The Incredible Vanishing Child

Demographic changes, long predicted, are here.

Also in this issue...

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A New Orleans preview
Planners have heard for several years now about the “greying” of the State. (See more in our articles on Demographics in this issue!) So how do we keep New Hampshire natives in the State? Certainly not with our amazing spring weather (J) Some municipalities are getting it right and providing not just housing for new residents, but whole communities with amenities that today’s young professionals and young families are looking for.

In this issue we look at some new multi-family residential developments popping up across the state. More housing options helps New Hampshire keep residents here and retain the talent we need to grow into a successful State. Communities like these also help to attract newcomers with fresh ideas to share, new perspectives to offer, and dollars to help support our economy and sustain our favorite small businesses. Communities like these need roadmaps – in the form of zoning codes and regulations – that may seem so different from the norm. Yet as I have said many times before – change is good and change is what we need if we want to shift the current trends. Take a look at these fabulous new developments and then take a look at your codes and Regulations. Would these be allowed in your town? Now is the time to delve deep and make it so!

Need more motivation? Check out NH Planner’s Associations Spring Conference which will focus on New Urbanism. May 31 and June 1 in Nashua! Registration open now!

Shanna B. Saunders

A letter from the President
NHPA Annual Conference set for May 31 & June 1 in Nashua

The state’s second largest city will play host to the NHPA Annual Conference this year. This year’s conference, slated for Thursday May 31 and Friday June 1 will run at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel in Nashua. The event will showcase developments in the Gate City, including a renewed focus on improvements downtown, as well as increased interest in more housing options in the center city. The event will include a pre-conference networking reception in Downtown Nashua.

Details are still being finalized for the event. Visit nhplanners.org for continuing updates and more information. Registration is currently open at: www.nhplanners.org/event-2839960

‘Density Done Well’ talks bring crowds in Concord & Portsmouth

Brent Toderian, the former Planning Director for the City of Vancouver, British Columbia spoke passionately in favor of increased density and quality urban design during talks in Portsmouth and Concord earlier this month.

Called “brash, hard-nosed, and ambitious” by the Vancouver Sun, Toderian frequently tackled long-held stereotypes and pointed to Vancouver as a city which simultaneously welcomed both increased density and glowing quality of life ratings. He argued that increased density lays the groundwork for truly vibrant communities and provides the critical mass needed to support transportation options and diverse, dynamic neighborhoods.

NHPA helped sponsor the talks presented by Portsmouth Smart Growth for the 21st Century (PS21),

Citing Amazon, Governor changes tune, supports rail study

Commuter rail advocates in New Hampshire may want to consult Alexa and make an Amazon purchase to thank the retail giant for helping spur a change of heart on the issue by Governor Chris Sununu (R).

Sununu credits Amazon, and the company’s requirements for a second headquarters, with spurring him to support the continued study of passenger rail in the state after previously mocking the proposal. Amazon specifically noted a robust and interconnected public transit network as one of its requirements for a second headquarters location. In crafting its pitch for the project, New Hampshire officials recognized that they were at a significant disad-
In Coos County, for every three K-12 students who existed in 1997, just two fill its classrooms today. In Cheshire County, one in every four students — or more than 3,000 children — have disappeared from school enrollments over the same 20-year period. In every single one of the state’s counties, including the state’s growth areas, school enrollments are smaller today than they were 20 years ago, despite a net population gain of approximately 150,000 people. Even over a shorter time period, in the 10 years between 2007 and 2017, approximately 20,000 children have disappeared from K-12 school enrollments across the state.

The trend appears only likely to continue. The U.S. Department of Education forecasts that New Hampshire will see the nation’s largest declines in school enrollment to 2023. Many districts that wrestled with growth waves in the early 2000s are being forced to consider school closures and mergers to help address the tide.

To borrow from Paula Cole, where have all the cowboys children gone? Did Massachusetts kidnap them? Did ruthless town managers and selectboards intent on reducing school tax rates forcibly relocate them? Is there a horrific child epidemic sweeping the state?

The answers are less dramatic and more nuanced. But a few factors help tell the story:

- According to the Centers for Disease Control, New Hampshire has consistently boasted the lowest or among the three lowest fertility rates among all states over the last 10 years;
- Concerned about rising school enrollments years ago, communities across the state enacted growth controls to stem the development of housing available to families while providing generous incentives for age-restricted senior housing. A 2017 Housing Report from Exeter is illustrative. The Town noted that approximately 60 percent of new multi-family housing since 2000 has been age-restricted for seniors only.
- Tax policy changes have helped make New Hampshire a more hospitable environment for retirees. The state’s optional elderly tax exemption for income-qualified seniors is exercised by most communities. The exemption is open to anyone who has lived in the state for three years (Massachusetts requires a 10-year minimum) and in some communities, exemptions can exceed the value of housing units, allowing some to live property tax free.
The Incredible Vanishing Child: Demographic change in the Granite State

New Hampshire School Enrollment

Total school enrollment has consistently fallen in the Granite State after cresting in 2002, even as Kindergarten and pre-K enrollments have grown, jumping from 10,420 in 1997 to 15,291 in 2017.

Source: NH Dept. of Education, Enrollment reports
Between 2008 and 2013, public school enrollment declined by 5.9 percent in New Hampshire…

...the second steepest decline in the nation.

By 2025, the US Department of Education forecasts that New Hampshire will record the nation's sharpest drop in public school enrollment, shedding nearly 15 percent of its students.

Forecast Change in Public School Enrollment, 2013 to 2025

1. Washington, DC  39.4%  47. Michigan  -9.1%
2. North Dakota  29.9%  48. Vermont  -10.3%
3. Utah  18.2%  49. Maine  -12.0%
4. Idaho  17%  50. Connecticut  -14.2%
5. Nevada  14.2%  51. New Hampshire  -14.6%

In sign of times, two NH hospitals move to shutter maternity units

Citing a declining number of new births, Lakes Region General Hospital in Laconia has decided to shutter its maternity unit, effective this May. Expectant mothers in the City by the Lakes and surrounding communities will need to make the 35-minute trek to Concord Hospital for maternity care.

In just three years, births have declined by more than 20 percent at the hospital, officials said. With an aging population in the region, the unit’s future looked grim.

On the same day as the LRGH announcement, Alice Peck Day Hospital in Lebanon announced it was closing its birthing unit. Hospital officials indicated that a declining number of new births played a key role in the decision, with births down by more than 30 percent in 2017.

The hospitals are hardly alone in New Hampshire. In recent years, New London Hospital, Valley Regional Hospital in Claremont, and Cottage Hospital in Haverhill have closed their maternity units. With the announcement of the recent closures, Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon will be the only NH hospital in the Upper Valley with a maternity unit, forcing expectant families in some rural areas to make a more than hour trek to receive care.

To be sure, declining births are not the only factors in the closures — officials also cite difficulty in recruiting obstetric doctors and high costs and insurance rates associated with maternity care. It’s also part of a national trend, with the closure of maternity units in rural areas trending upward nationally in recent years.

The closure of maternity wards has been tied to worrying trends related to maternity care. The United States now has the highest share of women who die during childbirth or postpartum in the developed world. More concerning is that deaths during childbirth is trending upward, nearing its highest level in more than a quarter of a century. Rural areas, where maternity ward closures have been concentrated, have been hardest hit. Mothers in rural areas are 64 percent more likely to die during childbirth in rural areas than in large cities.

Concern grows in Legislature over demographic developments

With mandatory accessory dwelling unit legislation enacted in recent years and legislative debate growing regarding a universal family leave program, some may wonder what’s got into the normally conservative legislature with its long-held regard for local control. Most recently, the always frugal New Hampshire House of Representatives voted to hire a state demographer.

Legislators are increasingly recognizing that the state’s demographic changes are presenting a series of new questions regarding the future of the state’s economy and finances with no easy answers.

With a ‘silver tsunami’ hitting the state, concern has also grown regarding local zoning that encourages senior-only housing. "It exacerbated the problems by developing these 55 and older communities," Londonderry State Senator Sharon Carson (R) told The Union Leader in 2016. "It's brought in senior citizens from other states. We just don't have the resources to address this situation."

"Historically, most communities didn't want newer families," Steve Norton told the newspaper for the same story. "Now, they will live or die by whether they are able to attract young families."
Drivers of population change in New Hampshire

Census: Rockingham County state’s most popular moving destination, Strafford is fastest growing, deaths surpass births in all of state’s rural counties

Deaths now surpass births in a majority of the state’s counties, all of which include the state’s most rural counties. It’s just one surprising piece of information available from the most recent U.S. Census estimates for counties, released in March 2018. Other data highlights include:

- More Americans are moving out of the state’s largest county - Hillsborough County—than are moving in, but new international residents are bridging the gap.
- International migration to Hillsborough County is more than the other nine NH counties combined!
- In a tale of two counties, migration from other states is fueling growth in Rockingham, while births and international migration fuels growth in Hillsborough County. International migration accounted for nearly half of all growth in Hillsborough over the last seen years.
- Three counties — Coos, Cheshire, and Sullivan — are experiencing population declines. Two others - Grafton and Carroll Counties — are barely growing.
- The Seacoast is the state’s growth center, with Rockingham and Strafford Counties the state’s fastest growing.
Once a hollowed-out industrial wasteland, Manchester’s millyard has often been at the center of planning efforts. Urban renewal efforts in the 1960s and 70s filled in the millyard’s canals and demolished many

Incorporated in the mid 1800s, Manchester was intended to be a model of utopian factory-city planning. The Amoskeag Manufacturing Companies were instrumental in the growth of Manchester and it is reasonable to state that without the mills, Manchester would not have grown to be as large and prominent as it is today. However, times changed – highway construction pushed people and industry out of the Millyard and into the suburbs, the labor-intensive trades matured and Amoskeag Manufacturing saw the end of an era.

For a period, some might have said that Manchester lost its identity. Similar to many older cities in the US in the 1990s, when infrastructure became tired and outdated, we demod and replaced the objects of our past, often times in the name of “progress” or “urban renewal” (who remembers the Notre Dame Bridge, the Canal, and Lollipops at Brady Sullivan Plaza?).

In the mid 1980s inventor, Dean Kamen and developer, John Madden facilitated the start of the renaissance when they urged the city to loosen zoning regulations to allow nonindustrial uses to locate in the Millyard. Kamen told the Union Leader in 1984 “bring the area to a point where it has a large enough high tech base that it starts developing itself.” He was right – 33 years later the Millyard is bustling.

The revitalized mill buildings are now filled with higher-education institutions such as University of New Hampshire and administration offices for Southern New Hampshire University, high-tech firms such as DYN, Autodesk and Texas Instruments, incubators, mixed-used developments and growing startups. The rebirth of the Millyard is also attracting out of state developers and the City is gaining a reputation as a worthy place to raise a family and as a place where young professionals want to live, work and play.

In December of 2016 the Manchester Planning Board approved a mixed-use retail and 106-room TRU by Hilton ho-
A ribbon cutting ceremony for the Advanced Research Manufacturing Institute attracted a who’s who of New Hampshire luminaries, including Manchester Mayor Ted Gatsas (R), former Governor John Lynch (D), Governor Chris Sununu (R), U.S. Senators Maggie Hassan (D) and Jeanne Shaheen (D), inventor Dean Kamen, former U.S. Senator Kelly Ayotte (R), Portsmouth City Councillor Stephany Shaheen (D), and Taylor Caswell, Commissioner of the NH Department of Business & Economic Affairs.

tel to be built on a former city-owned surface parking lot. The project will be a partnership with the City and will receive a $750,000 city subsidy toward construction of an on-site garage to replace the lost spaces and add approximately 50 more parking spaces - something that is highly sought after in the Millyard. The $25 million project, scheduled for completion in 2018, will include 10,000 square feet of retail at street level.

In October 2017 the Manchester Planning Board will hear a site plan application from SNHU’s College of Online and Continuing Education for the proposed construction of a 6-story, 1,700 car parking garage on the Merrimack River side of South Commercial Street, near Langer Place Mill, which is the closest mill building to Northeast Delta Dental Stadium, home of the minor league baseball team, the New Hampshire Fisher Cats. The objective of the project is to eliminate remote parking areas and shuttle bus system currently used by SNUH to accommodate employees. The use of the garage during off-peak periods for special events and other businesses is being investigated by the applicant. The project has a proposed opening year of 2020.

Another view of the planned Southern NH University parking garage proposed for Granite Street in the Millyard.
Clockwise from top left: 1.) NRPC planners Jen Czysz, Stephen Meno, and Cassie Mullen attend a PlanNH conference in Dover. 2.) Dover Community Development Planner and Good Samaritan Dave Carpenter assists a disabled motorist. 3.) Attendees of the NHPA Annual Meeting in Bristol stream out of the Old Town Hall en route to a walking tour. 4.) Rochester and Bristol officials, including planners Elizabeth Kelly and Seth Creighton attend the PlanNH event.
Multi-family Mania
Granite State’s apartment market surges

Driven by surging demand, low vacancy rates, ever increasing rents, and a housing market that is increasingly difficult for first-time buyers to crack into, multi-family development continues to spring up across the Granite State. From Nashua to Newport, Keene to Concord, NHPA takes a look at some of the major projects taking shape across the state.

Special thanks to planners from across the state for helping compile this information.

The Pointe Place mixed-use development in South Dover will include 240 multi-family units over 60,000 square-feet of retail/restaurant space, in addition to athletic fields, townhomes, and single-family homes. “It’s almost like a little version of the downtown,” developer Chad Kageleiry told a local newspaper.

Washington Place, a 150-unit apartment building with ground-level commercial space, was approved by the city’s Planning Board in December 2017. Replacing several vacant buildings in Downtown Dover, the project will also include wider sidewalks, street parking, a small public park, and a planned mural facing Chestnut Street. Construction is slated to begin this Spring.
The former state Employment Security building on Main Street in Concord is a divisive subject. Modernists appreciate the distinctive paneling and adherence to modernist architectural forms. But for the majority of folks, the 1950’s era structure is an eyesore. The Concord Monitor declared it “the ugliest building on Main Street.” The newspaper and others will be happy to hear that the building’s days appear numbered. An out-of-state development company recently purchased the building from the city with plans to construct a mixed-use building in its place.

Early plans depict a seven-story building with 109 apartments and commercial uses on the first floor. The City Council has already approved a zoning change to help support the planned development.

It’s not the only multi-family project on the drawing board in the Capital City. Manchester-based Elm Grove Properties recently acquired four prominent downtown buildings with plans to convert upper stories to 41 residential units, including the much-discussed micro-housing units.

In the city’s Penacook neighborhood, the Concord City Council endorsed the redevelopment of a former tannery site to host a 58-unit apartment building.

A mixed-use development in Downtown Keene will add 135 new apartments to the Elm City. The project, located at 17 Washington Street, will occupy the site of the former Keene Middle School. Part of the school building will be renovated to house commercial uses, including a restaurant, nightclub, and performance venue to be known as The Spot. The developers have indicated that the apartments will be marketed to millennials earning in the $40,000 to $50,000 range. The City of Keene, home to Keene State College, has no trouble attracting college-age residents, but has long wrestled with convincing younger workers to remain in the region after their studies conclude. The downtown mixed-use project, approved by the Keene Planning Board in 2016, is eying a Summer 2018 opening.

The Newport Planning Board approved the redevelopment of the former Ruger Mill into 66 market rate apartments, including 59 two-bedroom units and seven one-bedroom apartments. The development will also include several amenities including. The mill is located off Sunapee Street perched on the Sugar River a short distance from Downtown Newport. The mill includes a silo and a distinctive tower feature, helping make it a prominent local landmark.
With a healthy economy and a thriving downtown district, Portsmouth is attracting some of the most intense residential development interest in the Granite State. For some longtime Port City residents, the development interest is too much. Downtown development has been a hot topic in several recent municipal elections, and the city has instituted stiffer zoning requirements in recent years. But Portsmouth also boasts by far the highest residential property prices in New Hampshire - even modest downtown condominiums easily fetch over $500,000 - and there is widespread recognition that more housing are options are needed to help quell demand. Portsmouth’s North and West Ends are experiencing much of the recent development boom. Active projects and those recently completing construction include:

- A total of 54 apartments were added to city rolls with the re-development of the Frank Jones Brewyard this winter. An adjacent building will include 14 units along with commercial space. Chinburg is also proposing a new 92-unit four-story apartment building near the brewyard, a project that is in the early stages of the review process.
- A luxury 8-unit condo development, dubbed UnionHouse, has already hit the market.
- A 32-unit townhouse development approved off Caty Street.
- The Veridian development, featuring 92 apartments, recently opened on Constitution Avenue.
- Deer Street Associates is working with the City to develop four structures and a municipal parking garage off Deer Street. A 43-unit apartment building was recently approved as part of the development.
- A planned project at 30 Maplewood Avenue in Downtown Portsmouth will be mixed-use in nature with residential units on its upper stories.
New Orleans Undercover

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, a national debate emerged about the wisdom of rebuilding the Crescent City. The U.S. Speaker of the House suggested bulldozing the city. Opinion columns like "Don’t refloat" and "what’s to rebuild?" filled newspapers across the country. Twelve years later, New Orleans is growing and thriving. NHPA's Jodie Levandowski investigates.

When it comes to taking in the Big Easy, the trick is to live like a local. Step off Bourbon Street, down a sno-ball, explore the Bywater District. You’ll find a city teeming with life in the aftermath of one of the nation’s most horrific natural disasters.

APA is set to host the 2018 National Planning Conference in the Big Easy next year on April 21st through the 24th. New Orleans has so much to offer, so don’t limit your time to the French Quarter and Bourbon Street.

Explore the Garden District mansions, downhome cooking, historic above ground cemeteries and city landmarks. If you find yourself in the Garden District, a must stop is the Pontchartrain Hotel, a historic gem with a prime location on the St. Charles Avenue streetcar. The Hotel has multiple boutique food and drink options. The Bayou Bar, Silver Whistle Café, and the Caribbean Room and must importantly, the rooftop bar “Hot Tin” located on the hotels 14th story. The bar overlooks the downtown skyline and Mississippi River. A great photo-op and
bragging opportunity!

Ninety percent of your time in New Orleans will be spent eating, so make it count! In my opinion, skip the beignets and don’t leave the city without trying a sno-ball, a New Orleans confection that dates back to the ’30s made with finely shaved ice and flavored cane sugar syrup. You can only find them seasonally, from March to October, at sno-ball stands throughout the city so the timing of the APA Conference is perfect. I would also forgo the Po Boys and have yourself some boudin balls (check out Elizabeth’s in the Bywater)! You won’t regret it, trust me.

Chances are, if you’re visiting NOLA you’ll end up at the French Market one morning. After perusing the isles of alligator parts, handmade goods and souvenir t-shirts, continue north along the water to Crescent Park. Crescent Park is a 1.4 mile, 20 acre urban linear park that connects visitors to the riverfront. The comprehensively planned public space provides breathtaking views of New Orleans, native landscaping, bike paths, a dog run and multi-use pavilions for all to enjoy. The park opened to the public in February 2016 and was conceived post-Katrina by a private investor. You’ll find Crescent Park to be just the right tranquil disruption to the hustle and bustle of the conference and Bourbon Street.

A hidden gem of New Orleans is the Bywater District. The best experience I’ve ever had in the city was booking an Airbnb in the Bywater—a renovated shotgun house on Royal Street. The location was steps from local coffee shops, food co-ops, artist lofts, bars and restaurants. The Bywater district is a residential enclave bordering the famed French Quarter in the upper ninth ward. “Be nice or leave” - This phrase is found on street signs, in neighborhood cafes, and spray painted on fences.

While in the Bywater stop by Bacchanal on Poland Ave where you can buy wines by the bottle and enjoy them in a garden setting with live music or try The Country Club on Louisa Street for their famous drag brunch or happy hour from 4-7. The Country Club boasts a new million dollar remodel with lots of funky charm—I was told it’s a favorite hangout of Solange Knowles.

Once you’ve thoroughly explored the surrounding areas head back to the French Quarter for some libations and sinful fun. If you want a Bourbon Street vibe but don’t want the crowds try Frenchmens Street. The three-block section in the Marigny neighborhood (the “locals Bourbon Street”) is home to some of the city’s popular live-music venues including Snug Harbor, the Spotted Cat, and Bamboulas. In addition to funky jazz clubs and dancing in the street there’s no shortage of restaurants serving late-night eats, bars, bookstores, coffee shops, and art markets.

Finally, if you have time, head south of the city to Jefferson Parish for a swamp tour. Whether you choose your tour by airboat or barge you’re going to have a good time and you will definitely see some gators!
One project generating some of the most buzz in New Hampshire is the Tuscan Village mixed-use project slated for the old Rockingham Park property off Exit 1 of Interstate 93. Plans call for a healthy residential component with over 700 apartments and 100 townhouses planned. Work is already underway on a 256-unit apartment project as well as several townhouse units.

At 170 acres, the project site is expansive and will include more traditional forms of development, including a shopping plaza anchored by a Market Basket store and at least one massive big-box store (rumored in The Union Leader to be a trendy Ikea store). However, key parts of the project will commercial and mixed-use structures clustered along wide sidewalks, tree-lined streets and parks and outdoor gathering places.

While noting that key details of the project have not been finalized, Salem officials have consistently voiced support for seeing the development through.

“We’re all looking forward to moving this project forward as fast as we can,” Selectman and Planning Board member Gary Azarian told The Union Leader in February.
**BEDFORD**

In November 2017, the Bedford Planning Board approved plans for a 133-unit apartment building and a freestanding restaurant at 121 South River Road. The market rate apartment building will be located perched along Bowman Brook behind the Whole Foods shopping center and adjacent to a pedestrian path skirting the waterway. The development will complete the redevelopment of the former Wayfarer Convention Center property, which was demolished in 2015 after several years of standing vacant. The site is also located adjacent to the planned ‘Market & Main’ mixed-use site.

**LONDONDERERY**

Few communities in the Granite State, if any, have experienced as much multi-family residential development as Londonderry. After a master plan effort in 2012 revealed a strong demand in the community for more housing options to meet all income levels, the Town reformed its zoning requirements to encourage more workforce housing. Several major projects are in the pipeline, under construction, or recently opened. Projects include the 240-unit Wallace Farm workforce housing development, a 288-unit workforce housing development off Stonehenge Road, and a 216-unit workforce housing development on Perkins Road currently pending before the Planning Board. That does not even include the 629-acre Woodmont Commons planned unit development (conceptual rendering above). Located off Route 102 near Interstate 93 the development will include 1,300 residential units upon buildout in a walkable, mixed-use environment. A groundbreaking was held in the summer of 2017.
Located on the Merrimack River near a planned rail station, the Residences at Riverfront Landing will include approximately 140 apartments in three buildings and a 2-story commercial building. The project is currently under construction.

**Millyard Rediscovery**

The Nashua Millyard is buzzing with redevelopment activity after standing decrepit for decades. The development activity comes after significant city investments to extend the Nashua Riverwalk and the completion of the Broad Street Parkway, providing much more convenient vehicular access to the area, in 2016. Construction is currently underway by Brady Sullivan Properties to renovate the Franklin Mill. A total of 200 new residential units are proposed for the mill, located on the Nashua River. The mill is located adjacent to the Cotton Mill, which was redeveloped in 2014 to include 109 apartments, including 55 affordable units and 54 market rate apartments. The activity comes after several planned developments fizzled in the early 2000s.

Construction is currently underway at the Franklin Mill (above) while the redevelopment of the Cotton Mill (right) wrapped up in 2014.
Rochester planners report that the Lilac City is experiencing no shortage of multi-family housing developments, including several major proposals:

- Highland Commons is a planned unit development (PUD) featuring 174 apartments and 72 townhomes in addition to 100 single family lots. The townhomes have already been built while construction has not yet started on the apartments and many of the single family lots.
- **Clark Brook** is another PUD, featuring 144 apartments. Construction wrapped up in 2016.
- **Indian Brook** is a 40-unit townhouse community. Approximately half of the development has been built with construction expected to be complete this year.
- **23 Glenwood Street** is a recently completed development that includes 24 affordable senior apartments.
- A 102-unit affordable apartment development is slated for Rochester Hill Road with three buildings to include 34 units each. Construction has not yet started.
- A retrofit of a downtown multi-story mixed-use building in Rochester included the addition of 21 new apartments.
- Planners report that at least 62 additional apartments are pending in various other projects across the city.

**DOVER, continued**

Other projects pending in the Garrison City include:

- A 27,000 square foot mixed-use building will replace a former sports bar in Downtown Dover. The townhouse style development will include 15 apartments and 6 commercial units.
- The old St. Charles Church site on Central Street in Dover is currently under construction to make way for **Bradley Commons**, a mixed-use building to include 39 affordable apartments in addition to first floor commercial units. A summer 2018 opening is projected.
- Chinburg Companies is pursuing redevelopment of part of the **Washington Mills** in Dover to include 54 apartments. Existing artistic and commercial uses in the building will not be impacted by the conversion, slated for a vacant portion of the mill.
- Plans are currently pending to renovate the former **Fosters Building** at 333 Central Avenue to house 18 apartments and 16,000 square-feet of commercial space.
- The Planning Board has approved plans to redevelop a municipal parking lot on Third Street to include two new buildings with 22 residential units and ground floor commercial space.
Despite its enviable location between Nashua and Manchester, The Town of Merrimack, with its suburban form and spread out nature can sometimes be left out of statewide planning discussions. But with hundreds of new housing units planned, including 757 apartments, it will be difficult to forget about Merrimack anytime soon.

Three large multi-family developments are planned, including 280 units off Executive Park Drive, 240 units in North Merrimack off the Daniel Webster Highway, and 192 units at the foot of the Merrimack Premium Outlets.

The Outlets development has generated the most discussion as the area surrounding the retail area will get a much more urban feel when the planned mixed-use development opens at the entrance of the center. Plans filed with the Town of Merrimack call for a six-structure development featuring a hotel, office building, and apartment buildings with ground-level restaurants and retail units.

The development will be clustered along two streets with wide sidewalks, street parking, and park space. The buildings will feature contemporary, pedestrian-oriented architecture, marking a new development design for Merrimack. All told, the development will include 192 apartments, a 124-room hotel, 42,000 square-feet of office space, and 28,000 square-feet of retail and restaurant space. The developers hope to break ground on the project by late 2018.

Construction is wrapping up on 124 units that make up the Ridge at Eastern Trails development in Milford. The project features two apartment buildings (already opened) and four townhouse style structures. A separate 16-unit townhouse style development near Downtown Milford and adjacent to an old quarry operation is currently pending before the Milford Planning Board.
The state’s largest city is seeing its fair share of apartment development, with several redevelopment projects underway in Downtown Manchester, to convert old office space to apartment space. Active projects include:

- **875 Elm Street (Citizens Bank Building)** – 10 floors, 91 luxury apartments, including 43 one-bedroom units and 48 two-bedroom apartments located in downtown Manchester with garage parking.

- **Sundial Ave** – 48-unit, four-story apartment building with below-grade and surface parking.

- **1 Sundial Ave (Residence at Sundial Ave (former Hesser College)** – Change from dormitories to 54 apartment units in the upper three floors

- **855 Candia Road** – 105-unit, multifamily development comprised of three residential buildings and a clubhouse

- **1331 Elm Street** – Change of use from upper story office space to 60 one-bedroom units on second, third, and fourth stories of Downtown Manchester landmark building.

- **938 Elm Street (former Ted Herberts Music School)** – Conversion of upper story office space on the second, third, and fourth floors to 30 residential units Downtown.

Top: The former Amoskeag Bank Building at 875 Elm Street is being converted to apartments on its upper stories.

Middle: An apartment development proposed for Sundial Avenue in the Queen City.
After city election, non-binding vote in support, center’s future looks brighter

Just months after the Nashua Board of Aldermen turned down funding for a new downtown arts center, the project has captured new momentum, with the city primed to purchase the building eyed for the center. An aldermanic voted in early February to support a $2 million acquisition of the former Alec’s Shoe Store building at 201 Main Street. Several aldermen noted that with several residential projects underway in Downtown Nashua, there is renewed interest in more entertainment options in the state’s second largest city.

The move marks a comeback of sorts for the arts center, which appeared dead in September after the Board of Aldermen voted not to support the project and its $15.5 million pricetag. At the time, several aldermen noted that city taxpayers were already stretched and not prepared to pick up the tab for the project. The Board did however vote to put a non-binding referendum on the city ballot in November. A slim majority of residents voted to back the center in the election, with the referendum passing 51 percent to 49 percent. More importantly, the election reshaped the city’s governing body, with Democrats sweeping Board of Aldermen races in November. Several more conservative arts center opponents were swept out of office.

Nashua’s lack of major performing arts spaces has long been a thorn in the city’s side. An arts center study in 2000 recommended a 1000 seat theater in Downtown Nashua, but the proposal didn’t advance past the planning stages. Under Mayor Donnalee Lozeau, the city conducted a feasibility study on the center and initiated residents in choosing potential sites. Current Mayor Jim Donchess has also championed the proposal, and advocates lobbied heavily in its support during the election season when its future appeared on the ropes.

The current plan is for a 500 to 700 seat facility on the second floor of 201 Main Street. The first floor would feature ticketing and lobby space, with nearly 9,000 square-feet of space rented out to private restaurant and retail uses.
Talks progress on NNECAPA reorganization

Representatives from all three State Associations and NNECAPA gathered at the AMC Highland Center to hash out details and a timeline for the potential collaboration of all four organizations. Although it was very cold outside (−4 degrees!), the cooperation and thoughtful discussion from all participants made for a very productive 24 hours. The goal of the retreat was to draft a set of bylaws, structuring a new streamlined organization including composition and responsibilities. The draft bylaws are almost complete, and will be headed your way for review and discussion via your organizations spring meeting!

The timeline we are working towards includes; agreement on a final set of NNECAPA bylaws this spring/summer prior to the NNECAPA Conference in October. At the October business meeting NNECAPA’s membership will be asked to vote on the adoption of these new bylaws with effective date of October 1, 2019 (contingent upon amendments to be proposed for all three state association bylaws). If the NNECAPA membership passes the amended bylaws, then all three state associations will bring amended bylaws to their memberships for approval, with an effective date of January 1, 2020. If at any time any of these bylaws are not adopted, then none of them will go into effect. As we said from the beginning we are all in this together for the best solution. We are looking forward to discussions this spring!

-Sarah Marchant, NNECAPA President
Minkarah returns to NH for NRPC top post

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission welcomed A. John (Jay) Minkarah as its new Executive Director in October.

“The Commission is pleased to bring Jay Minkarah on board as Executive Director, not only because of his vision and passion for planning and the region,” said Susan Ruch, Chair of the Commission, “but because of his many years of demonstrated successes across the region, including in Merrimack, Nashua, and Manchester, as well as at the NRPC.”

Minkarah, who is well known and respected within the New Hampshire planning community, has a wide range of planning, economic development and management experience, which will serve the Commission and its community members well.

Minkarah started his career as an NRPC Regional Planner and was with the organization for approximately 8 years. Minkarah previously served as the Community Development Director for the Town of Merrimack, Economic Development Director for the City of Nashua’s Community Development Division, and the Economic Director for the City of Manchester. Most recently, Minkarah has served as the President and CEO of DevelopSpringfield, the private non-profit development partner for the City of Springfield, MA.

Jay earned a Bachelor of Science in Urban Planning from the University of Cincinnati in Cincinnati, Ohio. Jay subsequently earned a Juris Doctor from The University of New Hampshire School of Law (formerly Franklin Pierce Law Center) in Concord, NH.

Minkarah lives in Nashua and has three adult children. When not working, Jay likes to stay active. He enjoys working-out regularly and also swims, bikes and hikes. In colder weather, Jay frequents art museums. He also likes to cook and has a large vinyl collection (mainly classic rock, classic country, R & B, bluegrass, and folk) which he plays frequently.

Harris makes jump from Merrimack to Portsmouth

Jillian Harris, AICP is now proudly serving the City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire in the Planning Department as Planner I. In this position she works closely with the Planning Director to direct and coordinate review of land use development applications and to provide technical and administrative support to the Planning Board. Long range planning issues and special projects include ongoing development and execution of the City’s Wayfinding system and complete streets initiatives.


Jillian’s education includes a Masters of Urban and Regional Planning, received in 2007 from the University of Colorado, Denver. She also holds a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources Management, received in 2004 from California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, CA.

Harris has been active in the New Hampshire Planning Community, as a member of both the Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association (NNECAPA) and the New Hampshire Planners Association (NHPA). She served on the Executive Committee for NHPA from 2009-2012.

Jillian and her husband live in Auburn with their 2 girls, ages 9 and 6 and they enjoy hiking together as a family. The girls are proud to have a few 4000-footers under their belt and Jillian’s oldest is especially proud to have hiked Mt. Washington with her Dad this summer.
Welcome Scott & Congrats Donna!

NHPA extends its heartiest congratulations and best wishes to Dover Assistant City Planner and NHPA Executive Committee member Donna Benton and her family. Benton and her husband Chris welcomed their baby boy Scott Alan Benton a week early (planning ahead already) on February 24, 2018 at 8:33 pm.

Baby Scott weighed in at 7 lbs 12 oz and measured 19 3/4 inches. Benton reports that Scott and mom are healthy and enjoying a brief and well-deserved break from the action in the Planning Department.

A graduate of the University of New Hampshire, Benton previously worked as the Assistant Planner for the Town of Merrimack before joining Dover’s Planning Department in 2015. Benton has served on the NHBA Executive Committee since 2014, where she is a valued member credited for her dedication, attention to detail and easygoing nature.
Copeland retires after 18-year run at Strafford RPC

After 18 years as Executive Director of Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC), Cynthia Copeland, AICP, will conclude her decades-long public service career and retire at the end of March, 2018.

Under Cynthia’s leadership, SRPC experienced rapid growth and was restructured to ensure quality services and products to meet the needs of its region’s residents, municipalities, partner organizations, and stakeholders. Cynthia helped form the Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization in 2007, and guided the process that led to SRPC’s designation as an Economic Development District (EDD) in 2015.

One of the most notable projects SRPC undertook during Cynthia’s tenure was the statewide Granite State Future project. This three-year, multimillion dollar planning project enabled all nine regional planning commissions in the state to update their regional master plans, and produce a comprehensive “Statewide Snapshot.” The effort won the 2015 Plan of the Year award from the Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association (NNECAPA).

In addition to working on this and countless other projects, Cynthia lent her time and expertise to many boards and committees. She was for 17 years a member of the COAST board of directors and an active member of the NH Association of Regional Planning Commissions for 18 years. In 2010, Cynthia joined the board of the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program. From 2000 to 2010, she played a very important role in establishing the Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast.

In announcing her retirement, Cynthia emphasized the importance of personal relationships in both her private and professional lives. "In the last six months my career has come to a juncture that holds several choices, and I am selecting the one labeled ‘family and friends,’” Cynthia said. "It will be memories of ‘planned progress’-the slogan of my hometown in upstate New York-that will resonate with me as well as the wonderful colleagues, partners, officials and clients I have had the pleasure to work with over the years. Not only agencies and programs created, facilities built, lands developed and conserved, rivers cleaned up, landfills filled up, services and jobs created, but most importantly, people carrying out their beliefs about what makes our communities and lives better."

SRPC Secretary/Treasurer Thomas Crosby thanked Cynthia for all her hard work over the years and expressed his faith in the continued success of the organization, thanks in large part to Copeland’s leadership.

"I have enjoyed my time spent working with you over the last 18 years and 6 months," Cynthia told the SRPC staff. "The Strafford region is a great place to live and work-as is the state of New Hampshire-and I will continue to make the Strafford region my home."

Slack leaves NH OSI for Lakes Region RPC post

Susan Slack joined the staff of the Lakes Region Planning Commission in December 2017 as Principal Planner, following the retirement of Mike Izard. Susan was a principal planner at the NH Office of Strategic Initiatives (formerly the Office of Energy and Planning). She has a Juris Doctorate from the UNH School of Law (formerly Franklin Pierce Law Center) and a Bachelor of Science in Journalism degree from Ohio University. Prior to joining OEP in 2011, Susan was an attorney at the New Hampshire Municipal Association and an attorney in private practice focusing on municipal law. At LRPC Susan is involved with a broad range of transportation planning issues, and is working with several communities on water quality protection measures, and on Master Plan and Hazard Mitigation Plan updates. LRPC serves the 30 municipalities in the Lakes Region.
Duffy takes hometown director post in Goffstown

Jo Ann Duffy is enjoying a new position and a shorter commute.

After 24 years with the Town of Hooksett, including 11 years as Town Planner, Jo Ann Duffy took a position closer to home. The Goffstown resident has taken over the position of Planning and Economic Development Director for the Town of Goffstown. In her spare time, she served 15 years as an elected member of the Goffstown Planning Board, and most recently, ten years as an elected member of the Goffstown Zoning Board of Adjustment. Jo Ann also serves as a Commissioner on the Southern NH Planning Commission. In her new position, she will be responsible for serving as advisor to the Planning Board, as well as the Economic Development Committee. She is tasked with working with the business community to assist with expanding the potential business growth that exists throughout Goffstown.

Jo Ann is a New York City/ New Jersey native. She relocated to New Hampshire in 1984 to raise her family. She has two grown daughters. Jo Ann thoroughly enjoys spending time with her 8-year old granddaughter, Lily. She is thrilled to be working in her hometown!

Nashua welcomes planners Chizmas, Poirier

The City of Nashua has two new exciting announcements to share!

A big congratulations to Kate Poirier who recently accepted a position as Zoning Coordinator with the City of Nashua, NH!

Poirier graduated from Plymouth State University this past May, with a degree in Environmental Science and Policy. While in college she worked as a runner for the dining hall. She also spent a summer interning at Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest studying trees, and interned as a Stormwater inspector for the NHDES.

Her hobbies include wild plant identification, gardening, and reading. She listens to rock, bluegrass, and orchestra music. Kate enjoys kickboxing at the gym, and participates in the Monadnock regional choir. Poirier resided in Merrimack, NH with her parents, brother, and dog.

Kate says she is very excited to work in a job that pertains to her major, at such a good place to work, right out of college. Her duties as Zoning Coordinator include preparing paperwork for the Zoning Board, recording the minutes for Conservation Commission, and answering zoning related questions for the public.

Julie Chizmas recently joined the City of Nashua Community Development Department as a Transportation/Long Range Planner after working for many years as a senior transportation planner with a great team at the Nashua Regional Planning Commission. In her new role with the City, Julie will be leading project groups and research activities in the preparation of long-range planning studies addressing a wide variety of social, economic, physical, and facility planning issues and will also be developing planning strategies to assist in the management and improvement of a multimodal transport system in Greater Nashua. She lives in Merrimack with her husband, Steve, their two dogs, Lucy and Clover, and Cat Tabitha. When not out hiking the fantastic trails in the Nashua Region with their dogs, the Chizmas’ enjoy spending time at their family camp in Maine.
Elizabeth Wood, AICP, Planwell Resources, LLC celebrated nuptials with Stephen Drubin, of Groton Mass. in a civil ceremony on November 2nd in Windham, NH. The newlywed couple, currently residing in Groton, Mass. is busy house hunting for a home in New Hampshire. They just decorated their first Christmas tree and had to hide the poinsettia out of reach from their cat Magellan. Stephen is an airplane mechanic at Fitchburg Airport and also serves in the Air National Guard as an airplane mechanic. He looks forward to attending NHPA events with his new wife.