



Hyder Court, Portsmouth

## Pulling It All Together to Create Community

Efforts to promote affordable housing can, and should, complement efforts to stem sprawl and preserve open space. Smart growth encourages communities to increase housing choices, not only by modifying land use patterns on newly-developed sites, but also by increasing the supply in existing neighborhoods and on land served by existing infrastructure.

Similar to ongoing smart growth efforts in New Hampshire, the strategies highlighted in this handbook employ a combination of tactics to address affordable housing and land use patterns within the community. A few communities have started to “package” zoning changes to increase the supply of affordable housing with efforts to protect open space, and direct growth to areas with the infrastructure to support it.

Because affordable housing and smart growth objectives are compatible, forging a strong alliance between these two constituencies is a smart policy for all communities. This will require analysis of communities’ existing zoning ordinances and the master plans, and may require significant changes to the zoning language. This analysis and implementation

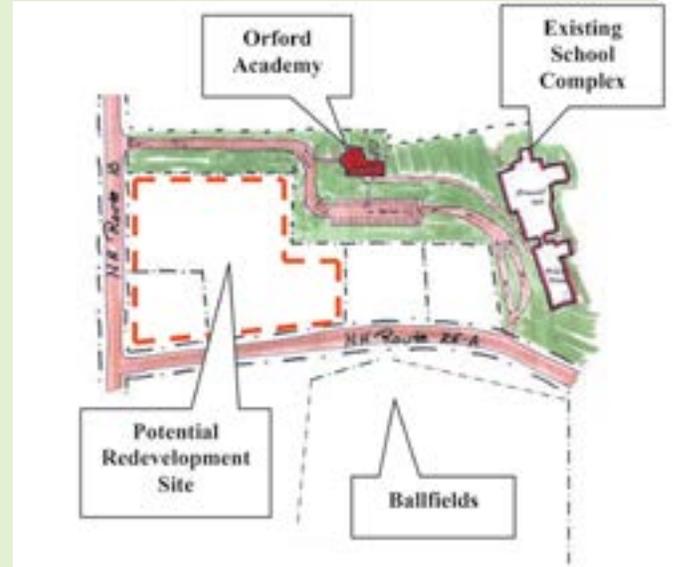
is necessary because smart growth is not a specific tool, but rather a comprehensive strategy of zoning and land use tactics.

Developed as part of the Achieving Smart Growth in New Hampshire project, the following smart growth principles can be helpful in analyzing existing regulations, and then guiding and supporting the creation of new housing alternatives in New Hampshire communities:

- ▶ Maintain traditional compact settlement patterns to efficiently use land, resources, and investments in infrastructure;
- ▶ Foster the traditional character of New Hampshire downtowns, villages, and neighborhoods by encouraging a human scale of development that is comfortable for pedestrians and conducive to community life;
- ▶ Incorporate a mix of uses to provide a variety of housing, employment, shopping, services, and social opportunities for all members of the community;



Orford Academy



Charrette Redevelopment Sketch, Orford Academy

## Using New Housing Development to Reinforce Community Centers

In 2006 the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance arranged for several consultants to work with a team of local citizens in Orford to brainstorm future uses for the former Orford Academy. The Academy is an impressive brick structure built in 1850-51. The building sits on a knoll at the south edge of the half-mile-long line of historic white homes bordering Route 10, near that road's intersection with Route 25-A.

The Academy served as the school district's high school until 2002. Over time, the academy and its grounds were home to a number of other civic uses, including the junior high school community playing fields and other recreational facilities.

Initial suggestions were that the Academy should be considered for housing, but its relatively small size can only accommodate a maximum of 12 unit, which was deemed too small to be attractive to either for-profit or non-profit developers. Other suggestions included using part of the building

as school district offices, with other space devoted to non-profit organizations and business incubator space. These suggestions are still under consideration.

The design team was also intrigued, however, with the idea of building on this collection of public uses, and expanding on them by identifying future housing sites nearby that might transform this small crossroad intersection into more of a village, with some housing and a small convenience store. They identified several underutilized adjacent properties that might also be redeveloped.

Increasingly, with energy prices continuing to soar, communities must consider infill developments that create nodal villages. Villages build social capital, they make ridesharing easier, and they continue a New Hampshire tradition that is 300-years strong!

### Contact Information:

New Hampshire Preservation Alliance  
 7 Eagle Square, P.O. Box 268  
 Concord, NH 03302-0268  
 (603) 224-2281  
[www.nhpreservation.org](http://www.nhpreservation.org)

- ▶ Preserve New Hampshire’s working landscape by sustaining farm and forest land and other rural resource lands to maintain contiguous tracts of open land and to minimize land use conflicts;
- ▶ Provide choices and safety in transportation to create livable, walkable communities that increase accessibility for people of all ages, whether on foot, bicycle, or in motor vehicles;
- ▶ Protect environmental quality by minimizing impacts from human activities and planning for and maintaining natural areas that contribute to the health and quality of life of communities and people in New Hampshire;
- ▶ Involve the community in planning and implementation to ensure that development retains and enhances the sense of place, traditions, goals, and values of local communities; and,
- ▶ Manage growth locally in the New Hampshire tradition, but work with neighboring towns to achieve common goals and address common problems more effectively.

New Hampshire communities can take charge of their own housing destinies if they foster:

- ▶ Vision
- ▶ Local support
- ▶ Community organization and communication skills
- ▶ Appropriate tools and regulations
- ▶ A range of partnering organizations

Now it is time for you to identify approaches that match the needs of your community. What do existing residents, and what will future residents, require for housing? Is your community meeting current housing needs? How can a diversity of future housing units be accomplished in your community? New Hampshire Housing encourages you to explore the many projects and programs featured in this guidebook. All references to specific regulatory language highlighted in this guide are included in the Appendix, as well as a list of additional contacts and information sources. 