
FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS

(2003)

■ INTRODUCTION

A land use analysis is an important element of community planning. Once raw land is converted to a particular use, it is usually committed to that use for a very long time, if not indefinitely. It is extremely difficult to change a pattern of development once it takes hold. Therefore, decisions about future land use should be made carefully, with a studied eye to the potential ramifications of those uses. A well-conceived land use plan allows for new growth and development while it protects and preserves the integrity of neighborhoods, businesses, transportation routes, and the environment.

This chapter describes the pattern of existing land uses in Temple and analyzes the changes that have taken place in the land use pattern since 1984, the date of the last land use analysis for Temple. Maps are used to identify the areas of town that have been developed, the kind of development that has occurred, and the relationship of one land use to another. This information provides the baseline necessary to evaluate the appropriateness of future development and the availability of suitable land for such development.

The development of a land use plan forms the basis of land use regulations, which are effected through zoning ordinances, subdivision, and site plan review regulations. The land use plan describes the goals and objectives envisioned by the town; the regulations are the means to put those goals into place. For instance, if in the process of describing present land use patterns in Temple, recommendations are made to encourage more commercial activity in a particular area, the zoning ordinance should be amended to permit that kind of activity in that location - if it does not already do so. Or, by the same token, the land use plan might recommend that the zoning ordinance be made more restrictive in particular areas, for the purpose of protecting and preserving certain natural features in town.

■ LAND USE CATEGORIES

The first step in the land use analysis is to classify the various land uses that exist in Temple. A classification system describes these activities. The second step is an analysis of tax assessing data from Temple using Geographic Information System (GIS) technology. Existing land uses and activities are recorded on a map to illustrate an interpretation of the land use pattern.

In general, land is classified according to its physical characteristics and/or the present activity that occurs on it. The two major divisions in a land use classification system are "Developed" and "Undeveloped" uses. Each of these divisions can be further subdivided into specific land uses. The following is a listing and description of the standard land use categories used to prepare a land use plan:

- ◆ **Residential:** All land and/or structures used to provide housing for one or more households. These include site-built single family homes, manufactured homes (previously known as mobile homes), factory-built modular homes, duplexes, apartment buildings, condominiums, and seasonal residences.
- ◆ **Public/Semi-public:** Establishments and facilities supported by and/or used exclusively by the public or non-profit organizations, such as fraternal, religious, charitable, educational and governmental facilities.

- ◆ ***Agricultural:*** Lands that are utilized for the cultivation of crops, the raising of livestock and poultry, and nurseries for horticultural purposes.
- ◆ ***Commercial:*** All lands and structures that supply goods and/or services to the general public. This includes such facilities as restaurants, motels, hotels, service stations, grocery stores, furniture and appliance sales, as well as establishments which are primarily oriented to providing a professional and/or personal service to the public, such as medical offices, banks and financial institutions, personal care establishments, etc.
- ◆ ***Industrial:*** Land and/or facilities used for mining, construction, manufacturing, treatment, packaging, incidental storage, distribution, transportation, communication, electric, gas and sanitary services, and wholesale trade.
- ◆ ***Home-Based Business:*** A residential property that houses a home occupation or home-based business. The residence continues to be the principle use of the land, and the occupation is by definition secondary and incidental.
- ◆ ***Road network:*** All public and private rights-of-way that are designated for carrying vehicular traffic. This includes Class VI roads that are no longer maintained by the town and do not carry public traffic.
- ◆ ***Protected Lands:*** Included in this category are all federally-owned lands, all state parks and forests, land protected under the State Land Conservation Investment Program (LCIP), land protected and/or owned by the town, sensitive land and wildlife habitats protected by the NH Audubon Society, land held by the Society for the Protection of NH Forests and the Monadnock Conservancy.
- ◆ ***Undeveloped:*** All lands that are not developed for any of the above uses, regardless of the reason - whether it be because the land is not usable due to environmental constraints, or there has been no demand to develop.

■ FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE LAND USE

Various factors influence growth and development in a town. The major physical and topographic features are the primary factors that influence the initial as well as the subsequent development of land. Secondary factors usually consist of human-made features such as roads, railroads, utilities and major commercial, industrial, or recreational facilities that attract and/or stimulate new or expanded development. The following factors have played an important role in the development of Temple:

History

The land upon which Temple lies was part of an enormous tract granted, in 1622, by the English King, James I, to Captain John Mason of Hampshire County, England. With the English Revolution under Cromwell, ownership of this grant fell into dispute. In 1746, one of Mason's heirs was awarded title to the land. Immediately, the heir sold his title to a group of Portsmouth, New Hampshire businessmen who came to be known as the "Masonian Proprietors."

Much of the land included in the Mason Grant was already settled when the Proprietors made their purchase. They confirmed all those settlements and, on the unincorporated land, continued to grant new townships.

Bounded by the older townships of Mason, New Ipswich, Peterborough, Jaffrey, Greenfield, Lyndeborough, and Wilton, was an unincorporated “slip” of land, irregular in shape, which was surveyed by the Proprietors in 1750. This “slip” was named “Peterboro Slip”, and included the present-day townships of Sharon and Temple. This “slip” was divided almost in half by the range of mountains now called the Temple Mountains.

Sale of shares in Peterboro Slip began in November, 1750, and settlement must have ensued shortly thereafter. A share of land usually consisted of three lots (one lot was 80 x 160 rods), and each shareholder was required to meet certain terms of settlement. For instance, three acres per share were to be brought to tillage as soon as possible and, within one year, each of the forty shares in the township was to have “a house built of a room sixteen feet square...fitted and furnished for comfortable dwelling in, and some person resident therein (for three ensuing years) with the additional improvements of two acres each year for each settler.”

The earliest settlers on the Temple end of Peterboro Slip arrived circa 1755-56. Before a score of years had passed, the Temple end of the “slip” was heavily settled, with about fifty families living on the land. These were mostly families of relatively young people, who came primarily from the Massachusetts north shore communities.

The late 1760’s found Peterboro Slip still unincorporated and still short of fulfilling its requirements of settlement (such as building a meeting house and the settling of a minister). The barrier of the mountain chain made travel and social connection between inhabitants of the two ends of the “slip” very difficult. In 1768, the people of the east (Temple) end of the “slip” petitioned the legislature to allow them to establish a town corporate. They were, after much negotiation, granted their request and, in addition, one half mile of Wilton’s land. The town charter was granted on August 26, 1768; the first town meeting was held on September 7, 1768, and in 1771 the new township had built a meeting house and settled an “orthodox and learned minister.”

The township was named for Sir John Temple, Lt. Governor of the New Hampshire colony, a native of North America, and a supporter of the cause of American liberty. The original approximately 8,500 acres of land (*History of Temple, N.H.*, by Henry Ames Blood), the geographical center of which was about where today’s White Village stands, was later added to by various additions and annexations: about 375 acres from New Ipswich; about 400 acres known as “Boreland’s Farm” which was bounded on one side by a 600 acre addition from Peterborough and about 900 acres from Lyndeborough. With the Lyndeborough Addition (1796) the borders of the township of Temple were finally fixed.

For most of its history, Temple has been an agricultural community. An attempt was made, during the Revolutionary War, to establish a glass factory in the township, but that attempt failed. No other large-scale industry was ever tried in Temple. There were small mills, powered by water, which operated to provide for local needs of an agrarian society.

In 1810, the population of Temple peaked at nearly 1,000 persons. From that year until the late 1930’s, the trend was one of population decline which was interrupted by periods of relative population stability. The population size was regulated primarily by the ability of local agriculture to sustain only a given number of people at any one time, for Temple was, for most of the time between its first settlement and the post-World War I era, a self-supporting economy. Few goods or services were imported into the township. Population and the economic base upon which the community existed were in relative equilibrium.

Pressure did increase upon local farmers, however, and most found that subsistence farming was no longer sufficient to sustain them. Many developed side-lines, which gave rise to poultry farms, dairy

farms, orchards and the like. By 1921, only 32 farmers remained in Temple. By 1980, there were not more than five farms providing a living for their owners.

This is evidence of the radical shift in the economic basis of the community in the years following World War I. Since 1917, Temple has moved from an almost entirely self-supporting, relatively stable, agricultural community to an almost entirely dependent, rapidly growing community which looks increasingly beyond its borders for virtually all goods, services, and sources of employment.

Location

Temple is located in Hillsborough County in the Southwest Region of the state. The town is bordered on the north by Greenfield and Lyndeborough, on the east by Wilton, on the south by Greenville and New Ipswich, and on the west by Sharon and Peterborough. Temple is 29 miles from Keene, 31 miles from Manchester, 49 miles from Concord, 25 miles from Nashua, 80 miles from Portsmouth, and 72 miles from Boston.

Temple today, as are many towns bordering the Peterborough-Jaffrey or Milford-Nashua-Manchester areas, is rapidly becoming a bedroom community.

Topography & Soils

To some extent, topography and soils also play a role in any town's development. Historically, people built houses and roads on land that was most easily accessed; and soil type and characteristics influence what kind of development will occur - farming, for example, and where that development will take place.

The topography of Temple is characterized by a large north-south ridge on its western border. The high point of this ridge is almost 2,200 feet above mean sea level near the summit of Pack Monadnock Mountain. The ridge includes Temple Mountain, elevation 2,081 feet. The remaining land slopes downward to the east to just over 800 feet. Elevation at the town hall is 1,060 feet.

■ EXISTING LAND USE

An analysis of the present land use pattern in a town is one of the first steps in the formulation of a land use plan. Since the type and intensity of existing land uses have a strong influence on future development patterns, it is important to understand how land and other resources are used within a given area before recommendations can be developed relative to future land uses.

Temple has a total land area of approximately 22.3 square miles, or 14,241¹ acres. Surface water accounts for approximately 185 acres. Of this land area, roughly 26 percent is presently developed for one of the uses described earlier in this text. The following table compares the estimates of land use between 1979 and 2002.

Attempting to calculate exact acreages for land uses - particularly residential usage, is difficult and time-consuming. Therefore, a commonly-used methodology is to simply assume two acres per each dwelling unit or use other than commercial, public/semi-public, farmland, and undeveloped land. For residential uses, this takes into account that multi-family units will typically occupy much less than an acre and most

¹ From the Office of State Planning as determined from USGS digitized data. This number has no legal bearing or significance, and is used for general planning purposes only.

single family homes much more than an acre. It is common for more of a lot to be taken up by a non-residential use than is generally observed for residential uses. The analysis of existing land use in Temple in 2002 was performed using Geographic Information System (GIS) technology with 2002 tax assessing data from the town. The 2002 tax assessing data from the Town of Temple breaks land uses into the following categories:

- ◆ Single-Family Residential
- ◆ Two-Family Residential
- ◆ Three-Family Residential
- ◆ Four-Family Residential
- ◆ Commercial
- ◆ Exempt – Federal
- ◆ Exempt – State
- ◆ Exempt – Municipal
- ◆ Farmland
- ◆ MGD Other Woods
- ◆ UNMGD Other Woods

The land area taken up by roads and highways is calculated by assuming a 50-foot right-of-way, multiplied by the number of miles of road.

This methodology was used to develop the 2002 portion of the following table. An attempt has been made here to compare the uses of land in 1979 to that of 2002. A direct comparison, however, is not possible, due to differences in methodology. The largest percentage by far of land in Temple remains undeveloped and, based on certain criteria, remains undevelopable.

**TABLE #24:
EXISTING LAND USE IN TEMPLE, 1979 AND 2002**

LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES		% OF DEVELOPMENT		% OF TOTAL LAND	
	1979*	2002	1979*	2002	1979*	2002
DEVELOPED:						
Residential (Single & multi-family)	255	1,312	9.7	35.6	1.8	9.2
Commercial/Industrial	11	312	0.4	8.5	0.1	2.2
Public/Semi-Public	195	195	7.4	5.3	1.4	1.4
Recreational	560	596	21.2	16.2	3.9	4.2
Agricultural	1,315	964	49.8	26.1	9.2	6.8
Roads and Highways	305	309	11.5	8.4	2.1	2.2
TOTALS	2,641	3,688	100	100	18.5	26.0
TOTAL AREA	14,241	14,241			100	100
TOTAL DEVELOPED LAND	2,641	3,688			18.5	26.0
TOTAL SURFACE WATER	185	185			1.3	1.3
TOTAL UNDEVELOPED LAND	11,415	10,368			80.2	72.7

* - Existing land uses and their acreages are “best estimates”. They are based on on-site examinations, maps,

measurements, and/or assessment records.

Sources: 1981 Master Plan for Temple, 2002 Tax Assessing Data from the Town of Temple

The greatest concentration of land uses and the greatest mixture of these uses occur in the general area considered to be the Village Center, at the intersection of Route 45 and General Miller Highway. The remaining development occurs along road frontage, fairly evenly disbursed around town.

The predominant land use in Temple is residential, which includes single family, two family, and multi-family housing. Most of this development is in year-round single family homes, with some two family homes and multi-family dwellings spread throughout town. Residential uses are located throughout the town, with the greatest concentration of smaller lots located in the southern half of town.

As mentioned previously, Temple was, for most of the time between its first settlement and the post-World War I era, a self-supporting agricultural economy. After World War I, most of the local farmers found that subsistence farming was no longer sufficient to sustain them. Many developed side-lines, which gave rise to poultry farms, dairy farms, orchards and the like. By 1921, only 32 farmers remained in Temple; by 1980, there were not more than five farms providing a living for their owners; and by 2002, the tax assessing records from the Town showed only one farm providing a living for the owners. Much of this farmland has been converted to residential use or is no longer actively farmed.

Public and semi-public uses are clustered in and near the Village area of town and consist of the Town Hall/Fire Station/Police Station, the library, elementary school, chapel, church, and post office. These uses are identified on the *Existing Land Use Map* (following page 80) as being tax exempt.

Commercial/Industrial activity in Temple is sparse, with a few uses located on the Temple-Sharon town line on the eastern portion of town.

Temple currently has about ten acres of park and recreation facilities including the facilities at the elementary school. These include a ball park, tennis courts, park (or common) and playground that also includes provisions for band concerts and picnics. Of major importance in assessing recreational facilities are several privately owned and/or commercial facilities that play a role in outdoor recreation not only in Temple, but in the region. There are several town-owned parcels used for open space and passive recreation in Temple that consist of Kendal Ledge or White Ledge, Temple Town Forest, and the Chris A. Weston Memorial Conservation Land.

Roads and highways, while not typically thought of as a "use" per se, do take up nearly 309 acres of land.

The Current Use Taxation program was enacted in 1973 to promote the preservation of open land in the state by allowing qualifying land to be taxed at a reduced rate based on its current use value as opposed to a more extensive use. The minimum land area currently needed to qualify is ten acres. The price of this favorable treatment is a 10 percent penalty tax (10% of the Fair Market Value) when the property is later changed to a non-qualifying use.

In comparing conservation easements to current use taxation, easements are permanent, while current use may be reversed by change to a non-qualifying use and payment of the Use Change Tax. Thus, current use may satisfy the goals of a landowner who cannot afford to permanently abandon future development value, but desires current property tax relief. If it becomes financially necessary to subdivide, the use change tax becomes an element of the development costs.

In Temple, the monies collected from the Use Change Tax (10% of the Fair Market Value of a piece of land taken out of current use and sold for development) goes to the Conservation Commission for the

acquisition of land and/or conservation easements. The Town of Temple has a total land area of 14,241 acres, of which 10,713.98 acres are in current use and 2,322.51 acres of those are in recreational current use.

The current use designation, authorized by RSA 70-A, provides the town other benefits as well: it encourages landowners to maintain traditional land-based occupations such as farming and forestry; promotes open space, preserving natural plant and animal communities, healthy surface and groundwater; and provides opportunities for skiers, hikers, sightseers, and hunters.

■ LIMITATIONS TO DEVELOPMENT

The data concerning the existing land use pattern reveals that roughly 26 percent of Temple's total land area is currently developed, leaving some 10,368 acres undeveloped. Not all of this land, however, is suitable for development. Limiting factors to development include steep slopes, certain soil types, wetlands, aquifers, and other sensitive lands or features. In addition to these physical constraints, development is limited by the public's desire to protect the quality of life and property values of existing residents. This public will is ideally expressed in the town's land use regulations, and is the central purpose of this planning document.

Two maps have been created using Geographic Information System technology showing limitations to development in Temple: *Aquifers, Hydric Soils, & Wetlands* and *Development Constraints*. These maps identify the seven constraints to development that are related to the ability of the soil to accommodate septic systems, road or building construction.

**TABLE #25:
LIMITS TO DEVELOPMENT**

Constraint	Total Acres	% of Total Land Area	Undeveloped Acres	% Undeveloped Area
Total land area	14,241	--	10,368	72.8%
Slopes between 15% - 25%**	203.2	1.4%	5.1	0.05%
Slopes between 15% - 50%**	5,655.0	39.7%	4,462.4	43.0%
Poorly/very poorly drained (Hydric soils)	987.8	6.9%	760.0	5.3%
Wetlands*	366.1	2.6%	271.9	2.6%
Aquifer	2,239.8	15.7%	1,767.7	12.4%
Shallow to bedrock soils (Less than 40 inches)	3,858.2	27.1%	2,923.1	28.2%
Shallow to water table (Less than 1.5 feet)	2,023.7	14.2%	1,525.7	14.7%

* U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory & USGS Wetlands Data

** Note: The Soil Survey for Western Hillsborough County does not break down slopes by 25% or greater, it only breaks down slopes by 15% or greater. The Planning Board only wants to regulate development on slopes of 25% or greater.

Source: SWRPC Geographic Information System

Reference to the following maps illustrates that one or more of these development constraints exists virtually all over town. There are in fact, only a few areas on the map that appear to have no limitations at all. It is interesting to note that the built up area of the Village Center is one of the areas in town with few limitations to development which was probably a primary reason why the area was in fact built out. The northern and eastern portions of town have many steep slopes due to the location of North Pack Monadnock and Temple Mountains. There are only a few areas in Temple with no or few limitations to development that have not been developed at this time.

In comparing limitations to development to the *Existing Land Use Map*, it can be seen that, while the development does follow almost every road in town, the areas shown as having the greatest constraints have not been developed. How much of this pattern is due to the natural constraints of the land or to other factors such as road access is not known.