



VISION
KEENE



20
FORWARD

VISION KEENE 20-FORWARD

COMMUNITY VISION REPORT

NEW HAMPSHIRE, USA

OCTOBER 2024





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This report summarizes the outcomes from Phase One of the Vision Keene 20-Forward comprehensive master planning process. This visioning phase ran from February – October 2024 and transitioned to Phase Two at the Vision Keene 20-Forward Future Summit on October 5, 2024. Beginning in February 2024, the engagement process included a Community Survey, 11 key stakeholder interviews, a Community Snapshot Report, a two-session Think-Tank Workshop, a Think-Tank Report, 15 Community Visioning Sessions, a Heatmap Survey, tabling at community events, Comment Cards and Postcards from the Future. The engagement process was designed to provide an open, inclusive, and transparent platform for community members to help create a shared community vision that will guide the planning in Phase Two of this project.

These reports and the associated data analysis are available on the project portal:
keenemasterplan.com

REPORT PREPARED BY:



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OVERVIEW OF THE COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN PROCESS

Vision Keene 20-Forward is a visioning and comprehensive master planning project that will update the City of Keene’s 2010 Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP).

This update will be done in two phases, beginning with a renewal of Keene’s Community Vision. Public involvement and input are a critical component of this phase, with a focus on public engagement throughout the city combined with strategic visioning around the future of Keene’s downtown and growth areas/nodes. In the second phase, each of the 2010 CMP’s multiple topic-oriented chapters will be examined and updated to reflect current community priorities. Throughout the process, citizens and community partners will be asked to join with the city to identify priorities and establish a list of goals and action steps for implementation. This input will inform the development of an actionable implementation section that will outline and prioritize strategies for achieving the Plan’s new goals and objectives.

The Vision Keene 20-Forward project is a robust, inclusive, and forward-looking planning process. The project’s objective is to produce the Vision Keene 20-Forward Comprehensive Master Plan, which aims to position the city on a continued path of becoming a diverse, resilient, and vibrant community. The process also will explore the future strategic positioning of the city and create an enduring and collaborative roadmap to the future. A fundamental premise is that the world is changing fast, and the city needs collaborative and decisive thinking to help envision how it will thrive over the next 10-15 years.

Learn from the past, plan for the future!



“Remember the challenges we face and focus on what will address them. Some may be tempted by the status quo, and Keene has much about it that’s wonderful, but we can’t keep the current dynamics around car usage and housing if we want to deal with climate change, homelessness, and cost of living. Be bold in envisioning a better future and the steps we need to take to get there.”

-Community Survey Respondent



➤ 1.0 | INTRODUCTION – SUMMARY OF PHASE 1

In creating the Vision Keene 20-Forward Community Vision, stakeholders worked together to explore the community and how it could evolve in the future. The eight-month visioning process began in February 2024 and will end in October. On October 5, 2024, the city is hosting a public Future Summit. Participants will learn about the outcomes from Phase 1 and set the stage for an implementation plan. The Future Summit will be the bridging event that will launch Phase 2 of the comprehensive master planning process.

For a complete account Phase 1 of the Vision Keene 20-Forward visioning process and reports, please see the project portal at keenemasterplan.com.

VISION KEENE 20-FORWARD

City of Keene, New Hampshire **Comprehensive Master Planning Process**
Phase 1: Community Vision and Community Snapshot



"Be bold and visionary – wise boldness creates its own success."
- Community Survey Respondent

2.0 | HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

This report lays out the findings from each key step in the visioning process. The process moved from background analysis and exploration, to identifying key priorities for the future of Keene. More details about the overall planning process may be viewed on the Vision Keene 20-Forward project portal at keenemasterplan.com.

This work represents robust ‘future gazing’ where stakeholders considered possible directions and the impacts and consequences of those directions. The process, and the report, then drill down deeper into what people saw as the optimal or preferred future for Keene. This understanding helps lay the groundwork for figuring out what next steps to take in Phase 2 of comprehensive master planning process. The preferred future identified through this process presents an exciting and compelling vision for how Keene could evolve as a community looking out to 2040.

Steps in the process



Sections of the report



3.0 | COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT REPORT – SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS



The Vision Keene 20-Forward comprehensive master planning process blends vision setting and engagement with a data-driven approach, balancing the qualitative aspects and sentiment of the community with specific metrics to quantify the city’s economy and future opportunities. Key findings from the 2024 Community Snapshot Report include:



Keene’s overall residential population of 23,000 remains relatively unchanged over the past 30 years. The share of Keene’s population that are students at Keene State College has declined from 24% in 2010 to 14% in 2022.



Keene’s households are earning more on average than in 2010, adjusted for inflation. Educational attainment rates for bachelor’s and advanced degrees have also increased substantially during this time.



Housing is a key area of focus, and the city is strategizing to improve the market and housing opportunities. The city is underway implementing action steps from its 2023 Housing Needs Assessment and Strategy.



Over the coming 20 to 30 years, Keene’s projected population is expected to grow ever so slightly and then decline to its current levels. However, New Hampshire’s population is expected to grow, with projected growth in the state’s southeast region signaling opportunities to capture growth in Keene.



Approximately 1,370 businesses call Keene home, and more than 17,000 people work in the city. Keene sits as the densest employment cluster in Cheshire County, accounting for more than half of jobs in the county overall.



While Keene draws outside workers into the city, it has an above-average rate of residents who live and work in Keene. Compared to peer cities in the region, Keene has the highest share of employed residents living in their respective residential locations. Current unemployment and labor force participation rates depict a healthy economy.



Keene’s demographic and economic conditions make the city more ‘livable’ than the average city across the country. Livability Index Metrics showcase opportunities to continue improving the city for residents and workers.

To read the Vision Keene 20-Forward Community Snapshot Report, please visit: <https://future-iq.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/JSA-Keene-Community-Snapshot-May-2024.pdf>.





4.0 | STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Vision Keene 20-Forward comprehensive master planning process has involved a wide, deep and transparent engagement process. Reports and survey results were published on the Vision Keene project website/portal, and the project was widely promoted across the city.

4.1 | STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT METRICS

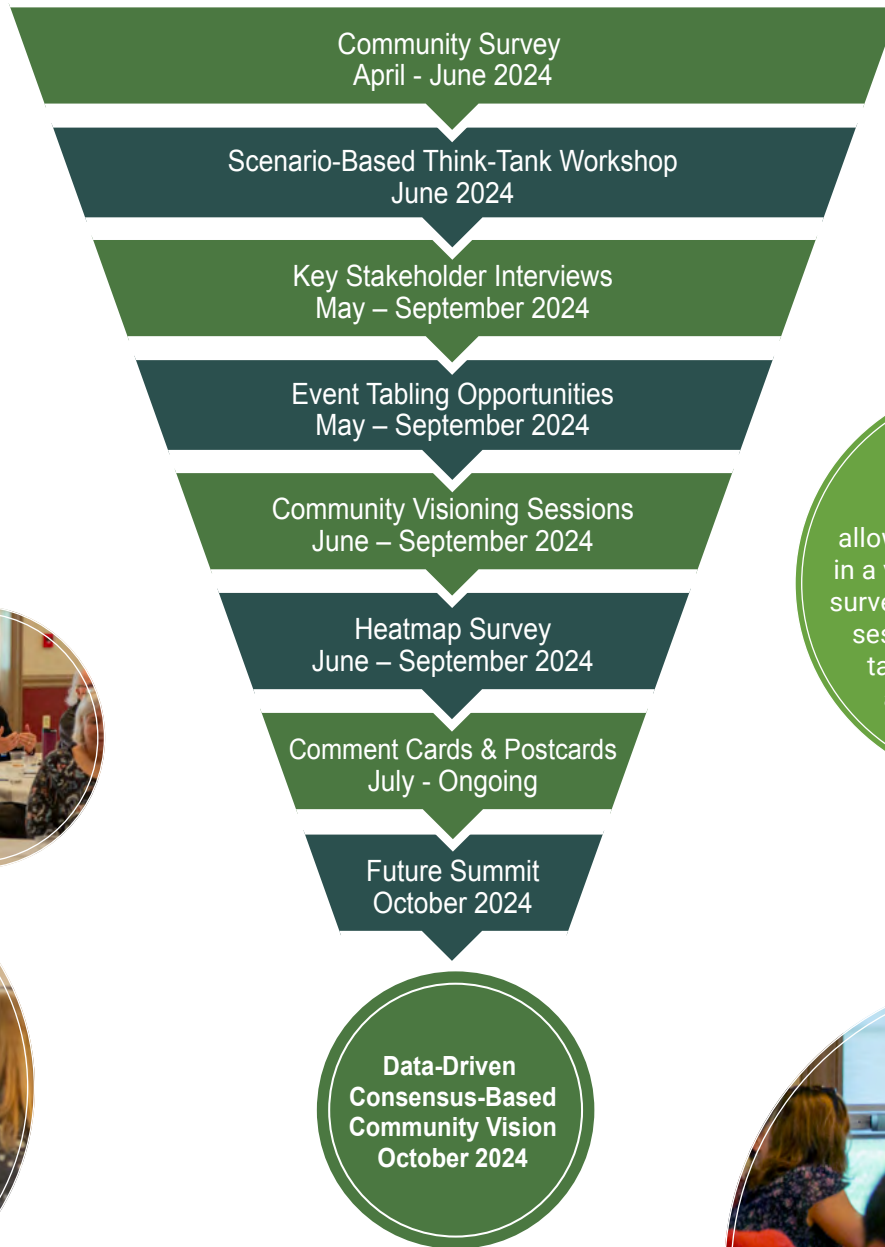
Throughout Phase 1, the Vision Keene 20-Forward comprehensive master planning process has been built on extensive stakeholder input. The engagement and data-driven methodology progressively focused the discussion on emerging key themes and stakeholder aspirations for the future. The purpose of the process was to arrive at a 'point of consensus' that represented the shared vision for the future of Keene. The result is a Community Vision with Strategic Pillars that guide the city on the path to that preferred future.

A key feature of the engagement and planning process was the mixture of surveys, comment cards, social media posts, utility bill inserts, and in-person sessions to reach the broadest range of stakeholders as possible.




4.2 | STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STEPS

Phase 1 of the Vision Keene 20-Forward comprehensive master planning process has included numerous opportunities for stakeholders to have input. This engagement process was intended to create a unified community vision that will serve as foundational support for the final Comprehensive Master Plan.



The stakeholder engagement steps allowed people to contribute in a variety of ways, including surveys, workshops, visioning sessions, comment cards, tabling at public events, and public meetings.





• The eight-month visioning process for the comprehensive master plan has been grounded in a consensus-based engagement approach, with multiple validation steps. This ensures the community vision represents the collective desires of the community.

5.1 | IDENTIFYING THE PREFERRED DIRECTION FOR KEENE

To identify the preferred future or vision for Keene, stakeholders participated in a scenario-planning workshop called a Think-Tank. This two-day scenario-based Think-Tank was conducted in-person on May 30-31, 2024. Approximately 80 people attended including key business, education, government, non-profit stakeholders, and community members. The Think-Tank was intended to build coherency around a vision for the future of Keene that will guide stakeholders looking out to 2040.

The scenario planning process provides a method to explore plausible futures and consider the implications of various future scenarios. The Think-Tank workshop aimed to:

- Deepen the understanding and examination of how external events and local conditions could shape decision-making
- Identify and understand the key influences, trends, and dynamics that will shape the city looking out to 2040
- Outline the results from the Vision Keene 20-Forward Community Survey
- Summarize the content in the Community Snapshot Report
- Create and describe four plausible long-term scenarios for Keene
- Explore alignment around a shared future vision
- Explore potential high-level strategies that could propel Keene to its preferred future

In the face of accelerating speed of change, the key to long-term resiliency for Keene is the ability to anticipate change, adapt, and remain agile in response to emerging trends.

The scenarios developed during the planning process are important to provide a framework to discuss future possible outcomes and implications for Keene’s comprehensive master planning for the next 10-15 years. In addition, the Think-Tank deliberations assisted in identifying key actions for the city and in exploring how various agencies and organizations might collaborate to best contribute to future policymaking. The process involved exploration of local trends and forces of change; development of a scenario matrix defining four plausible scenario spaces for the future. The event concluded with discussion of the scenarios, selection of a preferred scenario, and the identification of potential high-level strategic themes and actions that could propel Keene to its preferred future. For additional information and details on phase one’s visioning process, please read the **Vision Keene 20-Forward Think-Tank Report**.

“I think we should make bold, forward-thinking decisions that aim to do the most good for the most people.”
- Community Survey Respondent

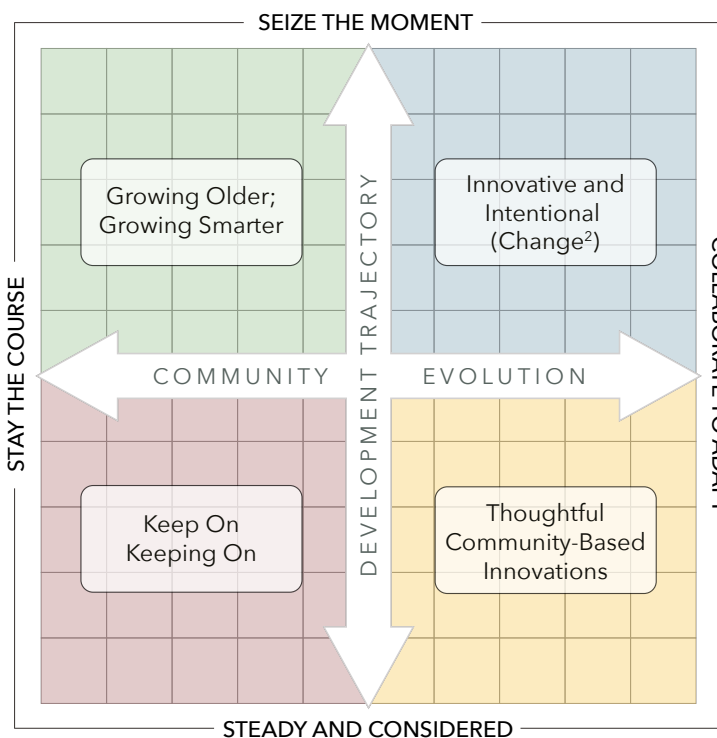


5.2 | SCENARIOS OF THE FUTURE – FRAMEWORK FOR EXPLORATION

During the Vision Keene 20-Forward Think-Tank, four different scenarios were created. The scenarios were created using the scenario matrix framework that was built around the two macro themes of Community Evolution and Development Trajectory. An in-depth scenario planning process over two days enabled the development of four potential future scenarios. For more details on the Vision Keene 20-Forward Think-Tank, please refer to the published [Think-Tank Report](#).

The community invests aggressively to incorporate future-oriented infrastructure, including new housing, utilities and local transportation options. The focus is on building climate resilient and smart infrastructure that addresses environmental sustainability and positions the community as an innovative and uniquely forward-looking location.

The focus is on sustaining the existing community fabric and experiences, especially for existing and aging residents. There is support for the traditional community amenities and focus is primarily on the familiar business and economic drivers of education, manufacturing, and services.



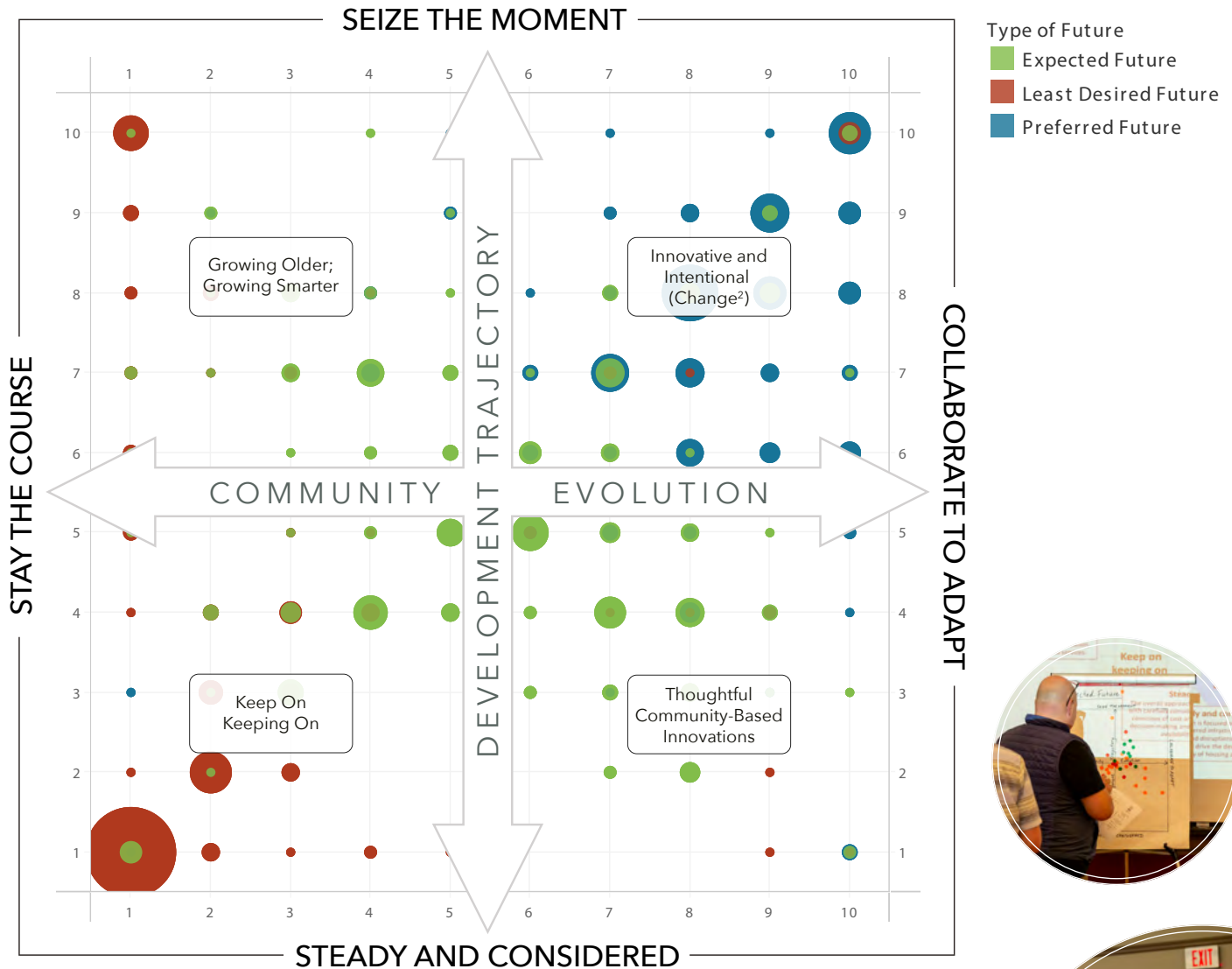
The community actively explores new ways to build opportunities in a rapidly changing world, with a strong focus on new areas such as the bio-sciences, renewable energies, and local food systems. The community creates deeply collaborative approaches to help drive local solutions and absorb new people and workplace trends.


The overall approach is focused on the 'tried and tested', with carefully considered infrastructure investment that is conscious of cost and disruptions. Market forces dictate decision-making and drive the development patterns and availability of housing and property.



5.3 | IDENTIFYING EXPECTED AND PREFERRED FUTURES

With the four plausible futures for Keene, Think-Tank and Community Visioning Session participants were asked to plot their least desirable, expected, and preferred futures for Keene in a 2040 using a 100-grid diagram. The results from each participant formed heatmaps that showed the preferences by color coding and size of bubble denoting how many people chose each section of the grid. The chart below shows the combined heatmaps from 235 people.





- The size of the circle denotes the number of responses in that square of the grid. The larger the circle, the more responses.
- The Least Desirable Future was firmly based in Scenario D – Keep On Keeping On. The bottom left-hand side of this quadrant had the most responses regarding this being the least desirable future for Keene.
- The Preferred Future falls primarily within Scenario B – An Innovative and Intentional Future.

DataInsight



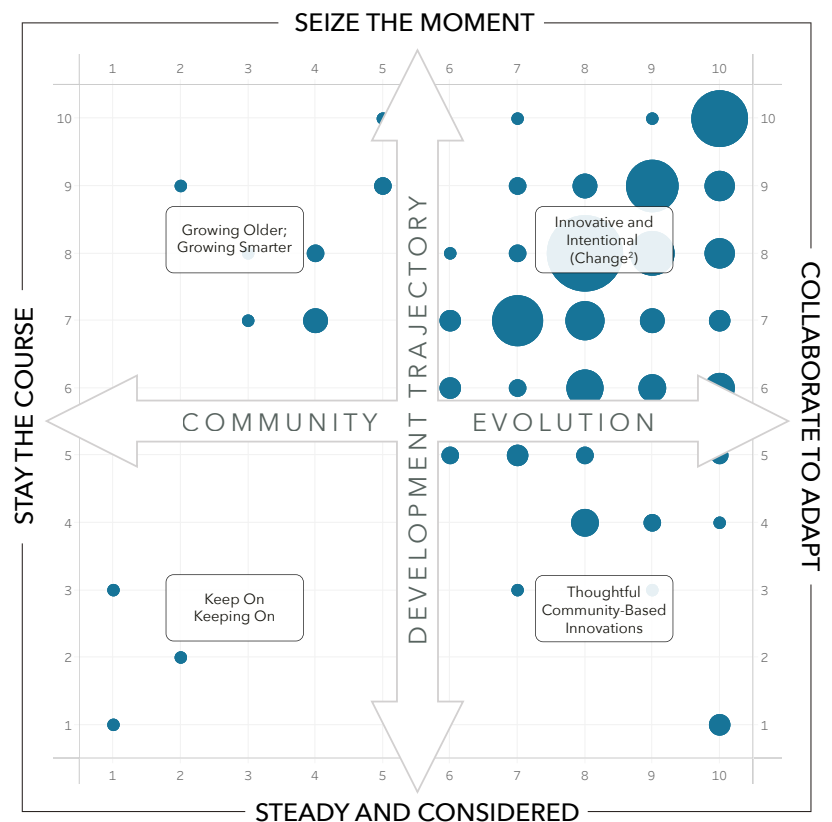
5.4 | DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED FUTURE – “AN INNOVATIVE AND INTENTIONAL FUTURE”

This scenario forecasts a future where the community actively and intentionally explores new ways to build opportunities that position the community as environmentally sustainable, innovative, and forward-looking.

A collaborative approach to adapting to change provides new opportunities for sustainable solutions. With a focus on building climate resiliency and smart infrastructure, new housing options flourish and affordability increases. The population becomes more diverse and schools grow. Climate refugees are drawn to the area. Education levels become higher and educational options broaden. Keene State College partners with local businesses and industry to expand experiential learning options for youth, and life-long learning opportunities for older residents. Transportation is expanded to include multi-modal options and connectivity to the State of New Hampshire and beyond. Local food production is encouraged and supported, while agricultural land and green space is preserved. Healthy foods are accessible. The community values health and wellbeing through its upkeep and support of neighborhood parks and recreation opportunities.

SCENARIO SNAPSHOT

- The community is welcoming to newcomers, with a reputation of inclusivity and collaboration.
- There is strong investment in future-oriented infrastructure that prepares the community to adapt to climate change.
- Housing, utilities, and transportation options are expanded, and local character and culture is celebrated.
- The local economy expands, with businesses and ventures that span from local scale to international.



6.0 | STRATEGIC PILLARS FRAMEWORK

The strategic themes and ideas for action for the Strategic Pillars will be further developed in Phase 2 of the comprehensive master planning process.

The key organizing framework for the Community Vision is its six Strategic Pillars. The pillars were developed following the Key Stakeholder interviews, Community Survey, Think-Tank, Steering Committee meetings, public tabling events, and Community Visioning Sessions. The pillars represent the major theme or topic areas that underpin the preferred future for Keene, Regional Magnetism*. The community ideas for action are structured around these six key strategic pillars which are the fundamental building blocks that support the vision for the city.



*It should be noted that the original name for the preferred future identified at the Think-Tank was 'Innovative and Intentional (Change2)'. Through the course of the community engagement process, the name evolved to be 'Regional Magnetism'.

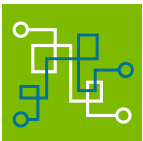


Objective: Expand enticing housing options for all.

6.1.1 | IMPORTANCE OF LIVABLE HOUSING

Throughout the planning process, the existing housing shortages in Keene have been highlighted as a major impediment to growth and resident attraction. The issue is a combination of the lack of available residential units, and a mismatch between the type of units people want and the units available. Housing availability and affordability is a national issue, driven by growing populations in urban and regional centers, and the increasing number of smaller households. There is persistent market failure in providing new housing options that suit the various age groups and personal needs. Cities across the United States are now mobilizing new resources and innovative approaches to solve this challenge. Keene has an opportunity to leverage successful models elsewhere, and use its collaborative approach to take some bold actions to address the current and future housing needs.

The current lack of suitable and attainable housing is seen as a significant constraint on the growth of the Keene talent pool and population.

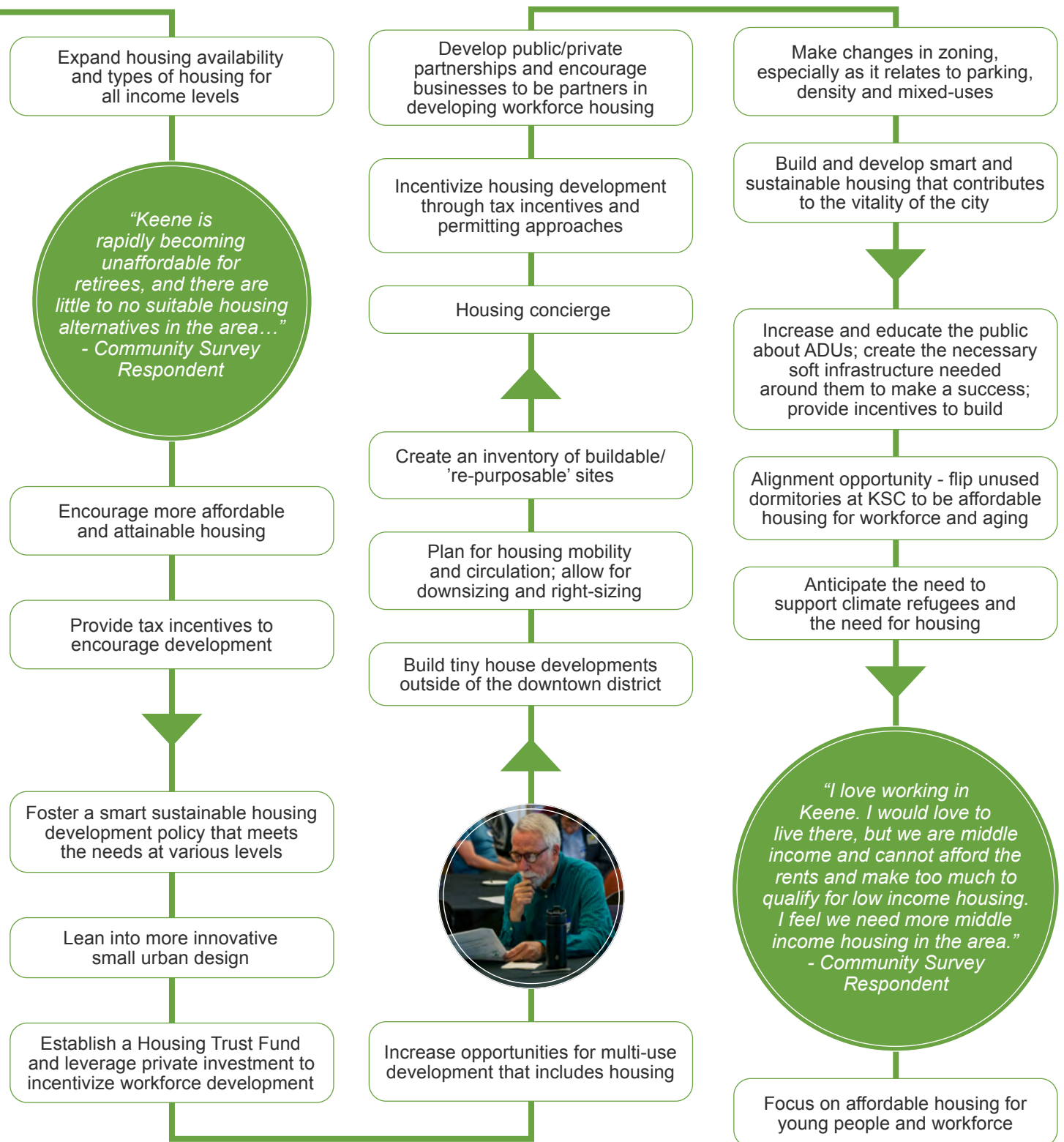


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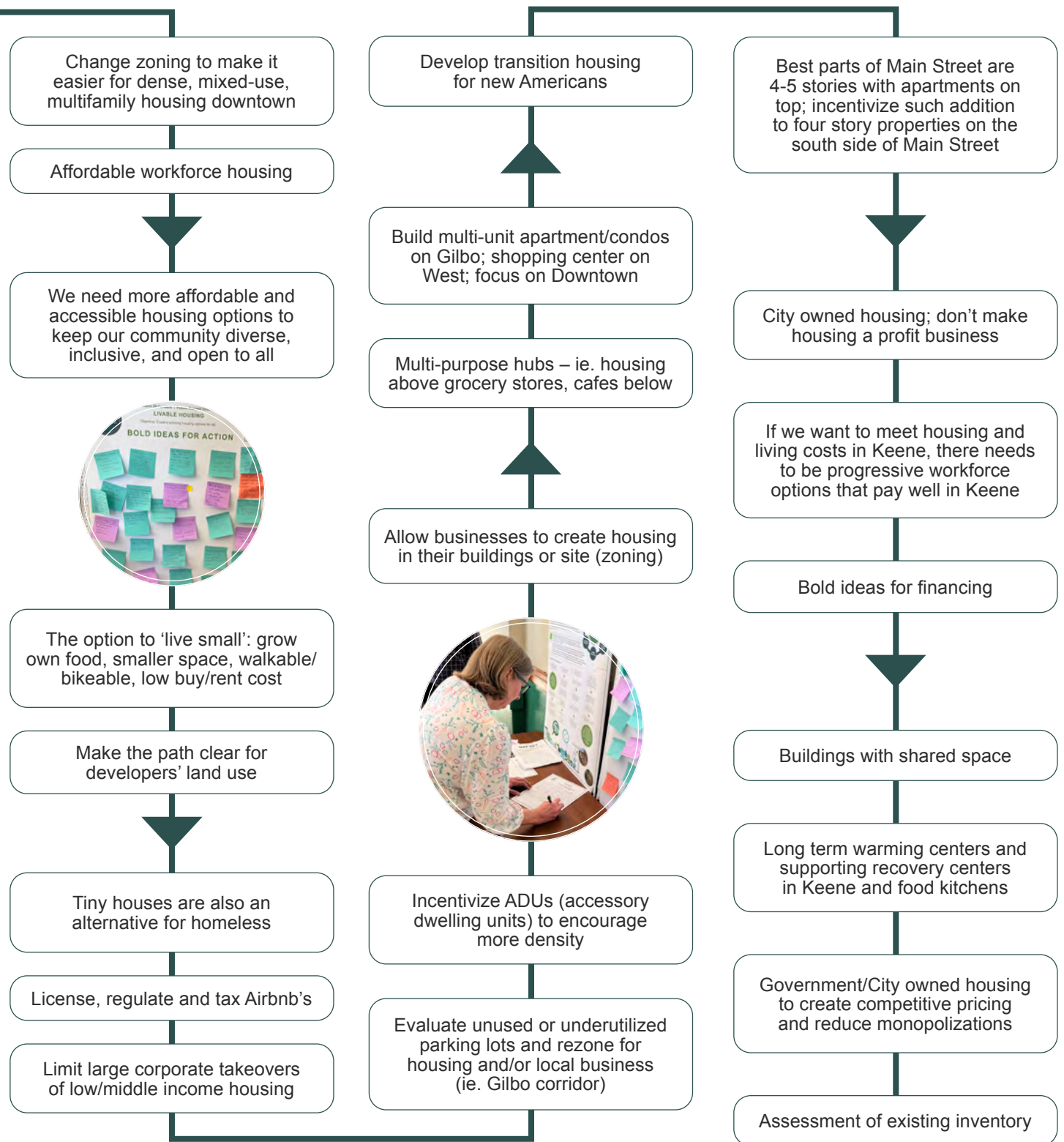
- Expanding housing availability will help Keene build its talented workforce and attract new residents. Working on expanding the available types of housing stock will also help existing residents by providing more choice, and helping people to have the right kind of housing for their life stage.
- Housing is not just about quantity; it is also about quality. This means livable housing that offers the amenities and functionality people are seeking. It also means housing that is environmentally sustainable and able to offer energy efficiency and adaptability in a changing climatic world.
- Keene has an opportunity to bring together key partners in a collaborative approach, to seek and implement bold solutions. This will require a willingness to explore new areas for housing development, increase density in some areas, and build a regional approach with surrounding communities.



The following bullet points are potential ideas for actions that emerged from the CMP community engagement process thus far. These ideas were gathered from participants at the Think-Tank, Steering Committee meetings, stakeholder interviews, public tabling events, Community Visioning Sessions, and survey respondents. Participants were asked for specific ideas on actions the community could take to achieve the preferred future, 'Regional Magnetism.'



The following bullet points are potential ideas for actions that participants at the October 5, 2024 Future Summit suggested on post it notes and comment cards. Participants were asked for specific ideas on actions the community could take to achieve the preferred future community vision for Keene. Participants also engaged in a mapping exercise to indicate where they thought changes should occur and where areas should be preserved in Keene.

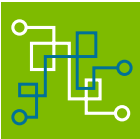


Objective: Grow a dynamic economy of the future that spans local to international.

6.2.1 | IMPORTANCE OF A THRIVING ECONOMY

Keene has historically enjoyed favorable economic conditions that support local businesses as well as larger corporations and ventures. However, the ongoing consolidations of businesses in the country means that some of these corporations are no longer local or have moved away. Keene has the opportunity to re-invigorate its economy by focusing on its iconic downtown and main street businesses, and positioning itself as part of the important economic sectors of technology, manufacturing, healthcare and biosciences. Part of Keene’s value proposition is that it is uniquely positioned as a small regional center that has high levels of innovations and strong cultural and social capital.

As an important regional hub, Keene has the potential to build on its existing successful economy and stimulate new levels of economic vitality.

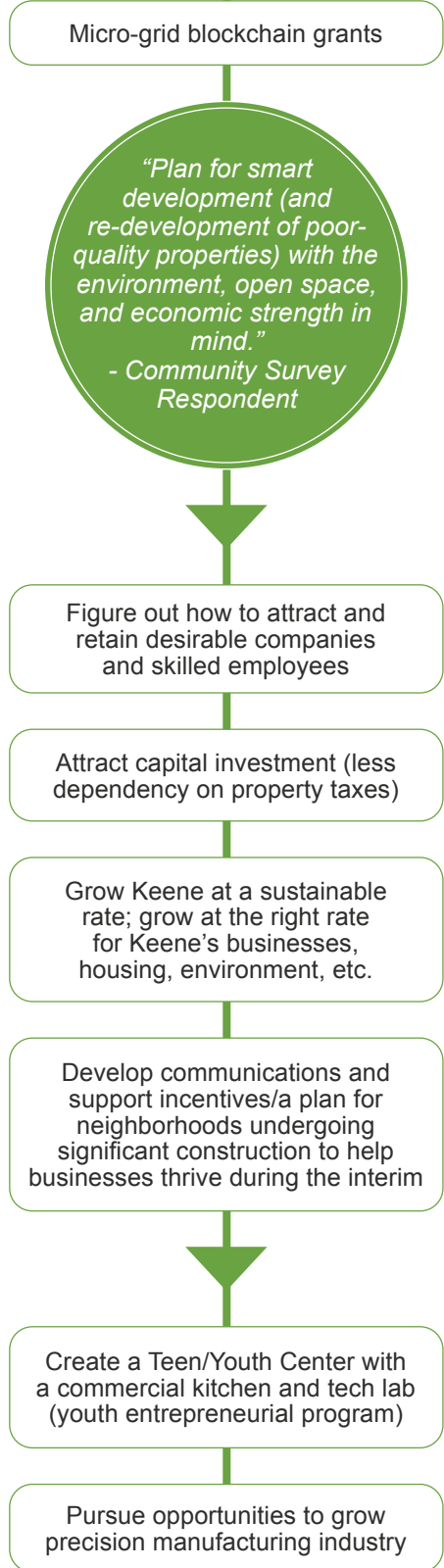
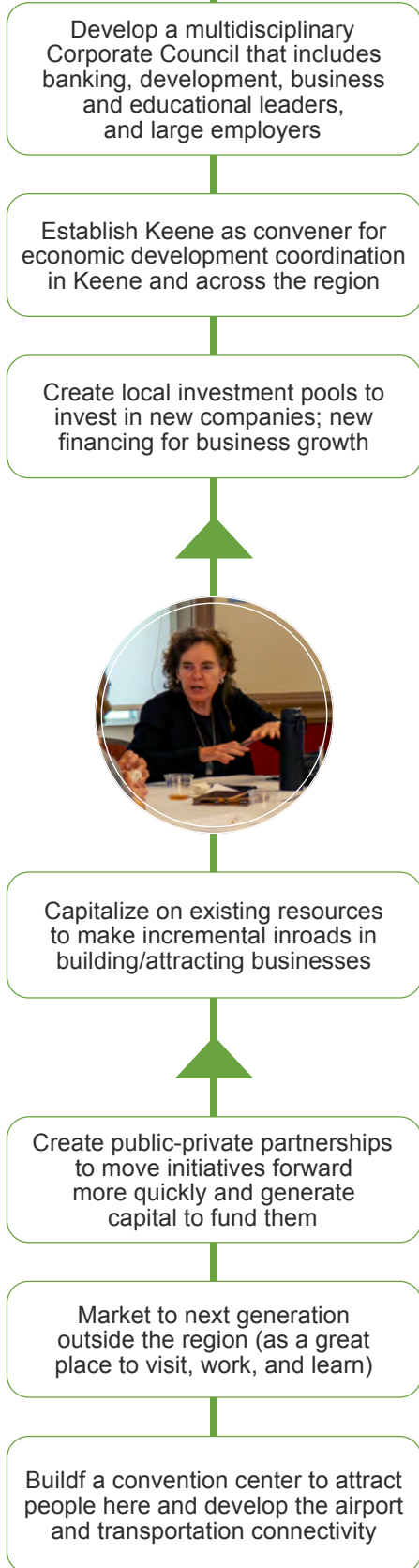
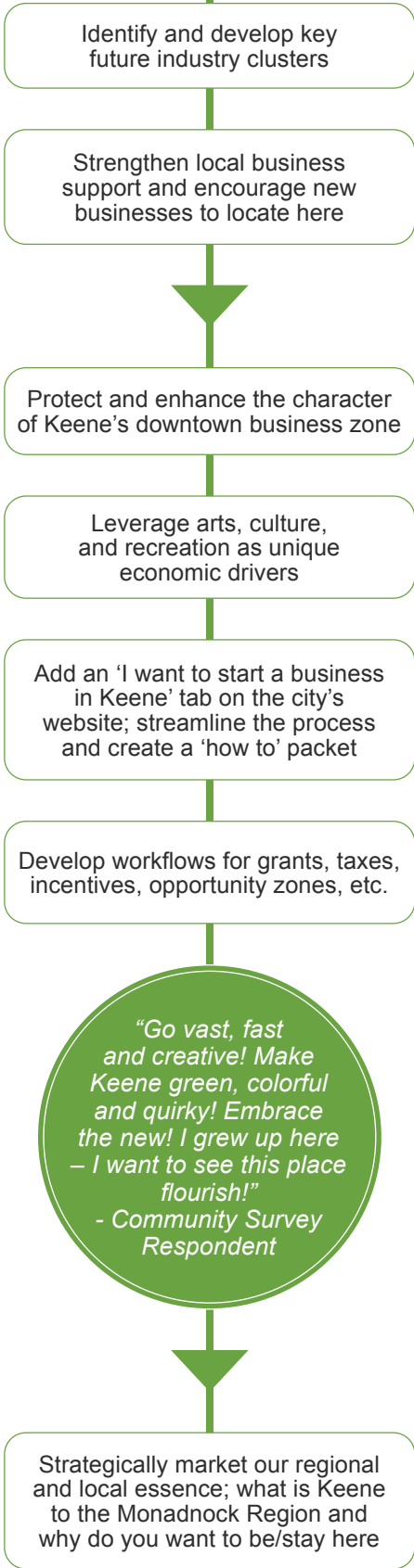


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- The downtown and main street businesses in Keene offer a great variety of locally owned enterprises. These bring a rich set of experiences to these important business nodes. As part of the Comprehensive Master Planning work, it will be essential to explore how and where these local business areas can expand.
- The outdoor recreation economy is becoming increasingly significant in regional areas across the United States, and Keene is well positioned to leverage this trend. The network of trails is significant and could be more activated to help in the overall value proposition of the community and add layers to the arts and culture economic drivers.
- The larger employers in Keene provide an important backbone and stability to the local economy. These existing businesses need to be supported, and larger ventures encouraged to come and grow in Keene. The community value proposition must reflect its appeal to important economic sectors, as well as the quality of life for residents.

6.2.2 | IDEAS FROM THE COMMUNITY

Thriving Economy



More of a focus on local businesses and growth of the community aspect of Keene

Energy substructure to support economy

Diversity! Remember the arts are a big economic driver

Examine transportation infrastructure for the movement of goods and services

Include farmers market – food security when supply chain is disrupted

Succession plan development for businesses

Funding for small businesses

Incentives and job training for trades

Improve health care infrastructure by attracting talent


Clean energy focus – it's the future of industry and will attract new residents

Incentives for BIPOC-run businesses esp. African hair salons

The Arts & Culture sector is a key driver of economic vibrance; must be prioritized

Allow Kingsbury site to be a regional model for smart, innovative development

Public art – temporary and permanent



Value-added food business incubator kitchen/infrastructure around Kingsbury or nearby property

Well-funded schools are key

Capitalize on our recreation economy; mountain-biking, rail trails, hiking, kayaking



Early childhood programs in nursing homes; share resources

Curate more green jobs; commercial compost facility, commercial year-round green house, food lab/ commercial kitchen for value added food, bike manufacturer

How to train people who grow up and want to stay here to prepare for the jobs we're attracting to the area

Don't forget about small manufacturing!

Investigate causes of businesses leaving Keene

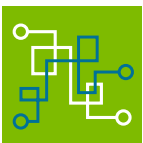
It's a people-first approach. Fix housing, increase population, increase consumers, increase business

Objective: Build regional and local connectivity, transportation and recreation networks.

6.3.1 | IMPORTANCE OF CONNECTED MOBILITY

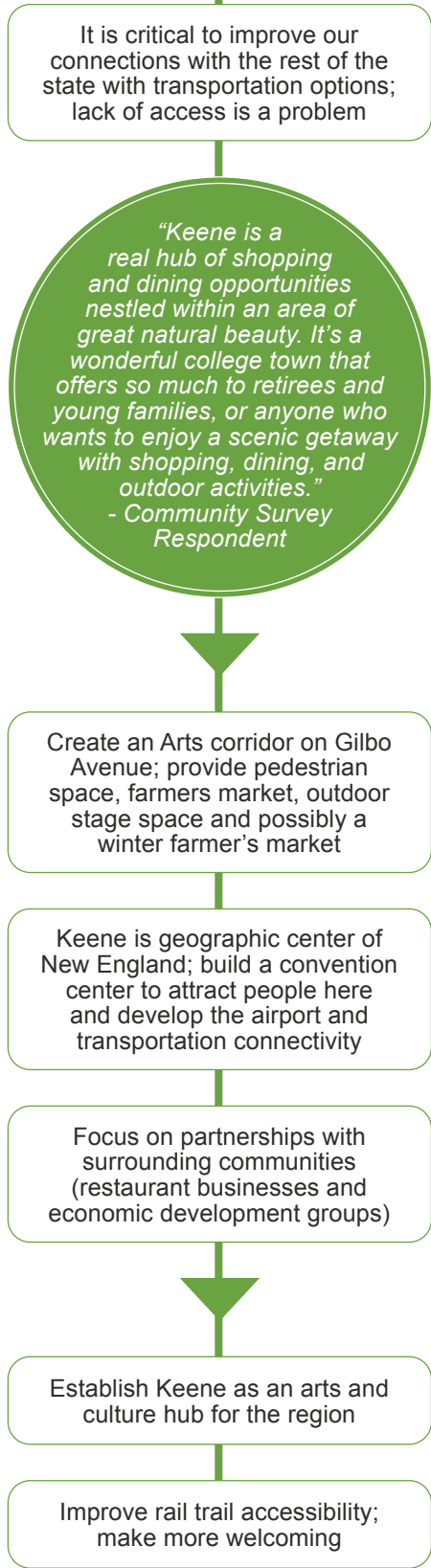
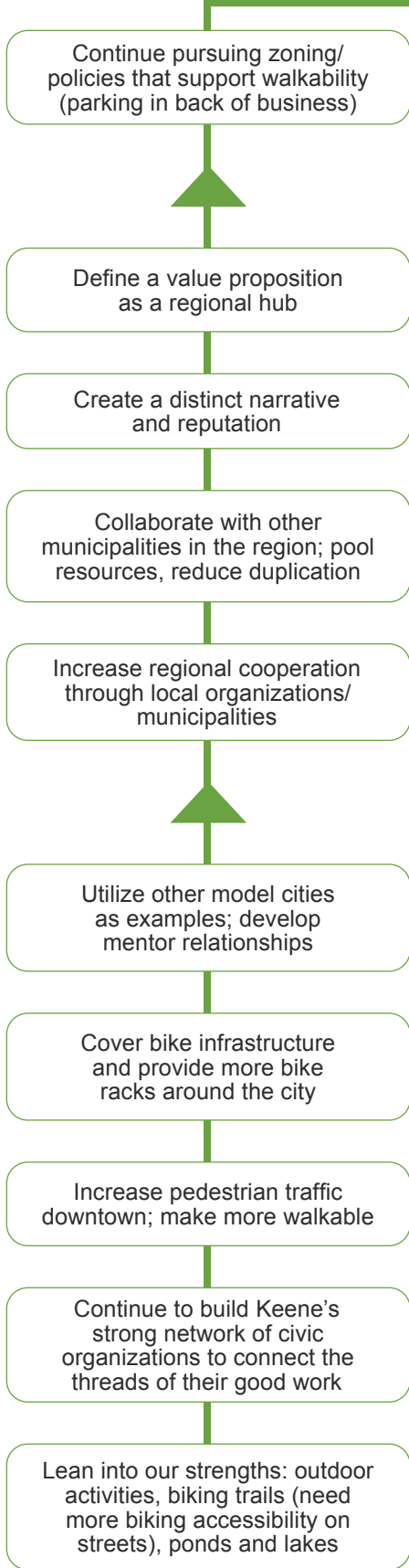
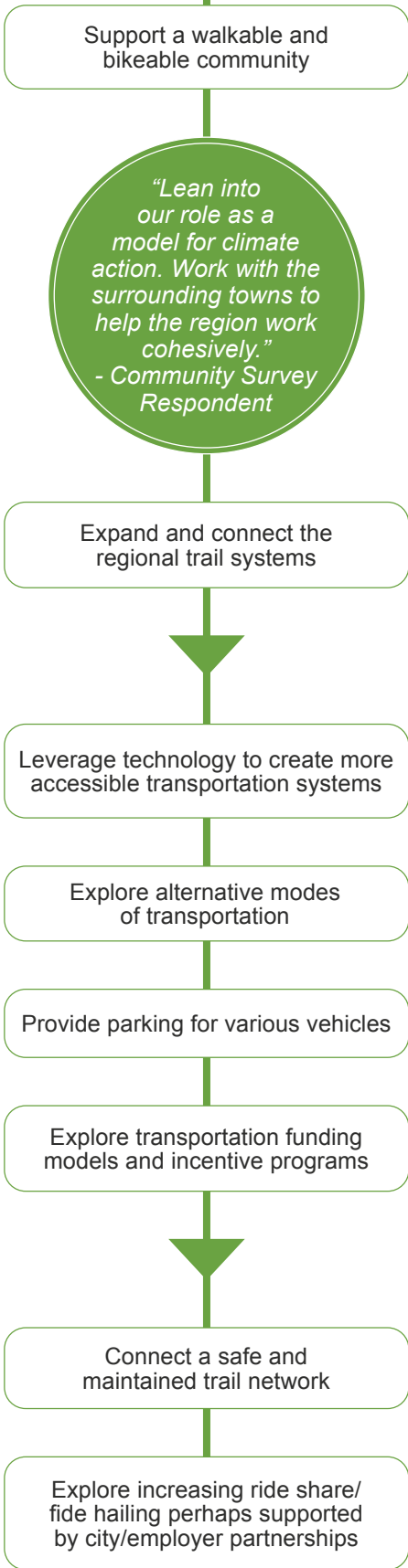
Keene is the logical hub and established regional center. As the region grows, especially the surrounding areas, building this connectivity becomes essential to help the easy flow of the workforce and residents. While the Comprehensive Master Planning work is focused on Keene, **topics like transportation require a regional approach**. This is further amplified by the expressed desire from residents to have a highly walkable and potentially ‘car-free’ living options. This has implications to planning, as it requires the seamless linking of recreation and trail networks to build multi-modal options that allow significant choice in how people ‘get around’ the community and the local region. This connected mobility is definitely seen as one of the intriguing and appealing features of the preferred future that has been envisaged by residents in the planning work to date.

Connectivity provides the critical elements of accessibility and inclusion for people of all ages.



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- As societal values shift, driven by increased environmental sensitivity, it is expected that people will be seeking a greater range of mobility options that are climate neutral. This plays well into the existing Keene values and helps frame the approach in this Comprehensive Planning process. There is an opportunity to think about a ‘city of the future’ where connected mobility might look quite different.
- As well as the ‘people mobility’ aspect, it is also important that planning consider the transport of goods and services to and from the community, and plans for these major transportation corridors.
- Keene’s network of trails offers the potential to create a unique layer to the connectivity and mobility equation. There is a desire expressed by some residents to create a system, similar to some European cities, where these trails are a major part of the mobility system and serve a purpose beyond just recreation.



In 2040 I want Keene to be a walkable City with many natural areas and good restaurants



Lights on bike path and enforce the speed limit

Wheelchair accessible playground like Jonathan Daniels

A pedestrian crosswalk with blinking lights at Kendall Road and Park Ave intersection

More bike-friendly traffic patterns and infrastructure!

Bus service needs to be expanded

Bikes should have a path around central square and sidewalks should be for pedestrians! Light crosswalks at base for safety

Create a downtown that does not cater to cars. Somehow make downtown pedestrian and have car outside of downtown core; childcare downtown for young professionals

Inter-city transportation!

Develop e-bike charging stations around town

Shift our lens toward post-car planning, please

Collaborate with other municipalities in the region; pool resources, reduce duplication

Light rail!

Connect neighborhoods to work spaces

Start the thinking about mobility from a standpoint of giving options

Keene skate park

Reduce car lanes everywhere possible to reduce speed and increase throughput

All sidewalks need to be accessible to all needs

Plan for EV future

Increase cost to register large vehicles, especially those that don't fit into parking spaces in town

Prepare for more use of e-bikes for transportation

Improve and expand network of bike trails



More bike infrastructure; more covered bike racks, more indoor bike parks

Need speed bumps on Park-heavy foot traffic with playground

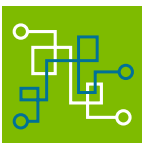
Cheshire rail trail crossing Rte. 101

Objective: Support vibrant community neighborhoods that reflect their unique identity.

6.4.1 | IMPORTANCE OF VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOODS

Keene is a community that has retained some very important aspects of its culture and heritage. The downtown and main street areas are a unique example of a vibrant ‘neighborhood’ that has a unique identity, and this will be enhanced by the upcoming infrastructure improvements. However, Keene has other important neighborhoods and places. The City should work with the community to identify these places and help build more place-based experiences in the community. In today’s world, these place-based approaches help build community connection points. This approach helps enhance the community fabric, and people’s sense of belonging and being included in a community.

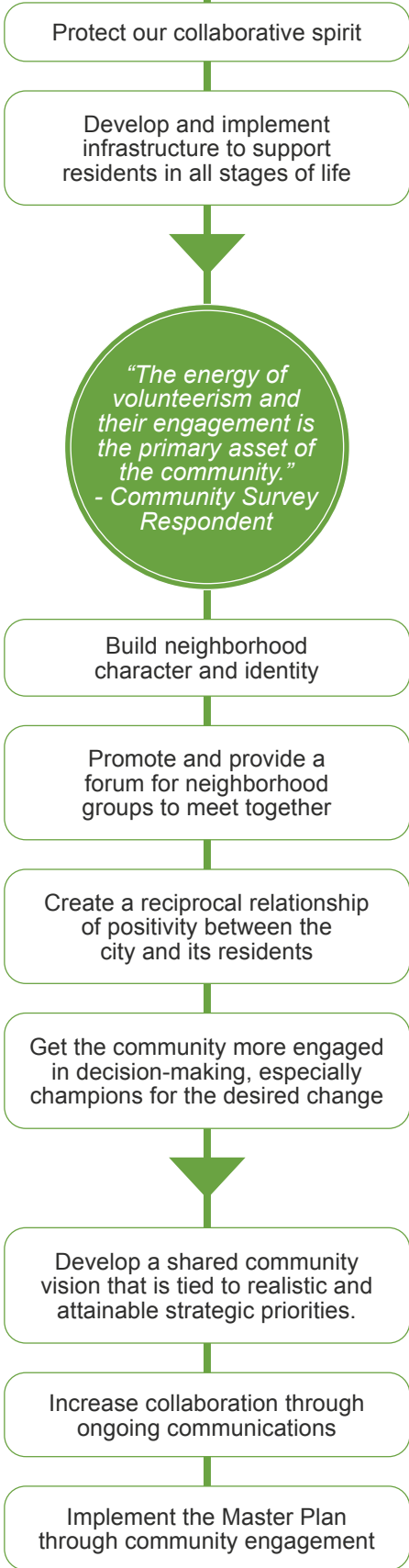
In the context of the Comprehensive Master Plan work, place-making is an approach that helps emphasize community neighborhoods and builds on their unique culture and identity.



FutureInsight

- Communities that are the size and scale of Keene often include smaller unique locations, places and neighborhoods. This smaller sense of scale helps create a more intimate sense of belonging, and tighter local community connections. Keene has numerous small character areas, that can be developed further through the Comprehensive Master Plan.
- Place-making is becoming more important in urban and city planning. It focused on more than just physical elements and includes approaches about how to ‘activate’ these places to create unique experiences and purposes.
- Scale is a key element in planning, and Keene is very fortunate to have many existing infrastructure design elements that help leverage this intimate sense of scale.





Make downtown completely car free. Pedestrian bi-ways/walkways, etc.

Drug free, crime free. Less car accidents. More events - make sure it is posted so the public knows

More benches downtown. Perhaps people could 'buy' them? Put a plaque on them etc.

Housing for all income sectors, but especially lower income families., elderly and disabled folks. Maybe the city has property it can give to develop more housing

More attention to sidewalks in winter for we walkers

Investigate private and public private organizations that can support community health

Foster neighborhood place-making events

Ramp up community based mental health infrastructure

Robust trails to be economic driver

Find a way to engage Elementary to High School students in community vision and discussions – it's their future!

Cultivate community use of common spaces

High school exchange program by encouraging travel; language learning

Game nights – both board games and video; reach out to local businesses to host?




Idea: Have 'Community Boards' located in key areas of the city that share 'club' information – when they meet and where; increase the number of clubs folks can join

Use existing development space fallen into disrepair. Maintain green integrity/limit deforestation

Need more 'gathering places'; bars/taverns/coffee houses

Children play structures and neighborhood pocket parks that lack them



Consider adding better access to medical services; ties to housing and workforce; shortage of caregivers

Create/celebrate existing 3rd spaces in each neighborhood

Encourage more community use of KSC spaces

Community activity boards

Keene funded BIPOC-run multicultural center

Splash pad!

Accessible community garden plots

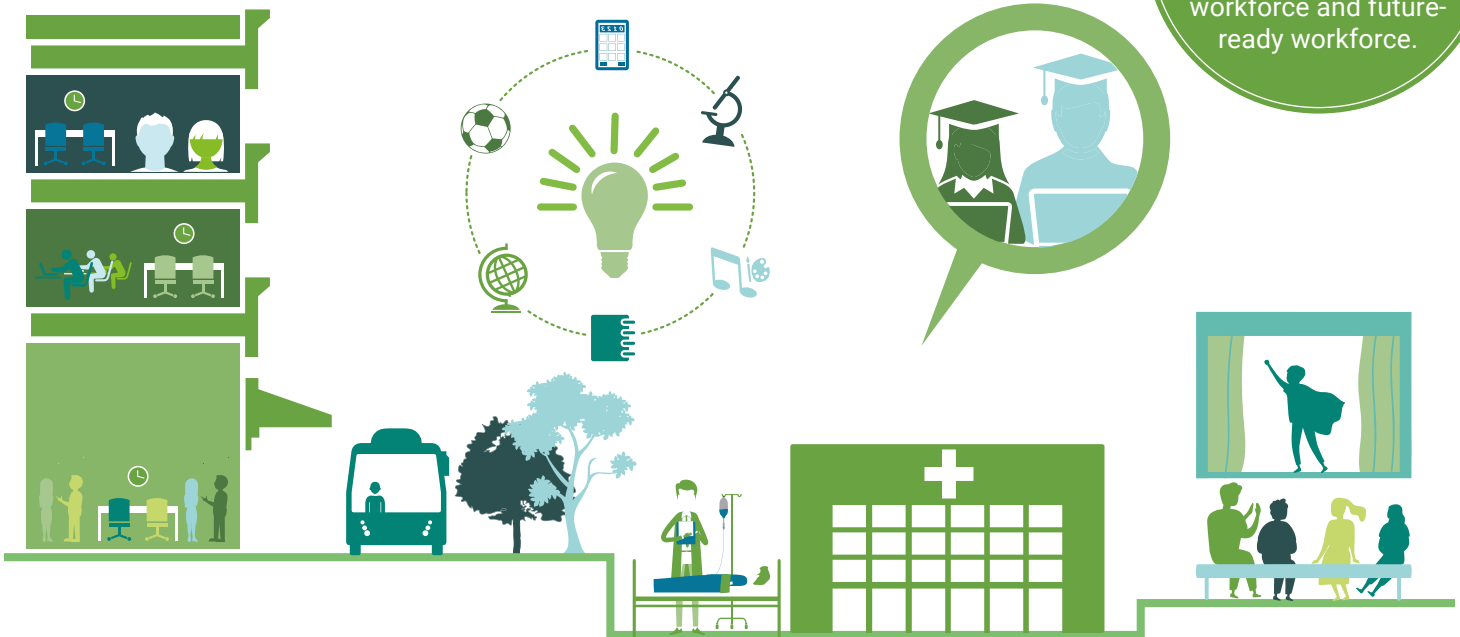
Organize neighborhood gatherings and planning for connecting neighbors

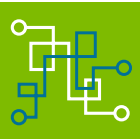
Objective: Foster a future-ready, abundant and adaptable workforce.

6.5.1 | IMPORTANCE OF AN ADAPTABLE WORKFORCE

In many locations across the United States, talent attraction is a key issue. As the national economy evolves and technology driven approaches increase in importance, having a skilled and adaptable workforce is essential. Keene is fortunate to have educational institutions that attract young talent to the region. The challenge is how to attract, develop and retain young people and skilled people into the local and regional economy and workforce. This ability to attract and retain talent is intrinsically linked to the unique appeal of Keene and its value proposition as a community. The Comprehensive Master Planning process aims to connect the community appeal and amenities to the value proposition for a future ready workforce. This will include identifying values and vision that make a compelling case as to why Keene should be someone's home of choice.

Keene's future competitive success will depend on its ability to develop and retain a skilled workforce and future-ready workforce.

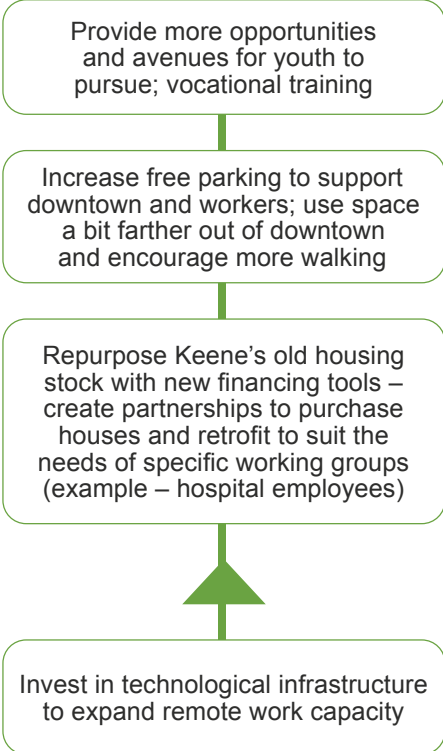




FutureInsight

- Keene has many elements that could make it attractive to a talented workforce. There is a magnetic attraction based on the community culture, which many people see as a being a creative haven.
- A future-ready workforce means it has the capacity to anticipate and adapt to changing skill needs. This requires a flexibility and nimbleness to see opportunities and respond. This will require a broader understand of the trends in the country and even internationally.
- Keene has the potential to be a creative center that helps spur innovation and flexible thinking. This is already a part of the community culture and can be further amplified, especially by looking at best-practice case studies and drawing the best examples into the community and this Comprehensive Master Planning process.





Develop more green businesses (especially in the food and energy sectors)



Promotion for trades jobs and education for students and adults; give \$ incentives to do trades training

Progressive workforce for up and coming jobs; eco jobs, tech trades

Expand vocational-tech and connect to business for employment

Provide high quality affordable housing options and long term warming centers; difficult to get a job if you don't have base needs met

Bold ideas for financing workforces

Imperative – attract a new employer to Keene (draw from Dartmouth talent pool) A company in software or biotech or engineering; locate downtown

Early childcare should not just mean day care it should mean options for parents to work part time or flexible time

Change zoning to allow business to create onsite housing for employees



Community connections – can our elders be part of our childcare solutions?

Make Arts and hands on technical skills interconnected; pottery and electrical or welding and woodworking as early as possible in education

Career training for adults, esp. those who are homeless, recovering or disabled; add more funding to recovery/career support programs

Broadband! Affordable housing! Walk/bike everywhere



Youth entrepreneurial program (ex. The Possible Zone, Boston)

Workplace neurodiversity training w/ Hannah Grimes

Jobs for older workers who want to re-enter the workforce or begin in the workforce

Prepare for AI

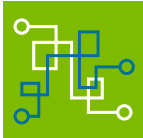
CDC career development center for high school

Objective: Champion environmental stewardship and climate action.

6.6.1 | IMPORTANCE OF A FLOURISHING ENVIRONMENT

There is an established and strong environmental stewardship ethos in Keene. This is reflected in the priority this topic has been given in previous planning efforts. Throughout the current planning work, people have pushed on topics of climate adaptation, climate action, renewable energy sources, ecological protection and sustainable development. This reflects a deep underlying value and desire to see Keene be a responsible community. As the climate changes, adaption will be essential. Urban environments will need to be designed to handle a hotter world, and more intense climate events. There will be a need to provide infrastructure to help transition to carbon neutral transport and energy systems. Keene has an opportunity to build on the existing solid work and move the community to a more resilient and sustainable future.

Keene has a long history of being a leader in environmental stewardship and climate adaptation. This planning process aims to build on this solid foundation.



FutureInsight

- Climate adaptation is going to be one of the defining issues over the coming decades. This is a challenge for all communities, and in Keene it will require rethinking some aspects of urban design and developments, to include greater environmental buffers and capacity for more renewable energy production.
- The environmental stewardship focus offers a way to take a proactive and positive approach and think creatively about ways to improve Keene’s community amenities while enhancing the environment. The exciting challenge is to create urban landscapes that are highly livable and appealing to people, while also enhancing and improving the environment.
- Keene is fortunate to have fantastic landscapes, ecosystems and natural resources. These are a key part of the community value proposition and appeal, and should be further enhanced and nurtured through this Comprehensive Master Planning process.



Support and update the city's existing environmental approach


Create more accessible green space within residential and commercial areas

Maintain our current agricultural areas and protect our green spaces

Respect the intent of previous plans, and processes, policies and vision

Prepare for emerging technologies in transportation, energy, etc.

Development priorities should use smart growth principles and limit destruction of habitat. Density and infill is desirable; make the community vibrant and walkable



Pursue public/private partnerships that make resources available for mitigation of health and environmental hazards

Need to balance solar and housing development with wild landscapes; don't do solar on Ag lands

Be a leader in both climate adaptation and sustainable development, particularly with respect to land use

Upgrade our energy/communication distribution network (fiber optic base) owned by the city

Future infrastructure should consider wildlife; as new roads happen, consider what it means for organisms (trout, reptiles, etc.)

Make a concerted effort to be eco-friendly

"... Keene has been a leader in climate change policy and action and other sustainable efforts. I would like to see Keene embrace this role and run with it....What Keene does becomes a model for other towns."
- Community Survey Respondent

Green space should include pollinator habitats; work on easy solutions

Maintain water quality with development, especially re stormwater infrastructure

State has lost Ag soils; we need to limit development on Ag soils to pursue Food Security

Build a new Community Garden on the East side of Keene

There is a need for green energy transportation options to move towards a car-free transportation system

"It's exciting to me to see new solar arrays, bike paths, EV charging infrastructure, and other efforts at sustainability move forward."
- Community Survey Respondent

Antioch's graduate program in Planning and Climate Adaptation is an opportunity for the college and city to work together to become nationally relevant

Foster collaboration between the city and KSC in the areas of organic local farming, advanced biotech, and rural farming technologies

Provide the infrastructure we need to support growth while at the same time protecting the environment

Plan for being energy independent and meeting the needs of EVs.

Solar panels all over city buildings

More benches, trees, flowers, charging stations

Maintain upkeep and improve Keene parks: Robin Hood, etc

Need to do some serious flood modeling for extreme weather scenarios; publicize results, include in plan

Develop comprehensive 'continuity and operations' plan for all City and private utility providers

Wind energy technology is getting smaller and smaller scale

Less lawn, more pollinator habitat in public and private spaces

Encourage college recycling programs



Plant pollinator habitats in the strips between the sidewalks and streets, especially downtown

Consider district heating systems and ground source heat pumps – where in Keene cold they work; what's feasible and cost-effective?

Have a hot compost pile at the transfer station so it will compost compostable plastics

Expand public transport, using electric vehicles – work with schools on electric bus system for vehicle-to grid resiliency

Need to collaborate with local land trusts to identify lands that need to be protected

Study and research all options for production of energy

Have restaurants use cardboard and tin foil lids instead of plastic for to go boxes and food containers

Storm resiliency – flood, ice are our threats

Support the 100% renewable electricity as same or less than 'regular' electricity even if that means raising regular electricity

Community gardens (food)

Enforce code for housing

Must prepare to implement flood plan



Invasive species management and education and support for landowners and public spaces

Grey water systems

Triple bottom line biz – environmental stewardship, social justice, end racism (explicit and implicit) in Monadnock

Bold ideas for financing

Environment should be considered with each Pillar

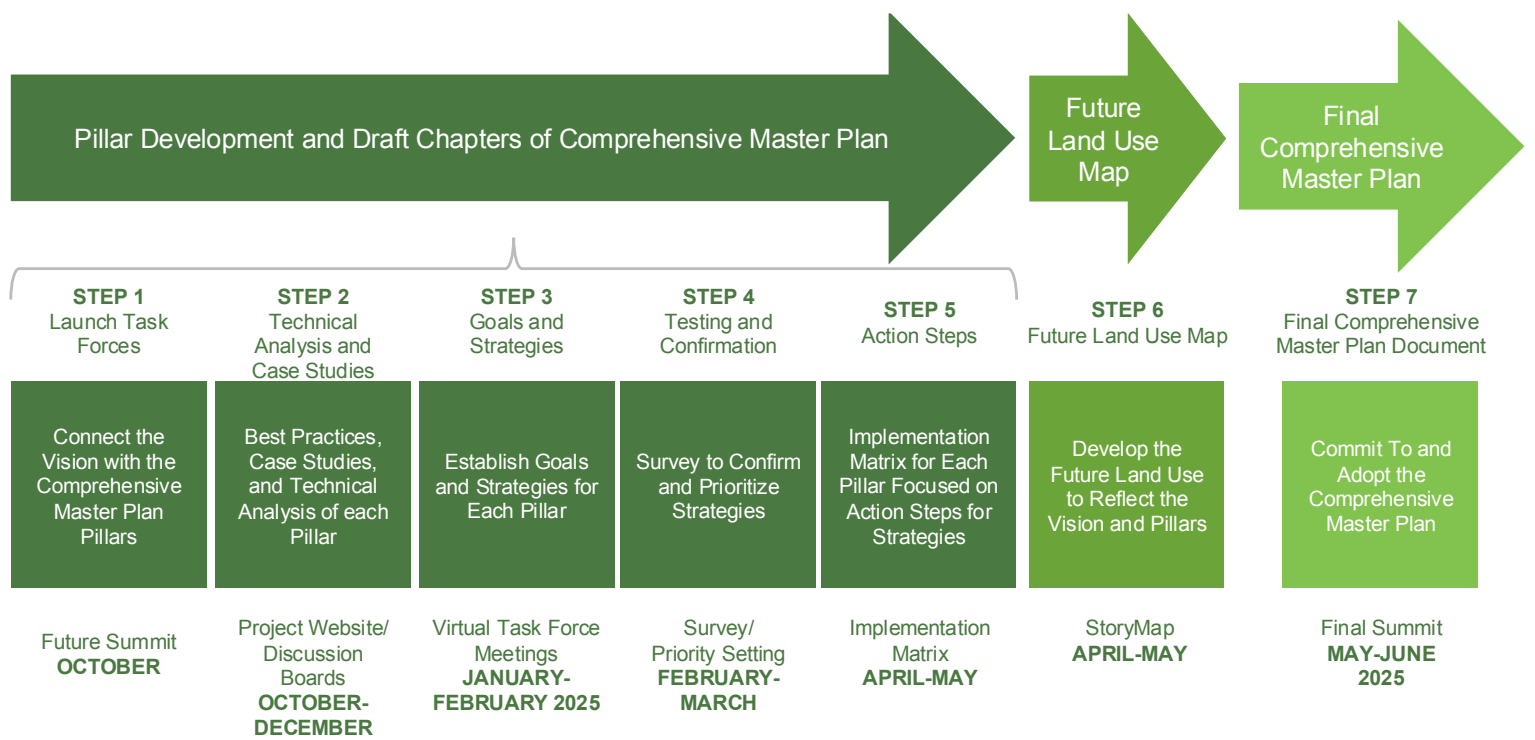


Please stay connected to the Vision Keene 20-Forward Comprehensive Master Plan project at keenemasterplan.com.

7.0 | NEXT STEPS

Following the Community Visioning Sessions that were held after the Think-Tank, this Community Vision report was drafted and presented for review at the public Vision Keene 20-Forward Future Summit held on October 5, 2024. This event was the bridging event that launched the next step in the planning process - Phase 2: Comprehensive Master Plan and Future Land Use Map.

CITY OF KEENE, NEW HAMPSHIRE COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS PHASE 2: COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN AND FUTURE LAND USE MAP



- October 5, 2024 – Vision Keene 20-Forward Future Summit. Participants reviewed the Community Vision and signed up for Master Plan Task Forces.
- October – December 2024 – Discussion Boards are posted on the project portal; case studies and technical analysis of each strategic pillar.
- January – February 2025 – Virtual Master Plan Task Force meetings are held to develop the strategic pillars of the Comprehensive Master Plan.
- February – March 2025 – Prioritization Survey to confirm and prioritize the strategies and action steps of the Comprehensive Master Plan.
- April – May 2025 – Develop Implementation Matrix for each strategic pillar focused on action steps for the strategies. Develop the Future Land Use map and StoryMap.
- May – June 2025 – Finalize Comprehensive Master Plan document, Council adoption of the Plan, and final Future Summit.

“A master plan is always dynamic. It’s made to dream but also be grounded in reality. If you are moving forward then it’s a working plan....”

- Community Survey Respondent





➤ 8.0 | ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Vision Keene 20-Forward Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee was formed to help guide this project. These dedicated individuals meet monthly to guide the consultant teams and participated in the Think-Tank Workshop. We would like to acknowledge the Steering Committee members.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Juliana Bergeron

Harold Farrington
Chair

Alex Henkel
Vice-Chair

Emily Lavigne-Bernier

Josh Meehan

Cody Morrison

Leatrice Oram

Joe Perras

Mike Remy
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Elizabeth Wood

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Keene City Council

Phil Jones
Keene City Council
Alternate

Jay Kahn
Keene Mayor
Alternate

Ken Kost
Alternate

Community members have engaged in this visioning process with great enthusiasm. Their passion and interest have ensured that discussions are open, thoughtful, and reflective of the myriad of perspectives that exist within Keene. This dedication is also reflective of the deep commitment participants have to the future of the city.

Additionally, our appreciation is extended to the Keene City Council and in particular to city staff Mari Brunner, Jesse Rounds, Evan Clements, and Rebecca Landry who meet on a weekly basis with the project team and provide the local expertise that helps guide this project. Their time and dedication are greatly appreciated.





➤ 9.0 | FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the Vision Keene 20-Forward comprehensive master planning project, please contact:



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Please stay connected to the Vision Keene 20-Forward Comprehensive Master Plan project at:
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12.0 | CONSULTING TEAM – ABOUT FUTURE IQ, JS&A, AND WGI

Future iQ specializes in applying innovative tools and approaches to assist municipalities, organizations, regions and industries shape their economic and community futures. With nearly two decades of experience, the company has a global clientele spanning three continents. To learn more about Future iQ, and our recent projects visit www.future-iq.com or by email at info@future-iq.com.

For this project, Future iQ has partnered with the economic development and planning firm of Jon Stover & Associates (JS&A), and the planning firm of WGI. To learn more about JS&A, visit www.stoverandassociates.com. To learn more about WGI, visit www.wginc.com.

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VISION KEENE 20-FORWARD

COMMUNITY VISION REPORT

NEW HAMPSHIRE, USA

OCTOBER 2024