

## **PUBLIC ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION CHAPTER VII**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance and recommendations for addressing the Town of Plainfield's current and future transportation needs. The primary goal is to develop and maintain a transportation system that meets the needs of residents while maintaining and complementing Plainfield's rural village character.

Plainfield's transportation system consists of inter-regional highways, local streets and public transportation. This transportation network enables safe and efficient circulation within the town and ensures links with communities and markets locally, regionally, and statewide. The transportation system affects the daily life of residents and the long-term economic viability of businesses in Plainfield. Traffic volumes within Plainfield are increasing, particularly along regional commuting corridors like NH Route 120. The regional rate of traffic growth for the 1996-2008 period averaged 2.2%. This trend will result in increasing traffic congestion and makes the continued development of viable transportation alternatives to the single-occupancy vehicle a priority for the future.

### **PUBLIC ROAD SYSTEM**

The public road system in Plainfield remains at about 103 miles. There are 6.31 miles of Class I roads that make up the State highway system, 13.14 miles of Class II roads that are the secondary State highway system, and 59.75 miles of Class V roads that are the responsibility of the municipality. Almost half of these road miles are unpaved. The town also contains another 23.64 miles of class VI roads that are unmaintained, but otherwise full public rights of way. Map VII-1 provides a comprehensive overview of roads in Plainfield.

### **Road and Bridge Maintenance**

The maintenance of the road network is one of the major expenses of the operating budget of the Town of Plainfield. The average highway budget has been approximately 38% of the Town's total annual non-school operating expenditures from 2004 to 2009 (see Table VII-2 below). The Town highway maintenance program receives a significant amount of attention from the community and its leaders. The use of computerized pavement management technology, such as the Road Surface Management System (RSMS) program, and the interaction of the Town Road Agent with peers in the neighboring communities should be encouraged to increase operating efficiencies.

There is currently no comprehensive information about the condition of Plainfield's roads. The NHDOT maintains data on the condition of state roads in the Town of Plainfield- NH Route 120, NH Route 12A, Main Street and Stage Road as part of its statewide RSMS program. Ratings are assigned by evaluating three indices. The Ride Comfort Index (RCI) evaluates road condition and indicates how the public views the road. Ride quality or roughness is evaluated through measurement of an axle's vertical acceleration averaged between the two rear tires. The Surface Distress Index (SDI) is a visual inventory of road surface cracking. The Rut Rate Index (RRI) measures the frequency distribution of rut depths. Table VII-3 summarizes current pavement conditions on state-owned highways in the Town of Plainfield.

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**Table VII-1-Highway Mileage by Legislative Classification**

Legislative Class	Description	Mileage
<b>I</b>	<b>Class I, Trunk Line Highways</b> , consist of all existing or proposed highways on the primary state highway system, excepting all portions of such highways within the compact sections of cities and towns. The state assumes full control and pays costs of construction, reconstruction and maintenance of its sections.	6.31
<b>II</b>	<b>Class II, State Aid Highways</b> , consist of all existing or proposed highways on the secondary state highway system, excepting portions of such highways within the compact sections of cities and towns, which are classified as Class IV highways. All sections improved to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of Transportation are maintained and reconstructed by the State. All bridges improved to state standards on Class II highways are maintained by the State. All other bridges on the Class II system shall be maintained by the city or town until such improvement is made. Bridge Aid funds may be utilized to effect such improvements.	13.14
<b>V</b>	<b>Class V, Rural Highways</b> , consist of all other traveled highways which the town has the duty to maintain regularly.	59.75
<b>VI</b>	<b>Class VI, Unmaintained Highways</b> , consist of all other existing public ways, including highways discontinued as open highways, and made subject to gates and bars, and highways not maintained and repaired in suitable condition for travel thereon for five (5) successive years or more. However, if a city or town accepts from the state a Class V highway established to provide a property owner or property owners with highway access to such property because of a taking under RSA 230:14, then notwithstanding RSA 229:5, VII, such a highway shall not lapse to Class VI status due to failure of the city or town to maintain and repair it for five (5) successive years, and the municipality's duty of maintenance shall not terminate, except with the written consent of the property owner or property owners.	23.64
<b>TOTAL</b>		102.84

**Table VII-2 - Plainfield Highway Expenditures 2004-2009**

Year	Total Highway Expenditures	Total (Non-School) Operating Expenditures	Percentage of Highway to Total Operating Expenditures
2004	\$589,080	\$1,531,772	38%
2005	\$576,451	\$1,553,955	37%
2006	\$638,062	\$1,663,841	38%
2007	\$686,569	\$1,751,845	39%
2008	\$711,228	\$1,816,330	39%
2009	\$627,269	\$1,727,815	36%

**Table VII-3 - Pavement Condition on State Highways in Plainfield**

Road	Segment	Rating	Summary
NH Route 120	From Stage Road to the Lebanon City Line	Yellow	Some Work Required
NH Route 12A	From Old County Road to the Lebanon City Line	Yellow	Some Work Required

NHDOT's data indicates that much of the state highway mileage in the Town of Plainfield requires "some" (e.g. pavement rehabilitation) or "major" (e.g. full-depth reconstruction) work. The New

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Hampshire Department of Transportation also assigns sufficiency ratings to bridges based on inspections by their Civil Engineering staff. The sufficiency ratings are based on a color-coded system, the most notable of which being the “red list.” Red list bridges require interim inspections due to known deficiencies, weight restrictions, or type of construction. Currently, one bridge in Plainfield is listed on the Municipal Red List: The Meriden/Mill Covered Bridge over Bloods Brook on Colby Hill Road. The bridge is listed as “Functionally Obsolete,” primarily due to its type of construction.

The Town of Plainfield maintains nearly 60 miles of Class V roads. Maintaining Class V roads in consistently good condition to prevent severe deterioration is fundamental to controlling maintenance costs. Roadway reconstruction projects are very expensive, and some municipalities have reported their costs for full-depth reconstruction of Class V roads at approximately one million dollars per mile. For these reasons, the Town of Plainfield should consider using a pavement management system to assist in prioritizing maintenance. This system consists of a methodology that is used in managing municipal highways and developing a budget and priorities for roadway improvements. “Worst first” maintenance policies can end up as a more costly option as the maintenance dollars are directed away from relatively inexpensive, preventative road projects to extensive road repairs. The benefit of directing funds to more preventative maintenance is the long-term cost savings in avoiding further deterioration while the cost and extent of the larger repair projects tend to remain constant over time. Balancing short-term and long-term costs is ultimately up to the Town where utilizing RSMS or a similar program is one facet of a more complex method of prioritizing road maintenance.

The Town of Plainfield has been proactive in Capital Reserve Funds for highway maintenance, highway equipment, and bridge repair/reconstruction. This is an important practice and should continue.

### Dirt Roads

Over 50% of all town-maintained roads in Plainfield are unpaved. Dirt roads are designed differently than primary roads such as NH Route 120 and have different demands and impacts on the environment. Many of these roads were once trails and were gradually improved by adding crushed rock and/or gravel.

To maintain dirt roads in good condition, it is essential to drain water off the roadways effectively. Once stormwater is appropriately drained, it is then important to manage it so that it does not create pollution problems in adjacent surface waters. Impervious surfaces, including unpaved roads, can adversely affect surface waters by contributing pollution. Pollutants from roadways can include sediments such as sand, petroleum products, and salt. In order to minimize the impact from dirt roads, it is important that: 1) New development in the Town limits impervious surfaces; 2) Roadways/driveways are designed and maintained to properly handle runoff; and 3) Road maintenance procedures minimize erosion. Best Management Practices (BMPs) can be implemented to maintain good water quality and to minimize the potential for flood damage to town infrastructure. Such BMPs may include vegetated buffer zones around surface waters, drainage basins that minimize erosion and allow for sediments to settle, and slope stabilization methods.

Many communities, including the Town of Plainfield, struggle with the question of when dirt roads should be paved. For many residents, dirt roads are indicative of a rural quality of life that is treasured in Plainfield. The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) recommends paving Class V roads with average daily traffic volumes greater than 300 vehicles per day. This traffic volume can cause drainage and deterioration of the road surface to the extent that it often becomes more cost-effective to pave the road. The NH DOT guidelines are simply a recommendation, and any decision to pave a Class V dirt road remains with the Town Selectboard. Such decisions are typically made on a case-by-case basis, after substantial outreach to and input from the residents of the road in question.

**Road and Bridge Maintenance Recommendations:**

- Consider implementing a local Road Surface Management System to assist in prioritizing local road maintenance needs.
- Maintain a long-range improvement program for existing roadways, bridges and culverts to assist in the Town’s capital improvement and/or budget planning processes.
- Maintain a local inventory of Class V roads and develop a detailed inventory of Class VI roads.
- Continue annual investments in Capital Reserve Funds for highway maintenance, highway equipment, and bridge repair/reconstruction.
- Enhance the maintenance of gravel/dirt roads by implementing Best Management Practices (BMP) to minimize sediment erosion and protect water quality.

**Traffic in Plainfield**

Forecasting future traffic volumes in Plainfield relies on historic traffic growth rates and an understanding of the general development patterns in the region. Barring any unforeseen major development projects, Table VII-4 summarizes historic and forecast traffic volumes. These projections were prepared by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) with the most recent data available at the time of this publication.

**Table VII-4 - Average Daily Traffic: 1999-2008 with Traffic Projections for 2013 and 2018**

Location	Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)										Projected AADT	
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2013	2018
NH 120 South of Methodist Hill Road	2500	*	*	2800	*	2900	*	*	2900	*	3230	3480
NH 12A North of Stage Road	2700	*	*	3200	*	*	3300	*	*	3200	3550	3820
Stage Road West of Penniman Road	*	*	850	*	*	910	*	*	860	*	980	1090
Willow Brook Road at Cole Brook	*	*	940	*	*	980	*	*	850	*	970	1080
Hayward Road over Blow-Me-Down Brook	*	*	100	*	*	*	100	*	*	90	100	130
Westgate Road over Blow-Me-Down Brook	*	*	190	*	*	*	190	*	*	190	210	260
Daniels Road over Blow-Me-Down Brook	*	*	190	*	*	*	300	*	*	300	330	410
Stage Road over Blow-Me-Down Brook	*	*	720	*	*	*	850	*	*	790	880	1090
Hell Hollow Road over Blow-Me-Down Brook	*	*	170	*	*	*	210	*	*	160	180	220
Penniman Road over Blow-Me-Down Brook	*	*	270	*	*	290	*	*	280	*	320	360
Colby Hill Road over Bloods Brook	*	*	210	*	*	250	*	*	190	*	220	240
NH 120 over Bloods Brook	*	*	2900	*	*	3000	*	*	3200	*	3430	3680
Bean Road over Bloods Brook	*	*	530	*	*	520	*	*	460	*	520	580
Methodist Hill Road over Great Brook	*	*	390	*	*	410	*	*	540	*	620	690

Source: UVLSRPC, 1999-2008 Traffic Counts and Projections.

The UVLSRPC conducts traffic counts at 14 locations throughout the Town of Plainfield by contract with NHDOT. These locations are counted every three years. Most of the counts are conducted on the state highway system or at bridge locations. The Town may consider developing or contracting for a local traffic counting program to monitor traffic volumes on local roads in Plainfield. Such a program will inform the Town with road utilization and provide annual data to develop growth trends. This

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information can further aid in road maintenance planning and budgeting.

### **Traffic Recommendations:**

- Consider developing or contracting for a local traffic counting program to monitor traffic volumes on local roads in Plainfield.

### **Road and Highway Access**

An important piece of State legislation pertinent to roads in Plainfield is *Driveways and Other Accesses to the Public Way (RSA 236, Section 13)*. The law states that anyone wishing construct or substantially alter any driveway, entrance, exit or approach within the right-of-way of any Class I, Class III or the State-maintained portion of a Class II highway, must apply for a permit with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT). In Plainfield this requirement applies to any new or substantially altered access points along Routes 12A, 120, Main Street and Stage Road. The NHDOT standards require that:

- The safest possible location for access shall be selected;
- There must be adequate drainage and grades to permit a safe and controlled approach to the highway in all seasons of the year;
- No more than one access shall be allowed per parcel of land (a commercial or industrial enterprise and a subdivision are considered a single parcel under the law), unless there is an all season safe sight distance of four hundred feet (400') in both directions along the highway;
- No more than two (2) access points shall be allowed from any one highway to any one parcel of land unless the parcel's frontage along that highway exceeds five hundred feet (500'); and
- The width of the driveway, entrance, exit, or approach shall not exceed fifty feet (50'), except for normal flare at its junction with the highway.

RSA 236:16 also regulates access to town-maintained roads. In towns that have adopted subdivision regulations, this legislation gives the planning board the power to adopt regulations to review access to town roads. Thus, the Plainfield Planning Board has the power to regulate access to any Town road. The Town has adopted standards that will ensure safe and controlled access points to all Town roads in all seasons of the year. An approved access permit is required in the Town's Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision and Site Plan Review Regulations. The Town should periodically review its adopted standards to ensure that best practices are being met, including:

- The safest possible location(s) for access shall be selected;
- There must be adequate drainage and grades to permit a safe and controlled approach to the highway in all seasons of the year. The slope of the driveway or access point shall not exceed twelve percent (12%). Surface water runoff shall be diverted so it will not drain onto the roadway;
- The width of the driveway, entrance, exit or approach shall not exceed fifty feet (50');
- Only one access point shall be allowed per parcel of land (a commercial or industrial enterprise and a subdivision are considered a single parcel) unless the following all season safe sight distance in both directions along the road can be met:

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<u>Road Class</u>	<u>Design Speed</u>
▪ Local Road	30 MPH or lower
▪ Collector Road	31 - 40 MPH
▪ Minor Arterial	41 - 50 MPH
▪ Arterial Road	51 MPH or more

- No more than two (2) access points shall be allowed from any one town road to any one parcel of land unless the parcel's frontage along that road exceeds five hundred feet (500'). The same ratio of two access points per 500 feet of frontage, provided the minimum safe sight distance requirements can be met, shall be used for parcels which have more than 500 feet of frontage.

Because the NHDOT regulates the issuance of driveway access permits on state highways and the Town of Plainfield regulates the use and development of parcels adjoining the roadway, managing access to state highways must be a cooperative effort between the two parties. To facilitate this cooperation, the NHDOT has shown a willingness to enter into memorandums of understanding with communities around the state for coordinating access management on state highways. The Town of Plainfield should consider the possibility of entering into such an agreement with the NHDOT to cooperatively manage access in the Route 120, Route 12A, and Stage Road corridors.

### **Road and Highway Access Recommendations:**

- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the NHDOT to cooperatively manage access in the Route 120, Route 12A, and Stage Road corridors.
- Periodically review the Town's adopted standards for access to Class V roads to ensure that best practices are being met.

## Scenic Roads

The Scenic Road designation permitted under state law protects trees and stone walls situated on the public right-of-way of a particular road. This tool can help in the preservation of the rural, scenic and historic landscape in a town. As shown in Table VII-5, thirteen roads in the Town of Plainfield have been designated as scenic roads.

**Table VII-5 - Scenic Roads in Plainfield**

Name of Road	Extent of Scenic Road Designation	Year Designated
Black Hill Rd.	From Old County Road Easterly to the Point where Town Maintenance Ceases	1982
Chellis Rd.	From Main Street to NH Route 120	1984
Colby Hill Rd.	From Mill Bridge Westerly to Columbus Jordan Road	1972
Daniels Rd.	Entire Length	1973
Grantham Mountain Rd.	Entire Length	1977
Harriman Rd.	Entire Length	1978
Kenyon Rd.	Entire Length	1973
Ladieu Rd.	From Colby Hill Road to Willow Brook Road	1984
Pierce Rd.	Entire Length	1984
River Rd.	From Ferry Hill Road Northerly to NH Route 12A	1972
Spencer Rd.	Entire Length	1973
Underhill Rd.	Entire Length	1974
Whitaker Rd.	Entire Length	1977

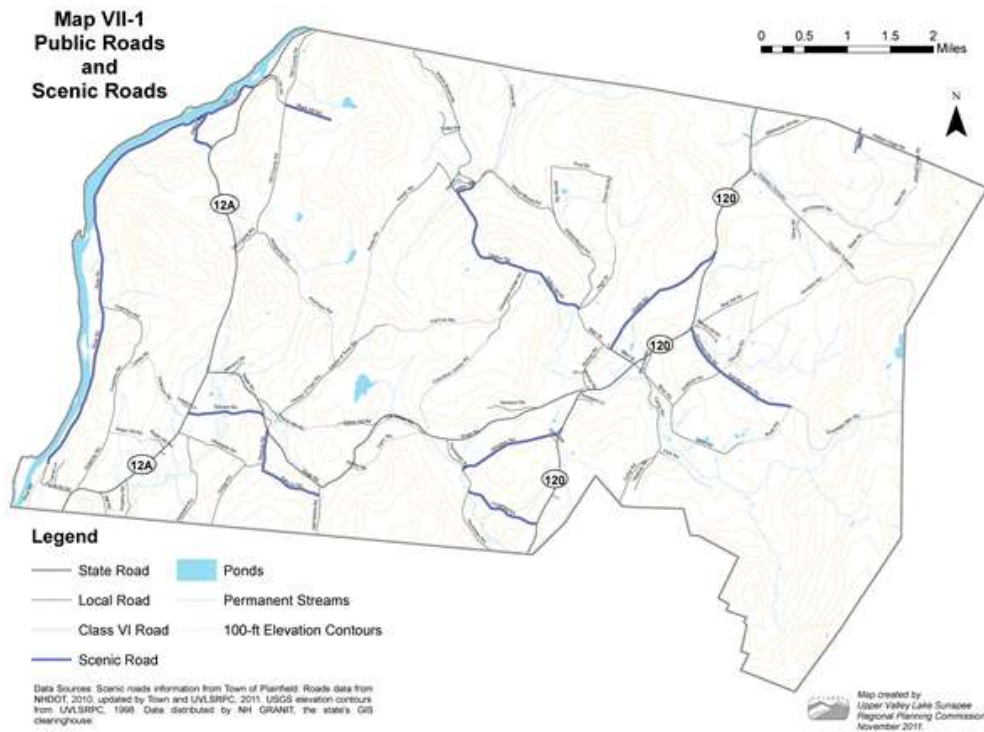
The procedure under RSA 231:157 allows 10 or more persons who are voters of the town or whose lands abut the proposed designated road to petition for a vote to be held at Town Meeting to consider the proposal, with Class I and II highways being excluded from this law. After Town Meeting designation, any repair, maintenance, reconstruction or paving work shall not involve or include the cutting or removal of trees, or the tearing down or destruction of stone walls, except with the prior written consent of the planning board or other designated municipal body and following a public hearing. However, the limited removal of natural and man-made obstructions is allowed for trees that are “public nuisances” threatening safety or property and for restoring the service of a public utility under emergency circumstances.

Per RSA 231:158, the Scenic Road classification does not affect the town's eligibility to receive state aid for road construction, nor does it affect the rights of abutting landowners to work on their own property.

### **Scenic Roads Recommendations:**

- Encourage the designation of new scenic roads to maintain Plainfield’s rural character.

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## LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

### Local Bus Service

#### Community Alliance Transportation Services

Community Alliance Transportation Services (CATS) is a service provided by the Community Alliance of Human Services which provides a wide variety of services, including public transportation for the residents of Sullivan County. CATS provides deviated-route transportation services in the towns of Newport, Claremont, Cornish, Unity, and Sunapee. While the Town of Plainfield is not currently served by CATS, a potential expansion of their service to the Hanover/Lebanon area could result in new a transit route that would directly serve Meriden Village.

The UVLSRPC has received approval for grant funding from NHDOT to oversee the design of a new transit route between Claremont and Lebanon via NH Route 120. The route would be operated by CATS and would have stops in Cornish Flat and Meriden Village. Such a route could provide Plainfield residents with a direct transit connection to employment and shopping destinations in both the Lebanon/Hanover area and the City of Claremont. The Town of Plainfield should be engaged in the design and implementation of this route. When implemented, the Town should consider providing an annual financial contribution to the operating costs of the route to ensure its financial viability.

#### Advance Transit

Advance Transit provides fixed-route public transit services to six communities: Lebanon, Hanover, Norwich, Hartford, Enfield, and Canaan. Advance Transit's service is fare-free and serves major



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employment destinations, including Dartmouth College and the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. Advance Transit does not directly serve the Town of Plainfield. However, it is important that when CATS begins serving the Town of Plainfield, their services provide convenient connections to Advance Transit's fixed-route system.

### **Local Bus Service Recommendations:**

- Participate in the design and implementation of a new transit service between Claremont and the Lebanon/Hanover area via NH Route 120 to ensure that Meriden Village is adequately served.
- Consider providing an annual financial contribution to the operating costs of the proposed NH Route 120 transit route to ensure its financial viability.

### **Human Service Public Transportation**

#### Grafton County Senior Citizens Council

The Grafton County Senior Citizens Council (GCSCC) provides transportation services for senior citizens and people with disabilities in 39 Grafton County communities. The Council serves the Lebanon area with three lift-equipped buses. These buses primarily serve the towns of Lebanon, Hanover, and Enfield, but also provide limited transportation services for Plainfield residents two days a week. In 2008, the Council provided approximately 400 rides to Plainfield residents for medical appointments, senior center programs, and shopping. GCSCC also provides meals, elder care, and outreach services to the town. The cost of these services is partially offset by an annual financial contribution by the Town. Plainfield should continue this arrangement with the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council to ensure that senior citizens and persons with disabilities have the mobility necessary to access medical appointments, senior center programs, and shopping destinations.

### **Human Service Public Transportation Recommendations:**

- Continue making an annual contribution to the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council to ensure that senior citizens and persons with disabilities in Plainfield have the mobility necessary to access medical appointments, senior center programs, and shopping destinations.

### **Intercity Bus Service**

#### Greyhound Bus Lines

Greyhound Bus Lines (formerly Vermont Transit) operates private, for-profit intercity bus service in White River Junction, Vermont. Services are provided to Burlington, Montreal, Boston, and New York City (via connection). Until public transportation services are implemented in the town of Plainfield, the Greyhound Bus Lines terminal can be reached only by automobile or taxi.

#### Dartmouth Coach

Dartmouth Coach operates private, for-profit intercity bus service in Lebanon, New Hampshire. Dartmouth Coach provides direct services to Boston (and Logan Airport), Stamford, and New York City.

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Until public transportation services are implemented in the town of Plainfield, the Dartmouth Coach terminal can be reached only by automobile or taxi.

### **Passenger Air Service**

#### Lebanon Airport

Plainfield residents have convenient access to air transportation at Lebanon Airport. Passenger air service is available to Boston, Massachusetts and White Plains, New York. Cape Air operates six flights per day to Boston and provides limited service to White Plains, New York. The Lebanon Airport is also a fully-equipped general aviation airport with ample hangar space. In 2009, the Lebanon Airport served approximately 12,000 passengers.

#### Manchester-Boston Regional Airport

The Manchester-Boston Regional Airport is located 70 miles from the Town of Plainfield. The Manchester-Boston Regional Airport is served by six airlines and offers non-stop service to nearly 20 destinations both in the continental United States and Canada. In 2009, the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport served nearly 3 million passengers.

### **Passenger Rail Service**

#### AMTRAK Passenger Rail Service

AMTRAK's "Vermont" passenger rail service, operating between Montreal and Washington, D.C. via New York City, makes one stop per day in each direction in White River Junction and Claremont Junction, both are about 8 miles from Plainfield. There is no direct public transit link with the rail station, although taxi service is available into Plainfield.

### **Upper Valley Rideshare**

Upper Valley Rideshare is a free carpooling program for Vermont and New Hampshire commuters facilitated by Advance Transit. Upper Valley Rideshare maintains a database of commuters who are interested in carpooling from 125 Vermont and New Hampshire towns. When commuters enroll in the program, they receive a "match list" of others who have similar commuting patterns. Members may then contact each other directly to set up a carpool or can coordinate with each other via an on-line "rideboard".

### **Park-and-Ride Facilities**

Park-and-Ride facilities can reduce the prevalence of single-occupant vehicle use by providing a collection point for people from rural areas to carpool or take public transportation to their destination. Successful public transit routes connect densely populated residential areas with employment or commercial destinations. Once public transportation serves the Town of Plainfield, a small park-and-ride facility should be formalized in Meriden Village to provide a place for people in rural areas of town to park and take the bus.

Implementing a park-and-ride facility in Plainfield does not mean that a new parking lot must be constructed. Rather, existing privately-owned parking lots can easily be used as local park-and-ride facilities with the permission of the owner. The NHDOT has expressed a willingness to enter into a lease

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agreement with private entities to lease their parking lots for use as public park-and-ride facilities. In return, the owner of the lot receives a stipend that can be used to offset the cost of maintaining the lot.

For example, park-and-ride facilities could be implemented with an agreement between a governmental organization like NHDOT and a local church, non-profit organization, or other private entity. Such arrangements are cost effective, environmentally sensitive, and easy to implement.

### **Park-and-Ride Facility Recommendations:**

- Work collaboratively with UVLSRPC and NHDOT to implement - through an agreement with a church, non-profit organization, or private entity - a local park-and-ride facility in the vicinity of Route 120 in Meriden Village to support local carpooling and potential public transportation ridership.

## **WALKING, CYCLING, AND TRAILS**

### **Pedestrian Needs**

The 2006 Master Plan Survey indicates public opinion that Plainfield residents desire pedestrian and bicycle-friendly village centers. Nearly two-thirds of survey respondents indicated that, “The Town should support the expansion of pedestrian and bicycle pathways, especially in the village centers.” To encourage additional pedestrian activity, the Town and State must provide the facilities and amenities necessary for pedestrians. Limited pedestrian facilities are located in Meriden Village and Plainfield Village. Sidewalks do not exist in the following key areas:

- Bean Road between NH Route 120 and Flat Iron Road (Meriden)
- Main Street between Mitchell Drive and the Town Offices (Meriden)
- NH Route 120 between Main Street and the Meriden Deli Mart (Meriden)
- East side of NH Route 12A between Lawton Lane and Westgate Road (Plainfield)

In addition to sidewalks, crosswalks are also needed in some village locations. Crosswalks across state highways are granted under the authority of NHDOT. NHDOT will not permit a crosswalk unless there is appropriate pedestrian infrastructure (e.g. sidewalks) on both sides of the crossing. Crosswalks are needed in the following areas:

- NH Route 120 between Main Street and Bean Road in Meriden Village
- NH Route 12A (Various Locations) in Plainfield Village

Establishing crosswalks on NH Route 12A in Plainfield Village will require the construction of sidewalks on the east side of NH Route 12A between Lawton Lane and Westgate Road. The Town may consider applying for future Transportation Enhancement funding to construct this sidewalk and make other traffic calming improvements in Plainfield Village.

### **Pedestrian Recommendations:**

- Support the development of additional pedestrian infrastructure, including sidewalks and crosswalks, at key locations in both Meriden and Plainfield Village.
- Encourage the formation of a local Safe Routes to School Task Force to identify and evaluate pedestrian improvements in the vicinity of the Plainfield Elementary School.

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- Consider applying for future Transportation Enhancement funding to incorporate traffic calming measures and construct a sidewalk on the east side of NH Route 12A between Lawton Lane and Westgate Road in Plainfield Village.

### Bicycling Needs

Similar to pedestrian accommodations, nearly two-thirds of survey respondents in the town's 2006 Master Plan Survey indicated support for additional bicycle pathways in Plainfield's village centers. NHDOT lists the following as designated bicycle routes along the state highway system in Plainfield.

**Table VII-6 - NHDOT Designated Bicycle Routes in Plainfield**

Road	Extent	Notes
NH Route 120	From Stage Road to Lebanon City Line	Advanced Skills Recommended
Stage Road	Entire Length	All Skill Levels- Use Caution
Penniman Road	Entire Length	All Skill Levels- Use Caution
NH Route 12A	From Stage Road to Cornish Town Line	All Skill Levels- Use Caution

The Town of Plainfield should work cooperatively with NHDOT to improve bicycle safety along state highways in town through the course of regularly-scheduled maintenance or betterment projects (e.g. resurfacing and rehabilitation). Such bicycle safety improvements could include increasing shoulder width or implementing traffic calming measures in Meriden and Plainfield Villages.

Some town roads also see significant bicycle traffic including Penniman Road, Willow Brook Road, and River Road. Bicycle safety improvements should also be incorporated into capital improvement projects on these roadways.

### **Bicycling Recommendations:**

- Work cooperatively with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to improve bicycle safety along state highways in town through the course of regularly-scheduled maintenance or betterment projects on these roads.
- Incorporate bicycle safety improvements into capital improvement projects on town roads with significant bicycle traffic including Penniman Road, Willow Brook Road, and River Road.

### **Trails**

Trails are not simply a form of recreational travel, but can also comprise an important part of the town's transportation system. Trails encourage active living and can provide convenient connections between residential areas, recreational areas, and town services. The Town of Plainfield has a long history of encouraging the development and usage of a connected, easily-accessible trail network. In the 2006 Master Plan Survey, nearly three-quarters of respondents indicated that the town "should continue to encourage public access to the existing roads and trails by expanding the system of trails which connect publicly accessible open spaces and community facilities." Plainfield's trail system is discussed in detail in Recreation Chapter.

### **Trails Recommendations:**

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- Work cooperatively with local trails advocates and landowners to expanding the system of trails which connect publicly accessible open spaces and community facilities.

## **REGIONAL COOPERATION/COORDINATION**

Because the Town of Plainfield is centrally located between the City of Lebanon and City of Claremont, the town has an important role in the regional transportation network. To ensure that the Plainfield's interests are considered in regional and statewide transportation planning processes, the town should continue to engage the UVLSRPC and neighboring communities, particularly the City of Lebanon.

### UVLSRPC Transportation Advisory Committee

While the Town of Plainfield is not responsible for maintaining state highways, the condition of these roads greatly affects residents. Maintenance or repair projects on state highways are completed by the NHDOT and must compete with other state roads for limited funds. The Town of Plainfield is entitled to representation on the UVLSRPC Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), which is the group responsible for prioritizing Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Plan projects in the region. The Town of Plainfield should maintain active representation on the UVLSRPC TAC to ensure that state infrastructure needs in the Town of Plainfield are fully considered in each NHDOT Ten-Year Plan update cycle.

### Direct Coordination with Neighboring Communities

Transportation-related decisions in neighboring communities can have a direct impact on the Town of Plainfield. For instance, if a Class VI road in a neighboring community is converted into a Class V highway, local roads in the Town of Plainfield could see additional traffic as a result. Similarly, if the capacity of Route 12A or Route 120 is expanded in a neighboring community, traffic may increase in the Town of Plainfield. Other impacts of development, including lighting, may also impact residents of the Town of Plainfield.

For these reasons, it is important for Plainfield officials to engage directly with officials in neighboring communities. The Plainfield Selectboard should consider participating in a joint meeting with the Selectboards (and City Council) of Cornish, Grantham, and Lebanon at least biennially to coordinate on issues of inter-municipal importance. The Plainfield Planning Board should also consider meeting at least biennially with the Planning Boards of Cornish, Grantham, and Lebanon. Plainfield town staff, particularly the Town Administrator and the Road Agent, should continue to coordinate with their counterparts in neighboring communities on an ongoing basis.

### **Regional Cooperation/Coordination Recommendations:**

- Maintain active representation on the UVLSRPC TAC to ensure that state infrastructure needs in the Town of Plainfield are fully considered in each NHDOT Ten-Year Plan update cycle.
- The Plainfield Selectboard should consider participating in a joint meeting with the Selectboards (and City Council) of Cornish, Grantham, and Lebanon at least biennially to coordinate on issues of inter-municipal importance.
- The Plainfield Planning Board should consider meeting at least biennially with the Planning Boards of Cornish, Grantham, and Lebanon to coordinate on issues of inter-municipal importance.
- Town staff, particularly the Town Administrator and the Road Agent, should continue to coordinate with their counterparts in neighboring communities on an ongoing basis.