

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

3

The Planning Process

4

VISION

5

Vision Recommendations

6



Welcome to

HART'S LOCATION

*Smallest Town in
New Hampshire*





INTRODUCTION

In 2025, Hart's Location embarked on the process of updating the Master Plan working with the North Country Council to develop the future vision for land use that reflects the community's values and challenges.

A Master Plan serves as a blueprint that helps direct a community into the future. This Master Plan provides a foundation for land use decisions which will provide long-term resilience.

It offers tools to uphold the shared values by those who live here today and generations to come while safeguarding against unwanted development.

In an effort to preserve the character of the community, broad land use planning principles are focused on maintaining the key aspects of Hart's Location which makes it one of the smallest and most unique towns in the state.

Hart's Location Residents say it best!

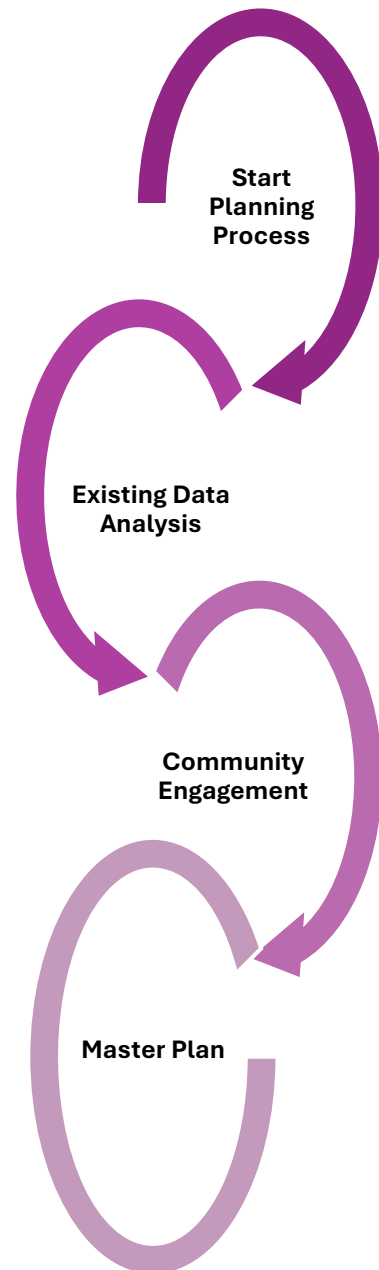
Quiet Scenic Resilient
Thriving Beautiful Rural Limited Edition
Natural Peaceful
Wilderness Small Town Feel

The Planning Process

Master Plans are typically updated every 10 years, and although more time has passed, the current Hart's Location government embraced the opportunity to take on the important task of updating the plan.

Over the past year, Hart's Location has worked closely with its residents with assistance of the North Country Council to update its Master Plan. This planning effort was grounded in a strong commitment to public involvement, transparency, and thoughtful data analysis. Recognizing the importance of capturing the unique character and priorities of the town, the Planning Board emphasized community engagement from the start. Nearly half of the community participated in the process through a combination of surveys, phone calls, emails, interviews, focus groups, and online feedback.

In parallel with outreach, extensive data was collected and analyzed to understand existing conditions, trends, and potential challenges. This included reviewing land use patterns, transportation infrastructure, natural resources, housing conditions, and demographic information. A community visioning process helped identify shared goals and values, which created the foundation of the Master Plan and guided the development of the Land Use Element. The input gathered through public engagement and technical research was carefully synthesized to ensure that the final plan aligns with the community's long-term aspirations while preserving its rural character and natural assets.



VISION

This Vision Element serves as a guiding light for all subsequent planning efforts. Every goal, policy, and strategy should be grounded in the simple but powerful message voiced by its residents:



The vision provides a view into the future. It highlights what is important in Hart's Location as it relates to the character of its beautiful and natural environment. The vision was created with input from the Planning Board, stakeholders and the community.

Known for its rugged natural beauty, rich history, and iconic role as the first town to cast ballots in presidential elections, Hart's Location is defined by its pristine environment, quiet lifestyle, and deep-rooted community pride.

A Community Rooted in Preservation

The future vision for Hart's Location is clear: to remain natural, rural, quiet, and beautiful. Residents do not envision major change but instead emphasize preserving what exists today. The town's greatest assets are its forests, rivers, mountain views, wildlife, and recreational trails, all of which should be preserved for future generations. Maintaining the town's small scale and unspoiled character is a top priority. When asked to describe their hopes for Hart's Location, a common refrain was simply: *"Keep it the same."*

This emphasis on preservation does not mean resistance to all change. Rather, it reflects a desire for thoughtful planning that respects the land and the people who live here. Residents expressed strong support for policies that protect sensitive areas, manage development pressures, and ensure that any growth aligns with the town's values and capacity.

Looking Toward 2035 and Beyond

Hart's Location embraces the opportunity to build on the values that have long defined its character, natural beauty, peace and quiet, community pride, and environmental stewardship. Looking ahead, the town envisions itself as a model of small-town resilience, preserving its distinct sense of place while making thoughtful, forward-looking decisions that protect its future while maintaining its quiet charm and close-knit community. Hart's Location remains welcoming, inclusive, and prepared for what lies ahead. These recommendations reflect a balanced approach; one that upholds fiscal responsibility while promoting long-term environmental and community sustainability.

Vision Recommendations

Planning with Purpose

Public engagement revealed a strong desire to:

- Improve broadband;
 - Continue working with regional partners and state programs to expand high-speed internet access.
- Improve Cell Service;
 - Encourage colocation on existing structures (e.g., utility poles, town buildings, or shared towers) to reduce costs and environmental impact.
- Enhance emergency preparedness for increasingly frequent natural disasters;
 - Coordinate with neighboring towns and county agencies to strengthen emergency response and hazard preparedness for floods, storms, and other natural disasters.
- Provide basic support systems for the aging population;
 - Connect older residents with local and regional resources for transportation, healthcare, and in-home support services.
- Support for renewable energy;
 - Encourage renewable energy projects through policies and incentives.
- Upgrades to emergency services;
 - Maintain strong partnerships with mutual aid departments in surrounding communities.
- Update ordinances to responsibly manage growth and short-term rentals
 - Review and update local ordinances to guide responsible growth, protect community character, and manage short-term rentals appropriately.

Supporting Those Who Call It Home

Survey respondents emphasized:

- The importance of services that allow people to age in place safely, including fire and rescue readiness, emergency shelters, and access to healthcare;
 - Coordinate with nearby towns and the Carroll County Emergency Management Office to identify designated emergency shelters accessible to Hart's Location residents during severe weather or extended power outages. Develop a clear communication plan to notify residents of shelter locations and transportation options.
 - Create a "Hart's Location Neighbor-to-Neighbor" volunteer system or phone tree to check in on vulnerable residents during emergencies or extreme weather events.
- Avoid overburdening residents with future decisions that will heavily weigh on taxpayers;
 - Develop a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to schedule and prioritize major expenses such as road maintenance, emergency equipment, and infrastructure upgrades, spreading costs over time.
 - Pursue state and federal grants, regional cost-sharing agreements, and partnerships with neighboring towns to reduce the local tax burden for large projects.
 - Maintain adequate reserve funds for emergencies or unexpected infrastructure needs to minimize sudden tax increases.
- Ensuring access to affordable housing, basic services, and community support systems.
 - Review zoning and land-use regulations to allow for small homes, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and modest multi-family dwellings that fit the community's rural character while expanding housing choices.
 - Encourage home modification programs, accessibility retrofits, and local volunteer assistance to help seniors and residents with disabilities remain safely in their homes.
 - Work with regional providers to ensure residents have reliable access to transportation, healthcare, broadband, and emergency services despite the town's small size and geographic constraints.
Explore state, federal, and nonprofit funding (e.g., Community Development Block Grants, NH Housing programs) to support local housing rehabilitation, energy efficiency, and service expansion.