

Merrimack County GAP Analysis Session October 9, 2003

What are the needs of NH residents, businesses and organizations and how important are they?

- Education on basic healthy lifestyles. (6 votes)
- Regressive tax structure and lack of discussion about it. (6 votes)
- (Elderly) property tax reform/relief. (4 votes)
- Transportation for rural communities, especially younger families (and people who don't have transportation.) (4 votes)
- Sprawl and resource fragmentation. (3 votes)
- Affordable, high quality daycare. (3 votes)
- Programs for stronger families – conflict, communication, stress. (3 votes)
- Transportation for seniors. (2 votes)
- Unnecessary development of land. (2 votes)
- Increase promotion of locally-grown food especially through farmers markets. (2 votes)
- Improve and protect water quality – surface and groundwater. (2 votes)
- Estate planning and transfer of family businesses. (2 votes)
- Job training for youth and adults. (2 votes)
- Drug and alcohol treatment programs – youth and adult – long term. (2 votes)
- Adult daycare, respite, home chore service. (2 votes)
- Improve opportunities for entry level farmers – farmer mentoring program. (2 votes)
- Senior adult education programs – improve life quality – maintain independence, education, prescription drug payment plan. (1 vote)
- Promoting health resources – inventory. (1 vote)
- Promoting a sustainable forestry ethic. (1 vote)
- More legislation and advocacy for tobacco cessation programs (1 vote)
- Healthcare for low-income.
- School funding – equality throughout county.
- Resources and education to sustain co-op community gardens.
- More affordable housing.
- Parenting classes for low income residents.
- Strategies for families that don't qualify for programs.
- More recycling programs.
- Bring awareness to public on advantages of conservation when relinquishing land.
- Coordinating state volunteer environmental programs.
- Bring unheard voices to the table.
- More educational programs for elderly – injury prevention.
- Resource center to help families know about what is available.
- Pamphlet listing what is available – especially for seniors – increase access.
- How-to info on energy efficiency for home owners.
- Broader job base – higher wages.
- Teen programs with a safe social environment.
- Assimilation of immigrants.

What should Extension do over the next two years and beyond to address these issues?

Healthy Lifestyle Education

- Sponsoring agency to put together a comprehensive directory of programs – inventory what exists already (VNAs, Riverbend, Sr. Centers.) Extension be a resources & referral like Family, Home & Garden Education Center. Healthy lifestyles newsletter, mailed and electronic, including a directory, highlight certain subject matter. (Be a central source for answering questions – Education Center.) (10 votes)
- Farm to School programs – (strong agricultural participation in Merrimack County – after school) – Educate children where food comes from (fruit & vegetable and dairy farms), farm environments, take learning home for greatest impact. (Change stressful lifestyle for kids.) (7 votes)
- Increase exercise in schools – because of cut backs may need to do it out of school. (5 votes)
- Continue social marketing – increase consumption of fruits and vegetables –promote seasonal healthy eating – coordinate with 5-A-Day (expand to print media). (4 votes)
- Workshops at senior centers, Elderhostel, independent housing, adult education.
- (Concord) Hospital cardiac rehabilitative program – (18 sessions – heart disease – train program leaders to do this – nutrition, exercise, stress, interpersonal communication). (2 votes)
- Prevention – prevent chronic disease – (obesity). (1 vote)
- Checklist of good healthy foods to get when you stop at the grocery store after a busy day. (1 vote)
- Continue local agricultural marketing work (and incorporate healthy lifestyle information.) eating closer to point of production as a “theme.” (1 vote)
- Teens and kids – more physical activity and less television – programs to encourage outside activities.
- After school programs (to do that.)
- Promoting walkable and bikeable communities – promote walking and biking (instead of teens driving – link teens with seniors.)
- More sessions with companies and businesses – workplace programs –lunch hour etc.
- Promote NH Celebrates Wellness (in businesses).
- Continue getting people back to work plus food stamp program.
- Collaborate with natural food stores, seminars, talks.

Repressive tax structure/Property tax reform

- Educate citizens about different options for taxes and funding – (myths, realities, sales, property tax). (6 votes)
- Develop a course for 6th grade students about how government is funded – (people only talk about what they don’t want). (1 vote)
- Education about different types of land uses (to reduce tax burden). (1 vote)
- Research income generating ideas/sources for state. (1 vote)
- Talk with legislators and agency personnel about what we do.
- Education – how do other states use financial disincentives to manage land development? (Law in VT that penalizes land owners if they misuse forest resources – sustainable land uses.)
- Research tax alternative i.e., sales tax vs. property tax. (Comparison between property tax and sales tax – what it means for the average person.)
- Disseminate existing reports – for example, current use research (penalty tax) to dispel myths.

Transportation – Seniors, young families, rural areas

- Better coordination of all the agencies that have vehicles – vans, buses. Expand greater Concord-based effort. (7 votes)
- Directory of existing transportation services. (2 votes)
- Community assessment of needs – within and among communities.
- Extension have pool of Segways.
- Move Extension within public transportation. (Extension office ought to be on a public transportation loop.)

What are the best ways for Extension to deliver educational programs and information?

- Brochures – expand on those available – for example at county offices.
- Home study courses through the mail or internet.
- Workshops, one-on-one follow-up.
- When you call you get a real person – good in Extension right now – keep that. People are available to answer questions.
- More going on at public libraries, displays, programs, literacy programs (or community centers.)
- Set up display/tables at farmers market – staff with volunteers, 4-Hers (but someone has to drive them there.)
- Community Coalitions as a place to promote Extension, not just for agricultural audiences.
- Promote all of Extension. (Go beyond agriculture or 4-H – promote the whole.)
- Get information out to companies, malls, general listing of what is available so people at work can access our information.
- We do a great job of interactive exhibits at Farm and Forest.
- Hands on workshops – e.g. pasture management.
- Visual methods, do, see, and use, plus something to take back with you.
- Speakers as a way to get information.
- Utilize the newspaper to disseminate information.
- Volunteers contribute newspaper articles, local news, human interest. (Create the need with the newspaper – we could all call the Monitor and request.)
- Channel 9 noon time show – Nancy Adams is often on.
- Radio as well – WEVO.