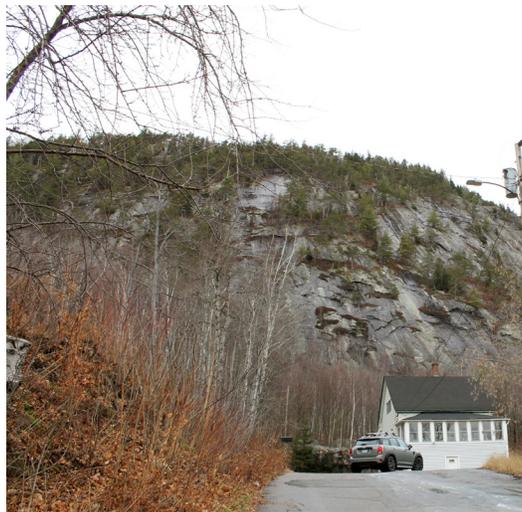


Analysis of Existing Plans and Studies



Berlin, NH
Master Plan Update

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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to summarize key findings, data, and recommendations developed through city planning efforts since Berlin's Master Plan was last updated (2010). This gives us a snapshot into how Berlin has changed since 2010, what the City has been working towards, and what priorities and initiatives have already been identified by the City. Each planning document is summarized in its own section on the following pages and includes implications for the 2021/22 Master Plan update.



2019 Berlin Community Profile

UNH Cooperative Extension



Summary of Report

The **Community Profile** is a process developed by UNH Cooperative Extension by which communities take stock of where they are today and develop an action plan for how they want to operate in the future. The process allows for community members to affirm community strengths, find collaborative approaches to meet challenges creatively, and manage change. The Community Profile Steering Committee hosted a public forum focusing on the components of a vibrant community as they pertain to Berlin, which include economic vitality; education and lifelong learning; housing, community spaces and infrastructure; leadership and community engagement; sense of community, history and culture; and quality of life: healthy living, natural resources and recreation. Participants selected a theme they wanted to discuss in small groups where they defined the problem, identified solutions, and selected 3 priority projects or opportunities in each group.

Collaborators: Berlin City Council, Berlin Industrial Development & Park Authority, Berlin Middle-High School, and the Berlin Planning Board

Six Overarching Key Themes

1. Business Resources & Support
- 2. Education & Community Services**
3. Branding & Marketing
4. Amenities & Infrastructure
5. Community Partnerships
- 6. Vibrant Main Street & Community Spaces**

The themes shown in bold above represent the key areas for near term implementation.

Community Engagement

The Steering Committee was tasked with planning and implementing engagement activities in order to gather input from community members prior to the Community Profile event. The committee distributed posters and created a poster board for community events to capture what folks loved most about Berlin. A community hike of Mount Jasper was planned and attended by a handful of Berlin residents. Event information was also distributed through the Berlin Daily Sun, and online via Facebook, and the City website. An Instagram hashtag campaign was initiated, utilizing, #buildingabetterberlin.

Berlin's 2019 Vision

Berlin is a place with immense potential. From its *rich history and culture, natural resources, recreation and beauty, affordable housing, resident industry, strong schools, arts, and a fairly open market for new businesses, entrepreneurs and remote working*, the sky is the limit. Together, leaders, volunteers, organizations, businesses, and the municipality can build a better Berlin. This process offers a few starting points filled with passion and energy.

Community Feedback on a Future Vision for Berlin

- Balance sustainable economic development with preserving the ecology and environment.
- Build a diverse economy (don't rely on any one industry).
- Expand outdoor recreation.
- Build on Berlin's qualities (welcoming, resilient, passion for work, strong social network).
- Build on Berlin's history - immigrants, industry, architecture.
- Make main street walkable and accessible.
- Capitalize on high-tech, remote work potential.
- Grow the arts community and harness the value of the community college.
- Expand parks, open space, and community gardens.

What do you love about Berlin?

The People

- Friendly, caring community - Community pulls together when needed - good work ethic

The Community Spaces

- Playground
- Public schools and college
- Art community
- Downtown - working to make it better

Sense of Place

- Culture and history
- Church architecture
- Safe place to live and to raise family
- Laid back - less hassle - easy going - quiet
- Full of opportunity

Location and scenery

- River, mountains, environment, snow, views

Diverse recreation, outdoor activities

- ATV trails

Priority Projects and Solutions

Vibrant Main Street & Community Spaces

1. Develop a Downtown Association for Beautification/ Façade Improvement Program
2. Create a Tourism Management Plan
3. Focus on Business Attraction / Support Initiative Mentoring Program

Education & Community Services

1. Generate a Mapping Resources & Community Calendar
2. Develop & Utilize Public Spaces for Recreation & Adult Education/Activities & Themed Events
3. Invest in Volunteer Management

Needs for a Diversified Economy, Housing, Infrastructure

- Amenities (cultural, business, programs, etc.)
- Downtown revitalization (incl. beautification)
- Broadband
- NEW Business support and networking (not established)
- Branding and marketing for city and businesses
- Local / regional transportation (variety of sources)
- Resources for entrepreneurs

Needs for High Quality Education and Healthy Living

- Communication, collaboration and networking
- Pre-K - 12 education - education options
- Adult education - senior volunteers, WMCC, correctional facility
- Funding
- Arts education - music, theatre, dance, sculpture, fine arts
- Substance abuse prevention
- Creating opportunities for people to gather and engage
- Community garden / access to healthy food and living

Main Street Improvements

- Attract new businesses and identify market opportunities.
- Retain existing businesses.
- Make Main Street more attractive (building facades, landscaping, etc.)
- Come up with a plan to clean up and encourage reuse of vacant, dilapidated buildings and properties.
- Attract community members to Downtown. Celebrate sense of place, pride, and rich history.
- Increase connectivity between downtown, Heritage Park, and other key spaces.

Downtown and Community Space Wish List

- Night time attractions,
- Retail on main street
- YMCA/swimming pool
- Market Basket
- Brew pub
- Art center/museum
- Motels/B&Bs
- Welcome center
- Camping amenities
- Downtown Community Garden
- More recreation spaces
- Farmers Market
- Food Coop
- More Downtown events

Implications for Master Plan:

1. A significant amount of community outreach and future visioning occurred during this initiative. Outreach for the Master Plan should ensure it does not duplicate engagement efforts used for recent planning projects, but instead build on them.
2. Incorporate the public feedback obtained during this process into the 2020 Master Plan. Build on the visioning process initiated for the Community Profile process.
3. Consider the main priority projects, overarching themes, and needs when developing a future land use vision and implementation strategies for natural resource protection, recreation expansion, economic development and redevelopment, and urban design.
4. Integrate topics related to broadband, education, health, arts and culture, and outdoor recreation into the Master Plan Update.
5. Emphasize Berlin's unique history, qualities, and strengths in the Master Plan document.

2020 Economic Development & Marketing Strategy

Camoin Associates



Summary of Report

In 2019/20, the City of Berlin and the Camoin Associates developed an [economic development action plan](#) with the goal of creating an implementable strategy that will help the city refocus priorities, build on their unique assets, and make progress towards city-wide goals of reversing population and industry decline. The strategy started with an economic and demographic data analysis and included public engagement, stakeholder interviews, best practice review, and regular communication with critical city organizations. The goal of this economic development and marketing strategy process is to address the severe challenges that businesses and residents face such as limited workforce, downtown disinvestment, need to diversify the economy, and infrastructure challenges, while at the same time respecting the community's values and principals.

Key Findings from Data

Population

- From 2018-2023 the population is expected to decline by about 3%.
- By age cohort, Berlin has proportionally fewer people under the age of 19, more aged 25-29, and more aged 85 and older. The median age of Berlin residents is 44.1 (compared to 48.1 in the county and 38.3 in the nation).
 - *Stable/declining numbers and an aging population will impact the City's ability to attract and retain businesses to Berlin. These trends will also continue to put pressure on the health care system, housing types needed, and community support services required. Additional population is needed to address the critical workforce shortages being faced in health-related occupations.*

Income

- Median household income in Berlin is lower than in the county, state, and nation.
- Eighteen percent of Berlin residents make less than \$15,000 per year.
- Fourteen percent of Berlin's residents have higher than a bachelor's degree, compared to 19% in the county and 37% state-wide.

- Lower income and education levels in Berlin is putting pressure on support services and limiting discretionary spending potential to support local businesses. Opportunities to raise incomes and pursue education opportunities will be beneficial to residents as well as businesses looking for workers. Higher levels of poverty also result in unique community health challenges that should be addressed to continue to support residents in their health and wellness needs.

Jobs

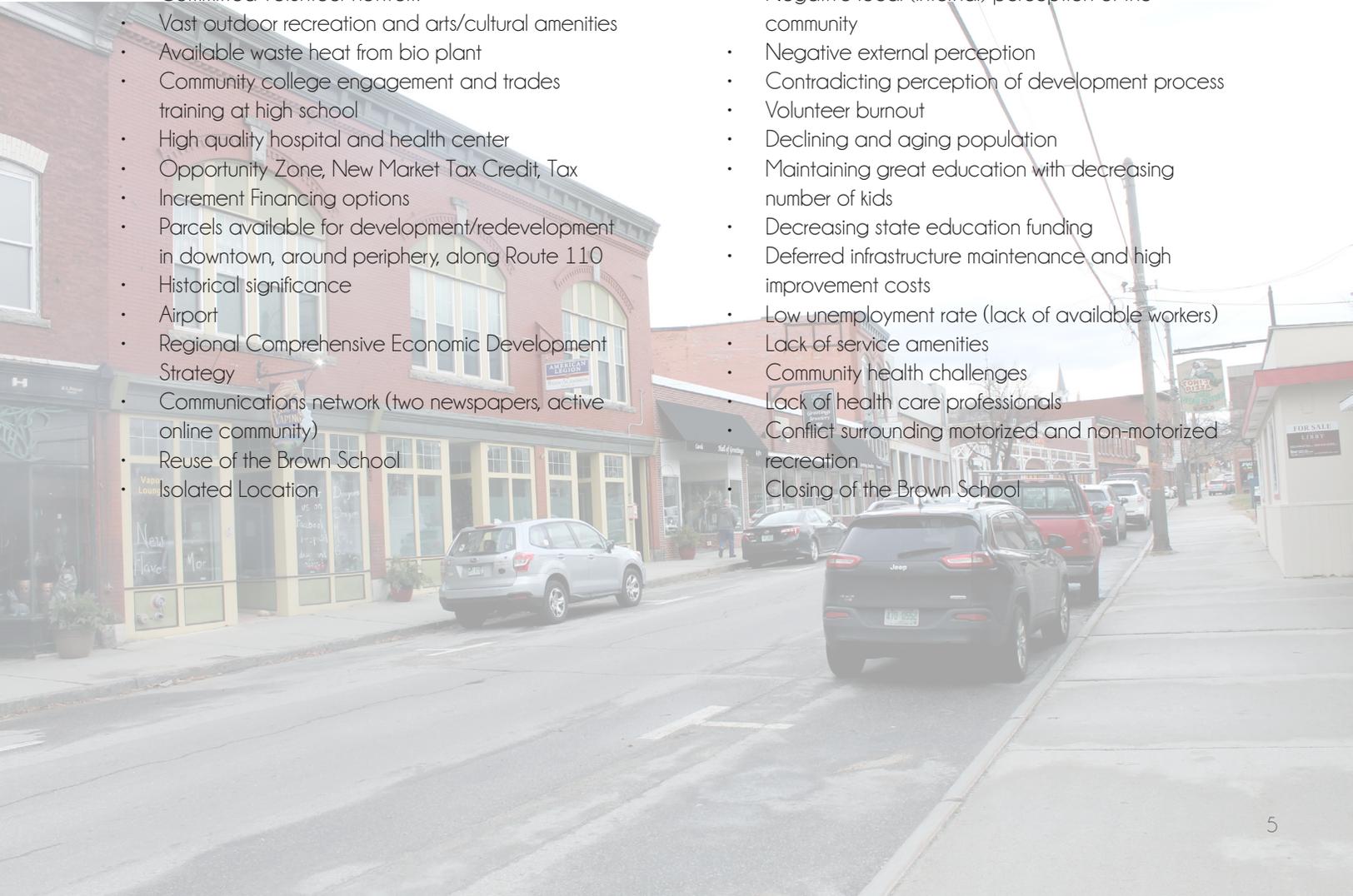
- Government, (includes jobs at both the state and federal prison), is the leading industry sector in Berlin, followed by Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, and Manufacturing.
- Over half (56%) of Berlin's top industries are expected to decline by 2028.
- From 2008-2018, Berlin saw a 9% decrease in the number of jobs.
 - With the total number of jobs declining and a heavy reliance on government, there is a need to diversify the economy to better prepare for the future and create new opportunities. Berlin's history of heavy reliance on a certain industry has resulted in negative consequences and as a result it is critical that the City continue to pursue alternative economic options.

Berlin's Opportunities

- Natural resources
- Affordable housing
- Committed and skilled city staff
- Growing ATV and snowmobile brand
- Committed volunteer network
- Vast outdoor recreation and arts/cultural amenities
- Available waste heat from bio plant
- Community college engagement and trades training at high school
- High quality hospital and health center
- Opportunity Zone, New Market Tax Credit, Tax Increment Financing options
- Parcels available for development/redevelopment in downtown, around periphery, along Route 110
- Historical significance
- Airport
- Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Communications network (two newspapers, active online community)
- Reuse of the Brown School
- Isolated Location

Berlin's Challenges

- High tax rates and perception
- Isolated location
- Disinvestment in the downtown
- High number of vacant/underutilized parcels
- Negative local (internal) perception of the community
- Negative external perception
- Contradicting perception of development process
- Volunteer burnout
- Declining and aging population
- Maintaining great education with decreasing number of kids
- Decreasing state education funding
- Deferred infrastructure maintenance and high improvement costs
- Low unemployment rate (lack of available workers)
- Lack of service amenities
- Community health challenges
- Lack of health care professionals
- Conflict surrounding motorized and non-motorized recreation
- Closing of the Brown School



Emerging Themes

EXPAND AND EXPLORE: OUTDOOR RECREATION AND TOURISM

- The vast natural resources within close proximity of Berlin (including trails, rivers, mountains, and more) has driven increased visitation of all types to the region, including ATVs, hiking, biking, hunting, fishing, boating, birding, and others. These assets are being utilized to varying degrees.
- However, the lack of tourist amenities in Berlin is a constraint to the city's ability to capitalize on these visitors. The lack of a hotel and limited eating options force those who are visiting Berlin to stay (and spend their money) outside of the city limits.
- Finding ways to build up the tourism and outdoor recreation assets in downtown and along key corridors like Route 110 Berlin will have fiscal benefits, including both increased economic activity and potentially increased residents and property tax revenue.
- Enhancing tourism and outdoor recreation assets combined with increased internet access and the ability to work remotely will encourage more people to move to Berlin to pursue their personal hobbies and interests. Finding ways to increase awareness of outdoor recreation access, build up the housing stock to align with the market demand from telecommuters, and brand the community as a great place to live and work will go a long way in increasing the vibrancy of the economy.

RECONCEPTUALIZE: THE DOWNTOWN AREA

- During the outreach phase of this project, it was noted that it may be time to reconsider where and what Downtown Berlin represents. Riddled with vacant and underused properties, a lack of housing options, and the Dead River abutting some properties, redefining and/or expanding the location of Downtown Berlin will help expand the opportunities for redevelopment.
- While Berlin has the "bones" and history of a healthy downtown, recent decades have seen high levels of vacancy, disinvestment in the buildings, need for infrastructure upgrades, and lack of significant community engagement or support to move the needle from decline to prosperity.
- Redefining Downtown Berlin will require a close look at the existing building inventory, identification of types of businesses that could be a good fit, and investment in its overall infrastructure.
- In addition, by expanding the Downtown discussion to include a potentially larger area (such as reaching out Route 110 towards the recreation assets), it will expand the possibilities and person-power of potential redevelopment initiatives.
- An assessment was completed of the current land use regulations, review processes, and "customer service" being performed by the City of Berlin staff as it relates to economic development initiatives. The greatest needs are related to public awareness of opportunities, clarity around process/timelines, and overall perception of the City's efforts.

SUPPORT AND DEVELOP: BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE

- By being a place that is attractive for businesses to locate and expand, Berlin will create new jobs, diversify the tax base, reduce the property tax burden on residential property owners, and create a more vibrant community.
- Training and expanding the workforce will both staff needed positions and prepare others for entrepreneurial endeavors.
- Improving Berlin's reputation, both internally and externally, will be critical to address some of the concerns expressed by the business community including perceptions around the ability to work with the city, the desire for the city to be helpful, and the need for community support in attracting and retaining businesses. Entrepreneurial spaces like Assemble being available in the community is a good sign in terms of the ability for Berlin to attract and retain entrepreneurs who are looking for space that meets their needs

RECOGNIZE AND ACKNOWLEDGE: BERLIN'S QUALITY OF LIFE

- Being able to communicate the assets and benefits of visiting, living, and working in a community is critical to being able to attract investment.
- For Berlin, this needs to happen both internally and externally, as many people living in and around the city have a negative perception of life in Berlin. The intended consequence of creating an internal marketing campaign creates a positive feedback loop which will percolate externally out of the city.
- Improving communication, both internally and externally, will benefit efforts to attract investment and activity to the community. Reviewing the audience, message, and channels of outreach will ensure increased understanding of the assets of Berlin and may attract people to the area who otherwise may have chosen to go elsewhere.

The marketing strategy outlines three campaigns to implement:

1. Give more voice to Berlin's successes;
2. Broaden the "Open for Business" initiative; and
3. Brand and showcase the region for recreation.

Implications for Master Plan:

1. Integrate key findings developed as part of the Camoin study into the Master Plan document.
2. Develop a unique brand for the Berlin Master Plan so it coincides with its marketing strategy.
3. Highlight development opportunities and propose regulatory changes that will incentivize development in desired areas of City.
4. Provide guidance on how the City can build a connected, accessible, diverse, and high-quality outdoor recreation system. Explore greenway connections, open space opportunities, and community garden sites.
5. Create diverse housing solutions for the City's population.
6. Review (in a cursory way) existing building inventory and infrastructure investment opportunities.
7. Identify both short term and long term strategies in the Master Plan to ensure, incremental and immediate wins while making regular progress on longer-term projects. .

IT'S IN OUR NATURE

2018 Redefining and Enhancing the Public Education System in the Greater Berlin Area

Municipal Resources



Summary of Report

This study on the [Education System in the Greater Berlin Area](#) was commissioned by the City of Berlin and its School Department in an effort to develop a better understanding of the regulatory and operational elements that influence and control how public education systems may be organized and structured in the state of New Hampshire. As the largest community in the North Country, Berlin has had to face and address virtually all the economic, social and demographic challenges associated with the impacts of globalization on rural America. As City and School District leaders look to the future, one major area of focus is to explore opportunities to refine and enhance the executive and operational structure(s) associated with how the public educational system in the Greater Berlin area organizes, manages and delivers high quality, affordable public education to the residents of Berlin and the surrounding communities in the Androscoggin Valley.

Key Findings

- By virtue of its size, the City has and will continue to have the “critical mass” of student population that is so critical to maintaining diverse, high quality programmatic offerings in public education.
- Beyond that, the physical size and condition of the school facilities in Berlin are such that regional solutions could be accommodated without significant additional investment in bricks and mortar.
- It is reasonably clear that Berlin has sufficient school facilities to serve all the K-12 students in the Androscoggin Valley. However, change of this scale is often difficult and there is and has been considerable resistance to the notion of consolidating all the schools in the Valley into a single system including Berlin. This resistance comes both from within and without the Berlin School District. While it is likely that there will always be some residents of the region that will cling to the status quo, the consultants believe that, given the age and condition of many school facilities, the demographic

realities of the region, and the future overhead costs associated with duplicative and redundant organizational structures, maintaining the status quo will no longer be feasible.

- Some Type of Regionalization of Androscoggin Valley Schools is highly likely. Due to the abundant data demonstrating that the self-interest of each community in the Valley, the development of a regional management and delivery system for public education is highly likely. Municipal Resources identified that moving elementary students from their local schools is not likely, but may involve some middle school and all high school students attending Berlin schools.

Implications for Master Plan:

1. Consider the findings, issues, and concerns related to the region's school system as it relates to Berlin's population and services in the Master Plan update.



2014 Mt. Jasper Natural Resource Inventory and Management Plan

Watershed to Wildlife, Inc.



Summary of Report

In 2013, the Berlin Planning Board, City Planner Pamela LaFlamme, and the Berlin City Council had been engaged in efforts to enhance the use of the Mount Jasper property, while maintaining its natural resources and integrity. A committee consisting of representatives from the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), the Planning Board, SAU 3, and private citizens was formed to develop goals and future use of this property. These were compiled in a [Natural Resource Inventory and Management Plan for Mount Jasper](#).

Key Findings

- **Location:** The Mount Jasper property is 203 acres, located in Berlin, New Hampshire, and owned by the City. Route 110 is to the south, paralleling the railroad tracks and the Dead River. The property accessed from the southern end includes the Berlin Senior High School, running track and soccer field, and baseball field. To the northeast, there are privately owned properties off Cates Hill Road. The Mount Jasper property abuts private properties along the north-west portion near a main transmission line. The property contains a hiking trail with access near the High School track where a kiosk and trailhead are located. There is an alternative access off Cates Hill Road behind the Mt. Calvaire Cemetery. There are faintly discernible segments of ancient trail where Native Americans traveled many years ago. The New Hampshire Bureau of Trails and local snowmobile club maintain a main corridor snowmobile trail that runs along the edge of the Dead River floodplain and over Mount Jasper to Cates Hill, adjoining the larger State-wide trail system. There are several older trails and access roads up and around the property used mostly by ATVs.
- **Land Cover and Habitat:** The Mount Jasper property is mostly forested and contains a diversity of habitat types. There are wetlands, vernal pools, headwater streams, mature mixed hardwood stands, some scattered mature red oak, and areas of mature white pines and eastern hemlock. This provides habitat for a diversity of wildlife species, some of which travel beyond the boundaries of the property to adjacent undeveloped areas.

- **Assets:**

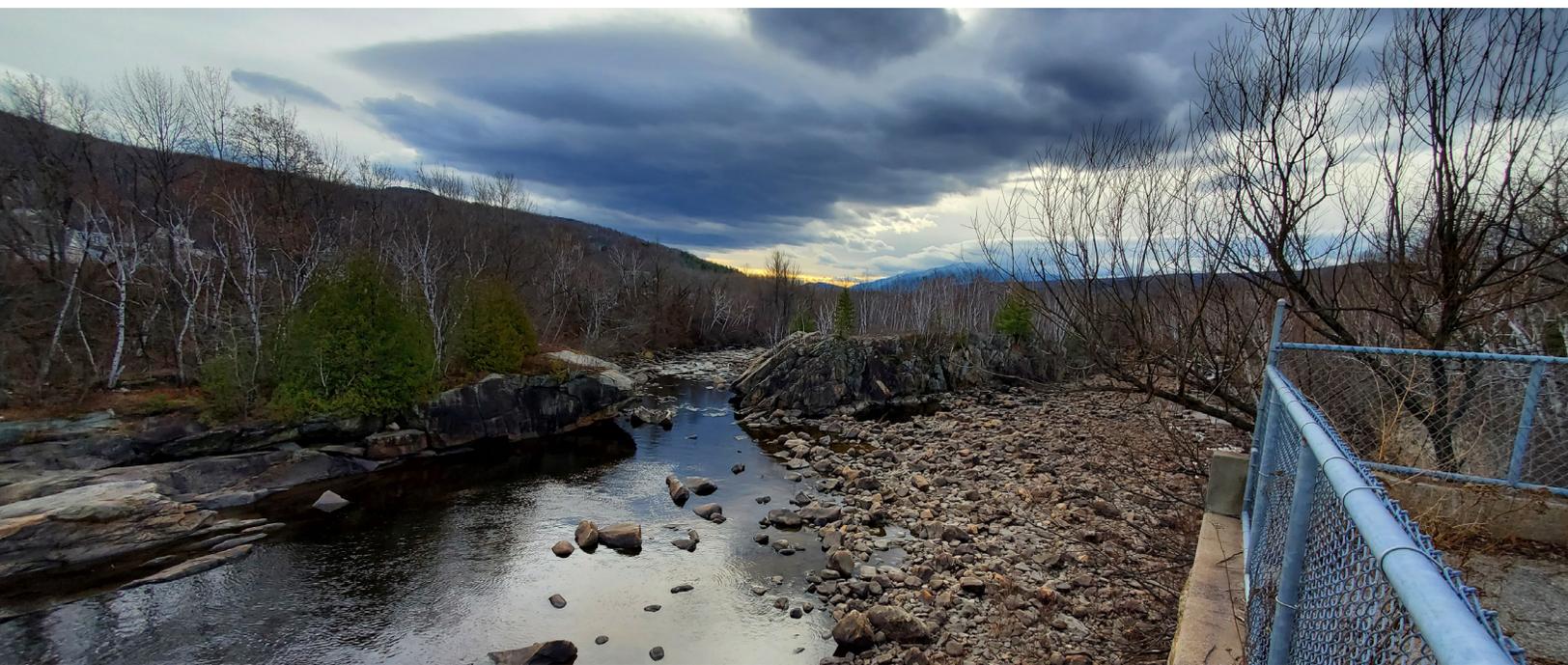
- **Views:** Due to the configuration and steepness of the property, there are many views including a spectacular view of downtown Berlin, the Dead River floodplain, and Mt. Forest. At its highest elevation, Mt. Jasper is 1584 feet above sea level, and the lowest is the Dead River at 1070 feet. The average slope from the Dead River to the top of Mt. Jasper is 47%, and has rugged terrain, exposed ledge and scattered boulder throughout.
- **Rocky Outcroppings:** The Mount Jasper property is known for the large rock outcrops near the summit (at 1,584 feet). These outcrops allow visitors to the summit to have panoramic views after a relatively quick hike up. Erratic boulders are found scattered throughout the property, some as large as 20'+ in height and diameter. Many of these erratics have broken off the ledges at the height of land and crashed downhill through the forest below often in the general direction of the Dead River wetland complex.
- **Cultural Significance:** Mount Jasper has a long and unique history around its natural resources, dating back in geological time of volcanic activity and the retreat of the Glacial Period, approximately 12,000 years ago. The Mount Jasper site has a long history of human use of natural resources beginning with Native Americans who mined rhyolite to make knives, scrapers, drills, and projectile points. Artifacts found in northern New Hampshire and Maine have been traced back to the Mount Jasper rhyolite site according to NH State Archaeologist Dr. Richard Boivert. A large triangular shaped portion of the Mount Jasper site has been designated in the National Register of Historic Places. Please refer to the aerial map attached to the back of this report. The New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) also holds an easement along a section of the Dead River floodplains that overlaps the National Register of Historic Places designation. There are concerns about the public using culturally sensitive areas on this property from the Abenaki perspective.
- **Recreation:** The property is currently used for many forms of recreation including snowmobiling, hiking, and ATV use in designated areas.
- **Diverse Natural Resources:** The Mount Jasper property consists of a variety of unique habitat types including wetlands, northern hardwood and mixed hardwood stands, white pine stands, dense softwood stands, rocky outcroppings, vernal pools, and streams. There is also a diversity of wildlife present, which correlates with the diversity and richness of habitat in this area. Wildlife include black bear, white tail deer, moose, beaver, raccoon, hare, red squirrels, and a variety of birds, frogs, and salamanders.
- **Wildlife Corridors:** The main wildlife corridors documented are along the north side of the Dead River floodplains, along and within the Dead River wetland complex in the northeast portion of the property, and on the north side of the Mount Jasper summit. The summit may also be an important migration point for many raptors, turkey vultures, and ravens due to favorable thermal currents. Wildlife travel corridors are important for wildlife movement, especially for those that have large home ranges and travel far distances.
- **Accessibility:** Mount Jasper is a close location for community members to access, as its close to the downtown and much of Berlin's housing and community facilities. Mount Jasper can be accessed in several ways. There is a newly revamped hiking trail that leads to the summit from a kiosk and signage near the Berlin High School track and field. There are a series of old former ATV trails in various states that are now illegal for ATV use with all effected landowners in agreement. There is a state easement (DRED) on a maintained snow machine trail that is part of PT108. The snow machine trail travels parallel to the Dead River, over Mount Jasper, and on to Cates Hill Road near the Mount Calvaire Cemetery as part of an extensive snowmobile trail system.
- **Recommendations** were developed related to wetland and stream protection, education, soil protection, trail maintenance and construction siting and design, and view enhancement.

Implications for Master Plan:

1. Incorporate relevant information on Mt. Jasper into Master Plan Update.
2. This parcel level understanding could inform and inspire a closer look at other key natural resources and open space parcels in other areas of the City.
3. Consider evaluating strengths, recreation and education opportunities, and considerations related to natural resource protection for other existing and potential open space parcels in Berlin to address their economic development goal of expanding outdoor recreation.

2016 Berlin Hazard Mitigation Plan

Mapping and Planning Solutions



Summary of Report

The [2016 Berlin Hazard Mitigation Plan Update](#) was compiled to assist the City of Berlin in reducing and mitigating future losses from natural or human-caused hazardous events. The Plan was developed by participants of the City of Berlin Hazard Mitigation Planning Team, interested stakeholders, the general public and Mapping and Planning Solutions (MAPS). The Plan contains the tools necessary to identify specific hazards and aspects of existing and future mitigation efforts. The Plan addresses natural hazards (such as severe winter weather, flooding, wildfire, drought, etc.) and human-caused hazards (such as pandemics, terrorism, etc.). Critical infrastructure and key resources were identified and potential hazards were analyzed.

Goals

1. Community and Resource Protection
2. Coordination and Communication
3. Outreach and Education
4. Damage Prevention and Reduction

Emergency Services

- Emergency Operation Center
- Emergency Management Director
- Berlin Police Department
- Berlin Fire Department
- Berlin Public Works Department
- Berlin Dispatch
- State ENS Emergency Warning System
- Medical Facilities
- Berlin EMS
- Emergency Shelter(s)

Natural Hazards

The natural hazards which are MOST LIKELY to affect Berlin include:

- Severe Winter Weather (including ice storms)
- Extreme Temperatures
- Flooding (local roads)
- Severe Thunder & Lightning Storms

The natural hazards which MAY AFFECT Berlin include:

- Hurricanes & Tropical Storms
- Wildfires
- Riverine Flooding (including ice jams)
- Tornadoes & Downbursts

The natural hazards which are LESS LIKELY TO AFFECT Berlin include:

- Hailstorms
- Landslide Erosion & Mudslide
- Earthquake
- Flooding (dam failure)
- Drought

Mitigation Strategies

Mitigation strategies were developed and organized by type including:

- Prevention
- Property Protection
- Public Education and Awareness
- Natural Resource Protection
- Structural Projects
- Emergency Services Protection

Implications for Master Plan:

1. Information on natural hazards, human-caused hazards, vulnerable infrastructure, and critical services should be incorporated into the Master Plan. Understanding the impacts and future effects of the COVID-19 pandemic should also appear in the Master Plan, as pandemics were not analyzed in depth in the current Hazard Mitigation Plan.
2. Recommendations from the Hazard Mitigation Plan should be referenced in the Master Plan Update and any new recommendations should complement efforts already underway.



2018-2022 Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

North County Council



Summary of Plan

The [CEDS document](#), a shared vision that assists in building positive change, contributes to effective development in the communities of northern Carroll, Grafton, and Coös Counties through a locally based, regionally-driven economic development planning process. Economic development planning as implemented through the CEDS is not only a cornerstone of the U.S. Economic Development Administration's (EDA) programs, but successfully serves as a means to engage community leaders, leverage the involvement of the private sector, and establish a strategic blueprint for regional collaboration.

Key Findings

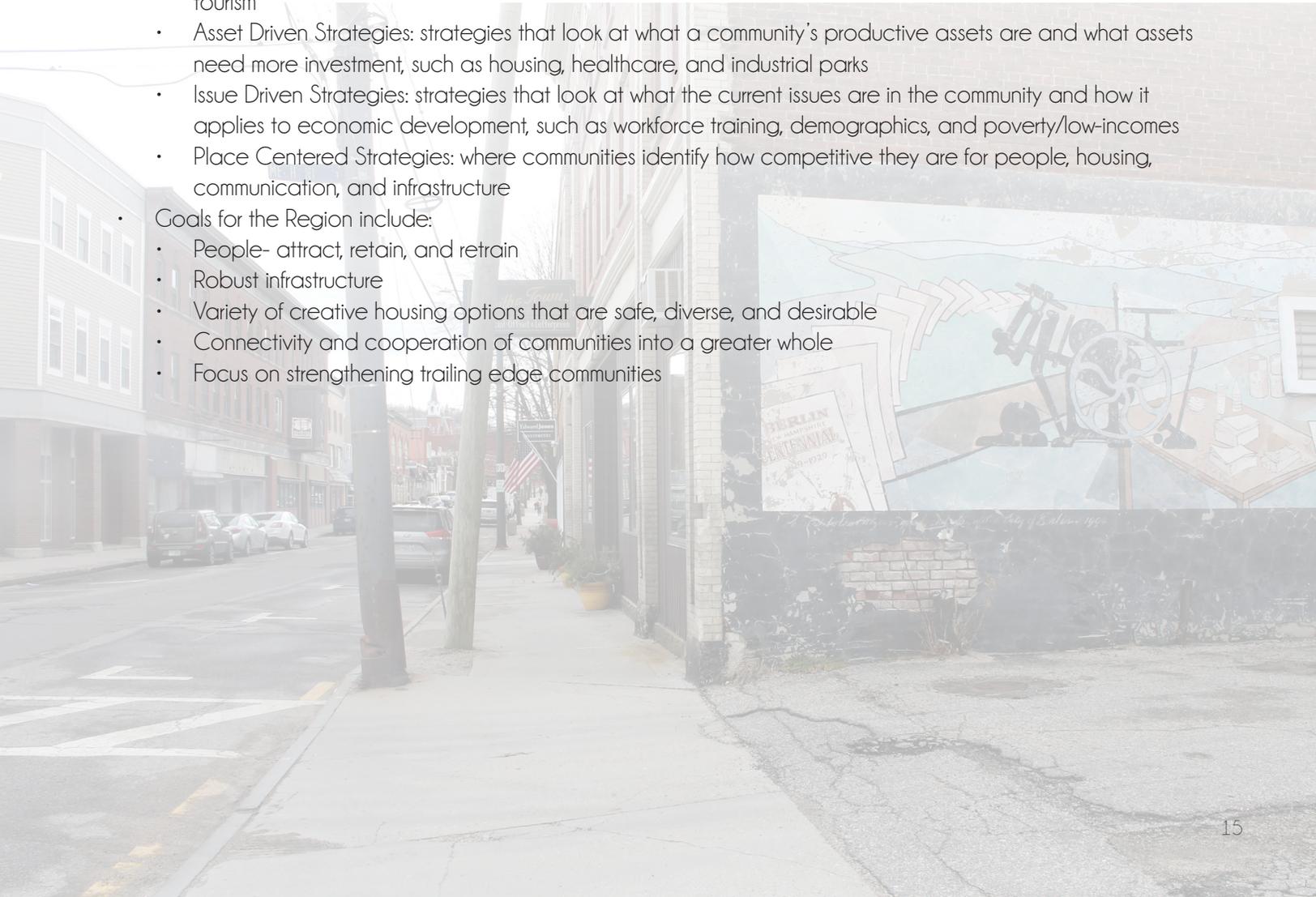
- The top industries for job growth in the North Country region include: local healthcare, education and knowledge creation, electric power transmission and generation, light and electrical equipment, Information Technology and Analytical equipment, and local hospitality.
- All top industries require these shared primary requirements:
 - talented and skilled people to be retained in, and recruited to the North Country
 - communications infrastructure
 - attractive and affordable homes in attractive and welcoming communities
- Within the 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment, the highest priority health concern identified by regional communities was substance misuse, including drugs, opioids, heroin, and more. A 2017 study illustrated a significant finding that, "the frequency of drug abuse among Coös County youth is higher than national levels, or than rural youth in general."
- Attracting new businesses, industry, entrepreneurs, and residents has been a regional conversation for the

past several decades. However, broadband availability continues to be a major barrier to economic development and resiliency. Based on the 2015 New Hampshire Broadband Report, the current state broadband availability in the region does not foster an environment for higher-paying businesses, industry, and entrepreneurs to put roots down in the area.

- Mountains, rivers, valleys, and more became recognized as profitable natural resources if properly planned to be used for outdoor recreation. 69% of New Hampshire residents participate in outdoor recreation each year. Approximately \$8.7 billion are spent annually by consumers on outdoor recreation activities in New Hampshire. 35,000 more jobs are in the outdoor recreation industry than the tech industries in New Hampshire. \$2.6 billion in wages and salaries are generated in the outdoor recreation industry in New Hampshire.
- Resiliency was a main component of the CEDS document and continues to be an emerging planning theme for communities.
- The CEDS document recommends that communities identify their strategic direction for economic growth using the following:
 - Industry Driven Strategies: strategies that look at specific leading industries, such as wood products and tourism
 - Asset Driven Strategies: strategies that look at what a community's productive assets are and what assets need more investment, such as housing, healthcare, and industrial parks
 - Issue Driven Strategies: strategies that look at what the current issues are in the community and how it applies to economic development, such as workforce training, demographics, and poverty/low-incomes
 - Place Centered Strategies: where communities identify how competitive they are for people, housing, communication, and infrastructure
- Goals for the Region include:
 - People- attract, retain, and retrain
 - Robust infrastructure
 - Variety of creative housing options that are safe, diverse, and desirable
 - Connectivity and cooperation of communities into a greater whole
 - Focus on strengthening trailing edge communities

Implications for Master Plan:

1. Integrate broadband infrastructure analysis and expansion into the Master Plan update.
2. Highlight regional perspectives on issues such as the outdoor recreation economy, healthcare, job creation, and others.
3. Emphasize resiliency in the updated Master Plan.
4. Consider the goals for the region and how they overlap with Berlin's vision for the future.



2021 - 2026 Capital Improvement Plan

City of Berlin, NH



Summary of Report

The **CIP** is an important planning document for the City that outlines a path for the future that works within the City's financial realities, while assisting the City's goals. A capital project is any item or project which is expected to be \$10,000 or greater in cost and has a life expectancy of at least three years. This may include certain large projects or funding set aside which is not traditionally thought of as capital in nature.

Key CIP Projects

While the CIP includes a number of key projects the City plans to invest in over the next five years, RP&D highlighted a few key initiatives that should inform master planning efforts.

- **Construction of Snowmobile Trails** - This project would include increasing the developed trail network within the City. This would include construction of a bridge over the Androscoggin River that would allow for access to Downtown at a location to be determined as well as a trail within the Riverwalk that utilizes the existing rail bed for cross town travel. The benefit of this increased trail network would be increased travel through the City that would aid with economic development. Removing the current cross town connector trail from its current location along the sidewalk would benefit both the users of the trail as well as pedestrian traffic in the Mason/Main/Pleasant Street areas.
- **Route 110 Sewer Expansion** - This project would include the extension of the sewer main along NH Route 110 for approximately 2 miles in length. The expansion would enable the system to meet the development requirements of this area while also enhancing business opportunities for this area.
- **Housing Initiative** - Berlin continues its' targeted neighborhood approach to de-densification, addressing the

demolition of blighted, tax-deeded properties for the improvement and rehabilitation of neighborhoods. The City continues to retain and acquire tax deeded properties which should come out of the housing stock by demolition. Berlin currently have approximately \$500,000 to \$600,000 worth of demolition work to complete.

- **Dead River Channel Rehabilitation** - This project includes the rehabilitation or relocation of the channel carrying the Dead River through the downtown area. This project envisions the collaboration of all parties to deal with the failing infrastructure. This project could include a channel relocation which would utilize the abutting properties that are currently owned by the City along Pleasant Street. The rehabilitation of the channel was listed as an action item in the 2016 Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- A number of the Community Facilities in Berlin (such as the Fire Station and Recreation Center) are scheduled for a number of CIP projects over the next five years. These should be referenced when updating the various Master Plan topics.

Implications for Master Plan:

1. The CIP should be referenced in each chapter/section update of the Master Plan (particularly related to land use, community facilities, utilities, etc.) to ensure new recommendations build on existing efforts and future projects are referenced in the Master Plan document.

