

# Dorchester Master Plan Transportation Chapter Final Draft

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# I. TRANSPORTATION

## Introduction

This purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance and recommendations for addressing the Town of Dorchester'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 Dorchester's rural character.

Dorchester's transportation system consists of inter-regional highways, local roads, and some trails. This network of roads enables vehicle travel within the Town and provides surface transportation connections within the State. The transportation system affects the daily life of residents and the long-term economic viability of commercial interests in Dorchester. Dorchester residents place a high value on the community's rural atmosphere including a collective sense of being part of a small community in a landscape with large tracts of undisturbed land. Managing the Town's transportation infrastructure in a rural setting presents its own challenges for long-term planning.

## Community Input and Vision

The Dorchester Planning Board collected community feedback through a Community Attitude Survey in late 2011 and a subsequent public meeting in January 2012. The survey and public discussion addressed existing transportation issues and potential future needs in Dorchester.

### Transportation and the Dorchester Vision Statement

The Dorchester Vision Statement is as follows:

*The Master Plan is intended to offer a blueprint about how Dorchester should evolve and grow. A community wide survey done in 2010 makes clear that Dorchester residents value the town's natural resources, agricultural heritage, historic buildings, social and cultural institutions, and its scenic and rural character. The special places and qualities of a small community make Dorchester an attractive place to live, work and raise families.*

*As Dorchester's landscape consists of important natural, cultural, and historic features, the town should strive to employ sustainable development practices to: preserve, improve, and promote historic structures; maintain the character of existing rural lands, open spaces, and natural areas; encourage compatible development throughout the town; promote existing businesses; and guide new commercial and industrial development as beneficial pieces of the landscape. Dorchester's vision is of a positive, complimentary relationship between celebrating its past and fostering opportunities for a vibrant future in the region.*

The Dorchester Vision Statement provides a broad outline of the core values of the Town's residents: what they want in their community and how the community will address future needs. Residents recognize the quality and value of the historic features and agricultural heritage and wish to preserve them into the future. This Vision will require careful consideration of how the community accommodates population and commercial growth while maintaining a good quality transportation network.

## Community Survey Responses

The Community Survey asked direct questions about the Town's transportation network and allowed for general responses at various points in the survey. The following bullets provide an overview of the attitudes regarding roads and transportation:

- More than 2/3 of respondents stated that road maintenance and snow clearing operations were "Good" to "Excellent". Nearly all respondents (96%) want the Town to maintain local roads with approximately a third of those respondents wanting roads to be maintained in the best possible condition.
- Respondents identified "Traffic Speed", "Road Conditions", and "Truck Traffic" as principal concerns.
- Nearly 2/3 of respondents "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that the Town should develop and maintain a Capital Improvement Program.
- Nearly 2/3 of respondents "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that the Town should identify and designate Scenic Roads.
- Nearly 3/4 of respondents "Agree" that the Town should promote access to public trails.

Many respondents included written comments about specific issues:

- NH 118, the principal State maintained highway passing through Dorchester, is referenced 20 times in written responses. These written responses focus on resident concerns about pavement condition, travel speeds, and traffic noise.
- There is a common theme that respondents highly value the rural character of Dorchester including the scenery, quiet, and the small scale of community features.
- Respondents are aware of the need for road maintenance and want to control Town expenditures to limit the property tax burden.

The public input about the Town's transportation network clearly identify important issues that warrant further investigation. The Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission is available to serve as a technical resource or partner to evaluate current traffic and road conditions and help mitigate issues as appropriate.

## **Dorchester Road Network**

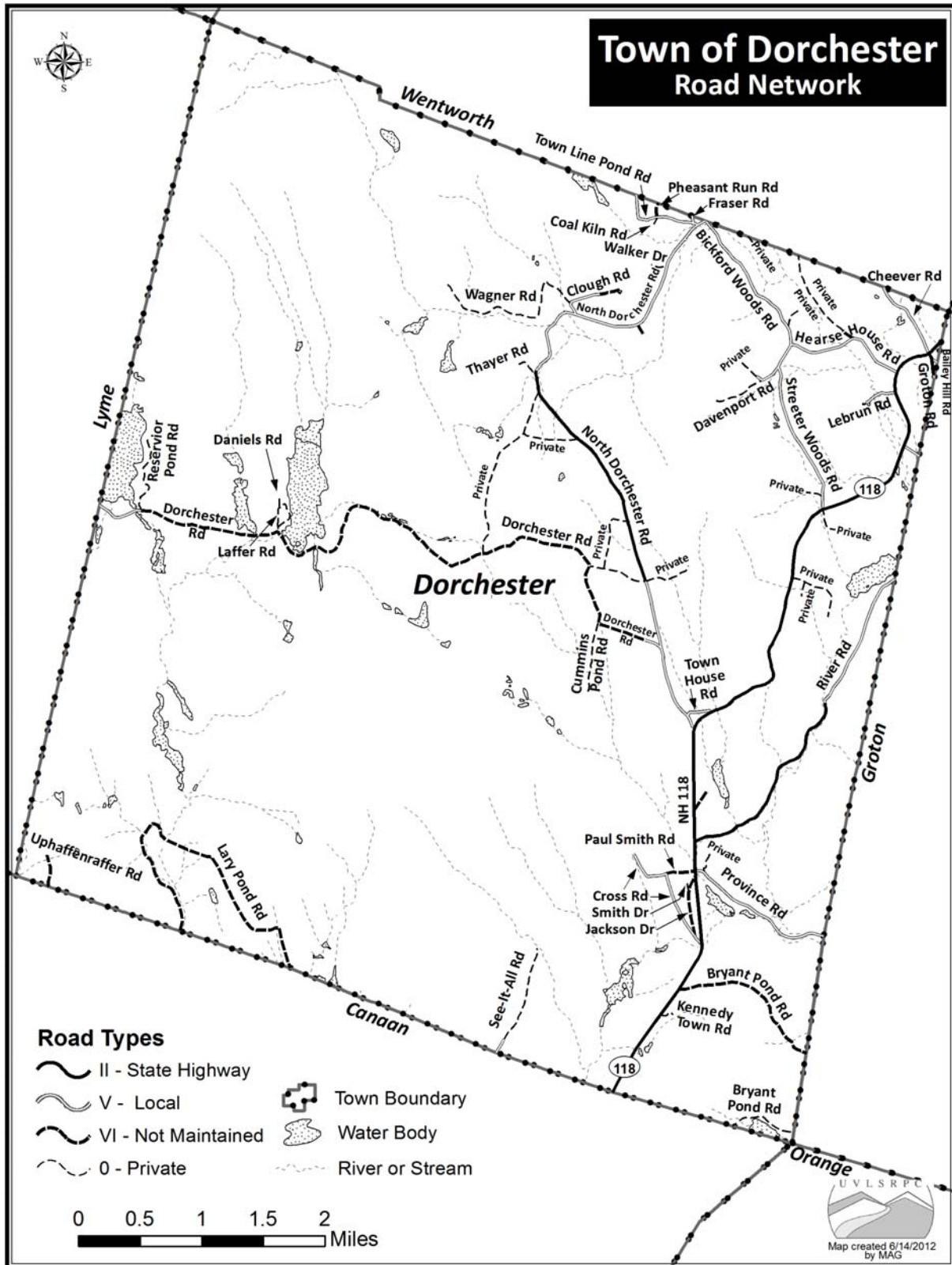
Dorchester's rural history results in a local road network that serves a sparse density of residences, commercial, and institutional properties. Table 1 presents a breakdown by class of the miles of roads in town, according to the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) digital mapping inventory updated in 2009. Map 1 illustrates the road network.

**Table 1 - Dorchester Road System**

| <b>Class</b>                   | <b>Type</b>           | <b>Mileage</b> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Class I                        | Trunk Line Highways   | -              |
| Class II                       | State Aid Highways    | 11.31          |
| Class V                        | Rural Highways        | 14.11          |
| Class VI                       | Unmaintained Highways | 11.12          |
| Private                        | Private Roadways      | 11.65          |
| Total Roadway Miles            |                       | 48.19          |
| Total Maintained Roadway Miles |                       | 25.42          |

Source: New Hampshire Department of Transportation (2009)

Map 1 - Dorchester Road Network (2009, NHDOT)



Per RSA 229:5, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation classifies road mileage in the state according to the following legislative classification system:

- Class I, Trunk Line Highways, 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. There are no such highways in Dorchester.
- Class II, State Aid Highways, 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 NHDOT are maintained and reconstructed by the State. All bridges improved to state standards on Class II highways are maintained by the State. An example of a Class II road in Dorchester is NH Route 118.
- Class V, Rural Highways, consist of all other traveled highways which the city or town has the duty to maintain regularly. Examples of Class V roads in Dorchester include North Dorchester Road, Streeter Woods Road, and Cheever Road.
- Class VI, Unmaintained Highways, 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. Examples of Class VI roads in Dorchester include Dorchester Road and Lary Pond Road.

### Regional Highway Network

This rural road network is served by a principal north-south state highway, NH Route 118, which traverses the eastern edge of the Town. This highway provides access to regional destinations and to Interstate 89 to the south and Interstate 93 to the north. NH Route 118 serves as the only regional travel corridor for residents, commuters, and commercial goods transport. There is no maintained east-west highway connection in Dorchester. The closest opportunities for Dorchester traffic to connect with east-west routes are NH Route 25 in Rumney and US Route 4 in Canaan.

### Local Roads

The majority of the transportation network in Dorchester consists of town-owned or private roads. Town roads carry local traffic, and to a limited extent, connect Dorchester with neighboring towns. Roads carry primarily local residential and commercial traffic such as North Dorchester, Province, Streeter Woods, Brickford Woods, River, and Cross Roads.

### Scenic Roads

The Scenic Road designation permitted under state law protects trees and stonewalls situated on the public right-of-way of designated roads. This tool can help in the preservation of the rural, scenic and historical landscape in a town.

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 (Class I and II roads are exempt) to petition for

a vote on the question of designation at Town Meeting. After designation, a public hearing and approval by the municipal planning board or designated municipal body is necessary to cut or remove any trees or destroy any stone walls. However, the limited removal of natural and man-made obstructions is allowed if there is a threat to safety or property and if it is necessary to restore public utility service 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.

### *Class VI Roads*

Per RSA 229:5, Class VI roads are "all other existing public ways and highways discontinued as open highways and made subject to gates and bars, and all highways which have been not maintained and repaired by the town in suitable condition for travel for five successive years or more." This status preserves the road as a public way. If a road is discontinued, the town gives up all interests. Ownership of the road reverts to abutting landowners, with no responsibility by landowners to maintain the road as a public right-of-way.

Class VI roads are often considered attractive with few, if any homes, and little traffic. Property is usually more affordable off Class VI roads than on main local and state roads, and as a result, many people are interested in building in a private and scenic area of town. However, after homes are built, issues often arise surrounding school access, emergency vehicle access, maintenance, and the overall efficiency of the town road network.

The Board of Selectmen review building permit applications for new construction. If a property owner wishes to develop a parcel with frontage and vehicle access along a private or Class VI road, then it is necessary to receive a release from the Town prior to receiving an approved building permit. The request for release is a standard form and follows a standard review process prior to approval by the Selectmen.

Table 2 provides a summary of Class VI roads is based on the NHDOT digital mapping inventory referenced above. The status of road segments as Class V, VI, discontinued, or private is important to the Town and its residents for two reasons:

- Budgetary: maintenance and repair.
- Future land development: development may be permitted or denied on Class VI roads.

The Town retains the right to designate any Class VI road or section of Class VI road as a Municipal Trail under RSA 231-A or an Emergency Lane under RSA 231:59.

### *Municipal Trails*

In accordance with RSA 231-A, Municipal Trails are along public rights-of-way often used for non-motorized travel or small motorized vehicles (e.g. snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles). State law further categorizes subsets of Municipal Trails to those with abutting landowner rights to use vehicles for access to properties (Class A) and those with no specific landowner rights beyond the limitations of the Municipal Trail (Class B).

### *Emergency Lanes*

RSA 231:59-a provides an exemption for Town maintenance of Class VI roads and private ways as emergency lanes to ensure the route is passable to emergency response vehicles. Such a

designation requires the Town Selectboard to declare a road an emergency lane after a public hearing.

**Table 2 - Class VI Roads in Dorchester**

| Name of Road      | Location   |
|-------------------|--|
| Lary Pond Rd      | Runs north from the Canaan town line, then turns southeast and runs back to the Canaan town line.        |
| Paul Smith Rd     | Runs east to west from Cross Rd to NH Route 118.   |
| Bryant Pond Rd    | Runs East from NH Route 118 to the Groton Town Line.   |
| Uphaffenraffer Rd | Runs north from the Canaan town line to a dead end in Dorchester.  |
| Dorchester Rd     | Runs East from Reservoir Rd to approx. 750 ft west of North Dorchester Rd.                               |
| Pheasant Run Rd   | Runs north from Town Line Pond Rd to the Wentworth town line.  |
| Jackson Dr        | Runs south from NH Route 118 to Cross Rd.  |
| Clough Rd         | Runs east from the maintained segment of Clough Rd to the point at which the class VI portion dead ends. |

Road and Bridge Conditions

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation has evaluated pavement condition on highways throughout the state as part of its Road Surface Management System. The Ride Comfort Index (RCI) evaluates road cracking and indicates how the public may perceive the quality of the road surface. Table 3 below shows predominant pavement conditions on Route 118 and River Road in the Town of Dorchester. Some minor segments of NH Route 118 at the Canaan Town Line and in the vicinity of the highway intersections with North Dorchester Road and River Road require some work.

**Table 3 - Pavement Condition on State Maintained Highways in Dorchester**

| Road         | Segment  | Rating | Summary             |
|--------------|--|--------|---------------------|
| NH Route 118 | From the Canaan Town Line to North Dorchester Road       | Green  | No Work Required    |
| NH Route 118 | North Dorchester Road to Groton Town Line                | Red    | Major Work Required |
| River Road   | From Intersection with NH Route 118 north approx. 1.7 mi | Red    | Major Work Required |

As Table 3 shows the NHDOT rates much of the state highway mileage in the Town of Dorchester as requiring “major work”, which means full-depth reconstruction of a specified road segment. Monitoring pavement conditions of state highways helps NHDOT manage and prioritize road and bridge construction projects. This prioritization process combines the RCI findings and other factors, including traffic volumes and highway significance.

The NHDOT also assigns sufficiency ratings to bridges based on inspections by their civil engineering staff. The sufficiency ratings help with prioritizing construction projects and are organized under a color-coded system. Red list bridges require interim inspections due to known deficiencies, poor conditions, weight restrictions, or type of construction. The NHDOT inspects Red List bridges twice each year. Yellow List bridges are structurally deficient or

functionally obsolete but not eligible for red list status. The “Structurally Deficient” status identifies a bridge as unable to carry existing vehicle loads and requires a load restriction and significant maintenance to correct the deficiency. The “Functionally Obsolete” status measures whether the bridge can meet the demands of present day vehicle traffic crossing it.

As shown in Tables 4 & 5 below, the Town of Dorchester currently has one “Red List” bridge, one bridge in need of replacement and three “Yellow List” bridges.

**Table 4 - “Red List” and Replacement Bridges in Dorchester**

| Bridge Number | Bridge Location                            | Summary                | Owner |
|---------------|--|------------------------|-------|
| 151/055       | Province Road, Bucks Brook                 | Structurally Deficient | Town  |
| 156/053       | Province Road, South Branch of Baker River | Destroyed              | Town  |

**Table 5 - “Yellow List” Bridges in Dorchester**

| Bridge Number | Bridge Location                                | Owner |
|---------------|--|-------|
| 042/118       | Cummins Pond Road, Mascoma River               | Town  |
| 156/152       | Hearse House Road, South Branch of Baker River | Town  |
| 131/169       | North Dorchester Road                          | Town  |

Current and Projected Traffic Volumes

Traffic volume data collected by Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) along principal roads in Dorchester and published by NHDOT are shown in Table 6 below. As a rural community, high traffic volumes and congestion are not a primary concern. Traffic volumes along NH Route 118, the major road in the community, have remained static between 2006 and 2009. There has been some increase in average annual daily traffic volumes along local roads, but the growth has not been substantial. Barring any major development projects that cannot be anticipated, the assumption is that traffic volumes will grow at 1% per year. The projected traffic volumes in 2020 are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6 – Existing and Projected Traffic Volumes in Dorchester**

| Location                               | Average Annual Daily Traffic |       |            |
|--|------------------------------|-------|------------|
|  | Actual                       |       | Projected* |
|  | 2006                         | 2009  | 2020       |
| NH Route 118 at Canaan Town Line       | 1,300                        | 1,300 | 1,450      |
| North Dorchester Rd, West of Clough Rd | 30                           | 40    | 45         |
| Bickford Woods Rd over Rocky Brook     | 100                          | 120   | 135        |
| NH 118 over Merrill Brook              | 1,200                        | 1,200 | 1,340      |
| River Rd over Merrill Brook            | 90                           | 50    | 55         |

\*Traffic volume projections developed based on 1% compound annual traffic growth. This is a baseline assumed growth rate.



## Transportation Safety

### *Hazard Mitigation, Community Safety, and Stormwater Management*

Planning transportation system maintenance and improvements also supports the intent of the *Dorchester Hazard Mitigation Plan*. A damaged or blocked road or travel route could delay emergency services and threaten public safety. It is particularly important that the Town identify and maintain primary and secondary access routes to properties and residences as a priority for emergency response.

Maintenance and improvements to road culverts and drainage areas are priorities for the Town Highway Department to ensure local roads are passable. The Town has focused on making improvements to mitigate potential flood damage by receiving Federal Emergency Management grants to make roadway and culvert improvements (see Table 9, below).

To maintain roads in good condition, it is imperative to drain water off roadways. Once stormwater is appropriately drained off roadways, it is important to manage this flow in order to insure that pollution problems are not created in adjacent surface waters. Where possible, upgrade water crossings and stormwater management features – to the extent practicable – to exceed design flow capacity. Such a measure will help to ensure passable travel routes even after severe weather events.

Roads are a primary source of non-point pollution in our waterways, including sediments, petroleum products and salt. The Town of Dorchester should develop and implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to maintain good water quality and. Those Best Management Practices might include vegetated buffer zones around surface waters, drainage basins that minimize erosion and allow for sediments to settle out, and slope stabilization methods.

### *Overall Road Safety*

As summarized in the Community Attitude Survey, Dorchester residents are concerned about safe travel speeds and surface conditions of NH Route 118. There is less public concern regarding the local road network. The Town is aware of the importance of maintaining and replacing road safety features like signage and guard rails on local roads and does so on an ‘as needed’ basis.

As a requirement of the Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program, NHDOT compiles an annual “Five Percent Report” identifying the segments and intersections in the State maintained highway system with the most severe safety needs. The NHDOT identified a half-mile segment of NH Route 118 in Dorchester, just north of the Town House Rd intersection, as part of a recent “Five Percent Report”. A summary of vehicle crashes along a 2-mile segment of NH Route 118 between the intersections with Town House Rd and Streeter Woods Rd (approx. 2 miles) is provided in Table 7.

The top three vehicle accident types from the 2002 to 2009 analysis period for the segment of NH Route 118 from Town House Rd to Streeter Woods Rd are: collision with other motor vehicle (19 accidents), collision with a fixed object (14 accidents), and collision with animal (7 accidents). Of the fatal accidents, two (2) fatalities were due to collisions with fixed objects, and one (1) was due to a collision with a pedestrian.

Dorchester’s rural character is exemplified by the sighting of moose and other wildlife in the area. The NH Route 118 in this area has a high record of vehicle collisions with moose as

compared with statewide safety statistics. This is a significant safety issue and recent mitigation efforts include installing variable message signs during the fall warning motorists to be aware of moose in the road.

**Table 7 –Accident Severity along NH Route 118, Town House Rd to Streeter Woods Rd**

| Year  | Accident Severity |                      |                           |                 |                      | Total |
|-------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------|
|       | Fatal             | Incapaciating Injury | Non-Incapacitating Injury | Possible Injury | Property Damage Only |       |
| 2002  | -                 | -                    | 1                         | -               | -                    | 1     |
| 2003  | -                 | -                    | 3                         | -               | -                    | 3     |
| 2004  | -                 | -                    | 6                         | -               | -                    | 6     |
| 2005  | -                 | -                    | 4                         | -               | 4                    | 8     |
| 2006  | 3                 | -                    | 2                         | 2               | 3                    | 10    |
| 2007  | -                 | -                    | -                         | 1               | 2                    | 3     |
| 2008  | -                 | -                    | 1                         | 1               | 4                    | 6     |
| 2009  | -                 | 1                    | -                         | -               | 6                    | 7     |
| Total | 3                 | 1                    | 17                        | 4               | 19                   | 44    |

Transportation Network Maintenance

*NHDOT Road Projects*

Upon review of NHDOT records, two NHDOT road construction projects were completed in Dorchester between 2004 and 2011 (Table 8, below). These projects focused on pavement rehabilitation along NH Route 118 with associated drainage and guard rail maintenance. At this time, no other Dorchester projects are identified in the statewide Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Plan.

**Table 8 - NHDOT Road Construction Projects Completed between 2004 and 2011**

| Year | NHDOT Project No. | Location  | Scope of Work and Cost   |
|------|-------------------|---|--|
| 2006 | 14478             | NH Route 118, Canaan and Dorchester – project terminus 1000 ft north of town line.    | Pavement rehabilitation and drainage upgrades.<br>Cost: \$1.25M      |
| 2009 | 15503             | NH Route 118, Dorchester – terminus of Project 14478 to south of North Dorchester Rd. | Pavement rehabilitation and guard rail replacement.<br>Cost: \$1.34M |

*Other Federal Grants*

Town Staff and Officials have endeavored to make necessary improvements to the Town-maintained road network with the assistance of Federal grants. The Town received three Hazard Mitigation Grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to prevent flooding of certain segments of Town roads. A fourth project is in the planning stages and has not yet received funding. Table 9 provides a summary of the projects and order-of-magnitude costs.

It is important to note that the bulk of the Federal grants received by the Town require a local contribution, or match, to the overall project cost. For example, the Hazard Mitigation Grants

listed in Table 9 are 75% funded by FEMA and the remaining 25% is borne by the Town, either through cash commitments or the use of Town staff and equipment to complete the work.

**Table 9 - Local Road Projects Receiving Federal Grant Funds**

| <b>Project Name</b>                            | <b>General Scope of Work</b>   | <b>Approximate Project Costs and Completion Date</b>                        |
|--|--|---|
| Section 1 – North Dorchester Rd, Melanson Flat | Upgrade existing culverts and install a box culvert, raise and/or regrade road surface.        | Federal Portion: \$65,500<br>Town Match: \$22,000<br>Est. Completion: 2013  |
| Section 8 – North Dorchester Rd, Thayer Hill   | Mitigate erosion along 2,700' of Thayer Hill.  | Federal Portion: \$80,000<br>Town Match: \$26,000<br>Est. Completion: 2012  |
| Cheever Rd                                     | Upgrade culverts, raise and/or regrade road surface.   | Federal Portion: \$292,000<br>Town Match: \$94,000<br>Est. Completion: 2012 |
| Province Rd                                    | Reconstruct road surface from NH Route 118 to Groton town line, replace two bridges (Table 4). | Project in the planning stages, not yet funded.<br>Est. Completion: TBD     |

*Local Road Maintenance*

The Town of Dorchester allocated almost 50% of the Town budget to road maintenance in the 2010-2011 fiscal year. This figure does not include grant funds from FEMA to make improvements to local road culvert crossings (addressed above).

Because road maintenance is such a significant portion of the town’s budget each year, it is necessary to conduct road maintenance in the most cost-effective manner. This requires careful planning and awareness of both summer maintenance projects and winter snow removal and road management. The Town will benefit from maintaining a Capital Improvement Program to assist in planning for roadway maintenance and equipment replacement costs over a 5 to 10 year period. Such a plan would not only assist in the capital improvement and budget planning processes, but would also establish a method of setting project priorities to best manage limited municipal funds.

Commercial Development and Roads

Given the Town’s general planning goals to maintain Dorchester’s rural character and agricultural heritage, special planning consideration should be placed on how the local road network will be able to accommodate future non-residential development. The Community Survey responses and Community Vision reflect a desire to develop small-scale cottage industries, agricultural uses, and timber harvesting among a limited range of development options. As these commercial uses become established or grow over time, it will be important to anticipate impacts of transporting the goods upon road conditions, maintenance costs and safety.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Use of Roads

Walking and bicycling on local and state roads can be a necessary mode of transportation for some, or a form of exercise and recreation for others. Consideration of bicycles and pedestrians in road maintenance and reconstruction projects will be an important component of long-term planning. Making roads a comfortable, safe place to walk and bike will encourage residents to

walk and bike more often and can improve the community's overall health and welfare. This type of planning is a relatively small investment for a long-term benefit.

Town officials and residents should also promote and encourage the same consideration of walking and biking along state maintained routes. An important example is engaging NHDOT to start discussions about how the segment of NH Route 118 that requires major repair can be improved to accommodate non-motorized travel when an improvement project is eventually funded.

## **Regional Transportation Issues**

Dorchester's link to other communities requires consideration of transportation issues on the regional scale. This may relate to large developments affecting the local road network, or identifying opportunities for municipalities to share resources to cut municipal costs for road maintenance. It is important that the Town of Dorchester continue to work with surrounding communities, the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, and the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to address regional transportation issues.

### *Regional Commuting*

While traffic volumes and congestion are not a critical issue for Dorchester residents, the Town can support local and regional carpooling for commuters. An option may include Town efforts to dedicate underutilized municipal parking spaces for a small-scale park and ride facility. The Town could also encourage resident participation in regional commuter ridesharing programs, such as Upper Valley Rideshare or North Country Rideshare. 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".

### *Rural Public Transportation Programs*

Dorchester's remote location and low population density presents a challenge for implementation of traditional transit services. This is problematic for individuals who cannot operate a vehicle and need to travel to regional health care and employment centers. In addition, the lack of transportation alternatives for residents whose long commutes to major employment centers are an increasing economic challenge as fuel prices continue to rise. Dorchester, like most New Hampshire communities, faces the challenge of providing supportive environments for the growing population of individuals over age 65 as well as those who depend on transit services due to a disability. Over thirteen percent of Dorchester's current residents are over the age of 65. Current transportation serving Dorchester is provided on a limited basis through the Mascoma Senior Center in Canaan or the Plymouth Regional Senior Center in Plymouth. These services, principally provided by Grafton County Senior Citizens Council vehicles, transport clients to senior centers for meals and to medical appointments.

In September 2010 a Transit Feasibility Study was conducted in the 19- town region surrounding Plymouth including Dorchester. The study proposed two service districts: one to the north of Plymouth (Campton, Thornton, Ellsworth, Rumney, Woodstock and Plymouth) and a second to the southwest (Hebron, Groton, Dorchester, Alexandria, Ashland, Bristol and Plymouth).

The Feasibility Study identified short-term and long-term goals for developing a transportation service called Transport Central. Transport Central, would be based in Plymouth and serve the transit needs of these communities. Possible options for services for Dorchester are volunteer driver services, demand response bus services, flex-route service (a hybrid of traditional fixed-route service and demand response service) operating along a broadly designated route on specific days each week, and a regional transit service between Plymouth and Hanover through Dorchester that would provide a commuter link to major medical centers, employment and retail opportunities.

The first phase of the Transport Central plan is slated to commence on July 1, 2013 with establishment of part-time mobility management staff and a volunteer driver program. Dorchester residents can join the volunteer driver corps for Transport Central as part of the southwestern demand response district.

Long term, community engagement in the development of subsequent phases of the Transport Central plan will be required for these rural community transportation services to be successful. Dorchester Town Officials and residents can support regional transportation improvements and operations with financial contributions and community service as volunteer drivers.

### Recreational Transportation

Recreational trails typically do not stop at the Town boundary. The Town of Dorchester should work to increase public access to public hiking trails to encourage local and regional recreational activity. This effort will increase opportunities for residents and could attract non-residents as a recreational destination, which could lead to economic development opportunities. Further, replacing the two bridges along Province Road would enable public access to the Province Road State Forest.

## **Transportation Goals and Policies**

### Goal #1: Evaluate Roadway and Traffic Conditions and Address Issues

- Coordinate with UVLSRPC to receive technical assistance to conduct targeted traffic counts at existing NHDOT count locations to collect information about:
  - Vehicle classification – quantify the number and types of vehicles passing the location.
  - Vehicle speed – determine the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed (where 85 percent of vehicles travel at or below a given speed).
- Coordinate with UVLSRPC to receive technical assistance to evaluate whether noise is a significant issue for residents along principal travel routes.
- Work cooperatively with UVLSRPC to evaluate traffic counts and other findings (including accident data) to identify issues. Develop short-term and long-term strategies to address issues, which may include amending speed limits, enforcement options, and evaluating road or intersection improvements.

### Goal #2: Formalize Road Maintenance and Planning Efforts

- Identify Town Staff, boards, or committees as responsible parties to implement specific Goals and Policies, as appropriate.
- Work cooperatively with UVLSRPC to develop a Road Surface Management System (RSMS) to effectively identify road maintenance needs and develop a mid-term (5-10

year) road maintenance plan. UVLSRPC could provide technical assistance with developing RSMS, upon request of the Town, as a special project funded by NHDOT.

- Develop a long-range improvement program for existing roadways, bridges and culverts to assist in the capital improvement and budget planning processes.
- Maintain an inventory of Class V and Class VI roads, as well as maintained bridges, and culverts.
- Continue to require Selectboard review of building permit requests on Class VI roads.
- Continue to ensure that off-site impacts resulting from a proposed development are properly mitigated as part of the Planning Board development review process. These improvements could include: maximizing existing capacity, and providing bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

### Goal #3: Maintain Community Character Through the Transportation Network

- Consider implementing the State of New Hampshire's Scenic Roads law, and designating scenic roads to maintain Dorchester's rural character.
- Consider incorporating "Flexible" Road Design guidelines to reduce potential impacts on environmentally sensitive and culturally significant areas, preserve scenic vistas, and complement rather than detract from surrounding land uses.
- Continue to ensure that efforts are made to mitigate the visual impacts of a proposed development along a public right-of-way as part of the Planning Board development review process.

### Goal #4: Support Pedestrian and Bicycle Use of Local Roads

- Enhance pedestrian and cyclist amenities throughout the Town, including increasing shoulder widths for bicyclist safety and providing additional signage as a means of encouraging pedestrian and bicycle activity.
- Advocate for pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements on NH Route 118.

### Goal #5: Support Regional Transportation Planning Efforts

- Educate residents about, and encourage their participation in, rideshare programs to reduce commuter miles traveled. Town support could include educating the public through flyers and designating a small-scale park and ride facility on Town land.
- Participate in the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission's Transportation Advisory Committee to ensure that Dorchester's infrastructure needs are considered in the state's Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Plan development process.
- Support regional transportation assistance programs that may serve Dorchester residents, including the Transport Central initiative based in Plymouth.
- The Dorchester Selectboard should consider participating in a joint meeting with Selectboards from surrounding communities at least annually to coordinate on issues of inter-municipal importance.
- The Dorchester Planning Board should consider meeting at least biennially with the Planning Boards of surrounding communities to coordinate on issues of inter-municipal importance.