

Linking People and Land: Conservation Planning for Municipalities

New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions Conference

Zak Brohinsky and Crystal Kidd

November 1, 2025



**New Hampshire Association
of Conservation Commissions**
SERVING NEW HAMPSHIRE'S COMMUNITIES SINCE 1970

RESILIENCE
Planning & Design LLC

Zak Brohinsky & Crystal Kidd

Resilience Planning and Design is a collaborative planning firm with expertise in community planning, land use analysis, visioning, and equitable outreach and engagement. We develop plans designed to launch a community or organization into action. We co-create visioning processes that emphasize grassroots, bottom-up decision making and strategies for implementation that reflect best practices, innovative solutions, and local context.



Agenda

- ▶ Benefits of conservation planning
- ▶ List of projects
- ▶ Scales of conservation planning
- ▶ 4 phases
- ▶ Key takeaways

Benefits of Conservation Planning



Natural Resources

- Wildlife corridors
- Wetlands and groundwater
- Native species
- Conserved land
- Connectivity



Social & Health Elements

- Quality of life
- Health and wellness



Ecotourism

- Trail connectivity
- Local businesses

Projects we have completed



Strategic Conservation Planning Services
Vermont River Conservancy, VT



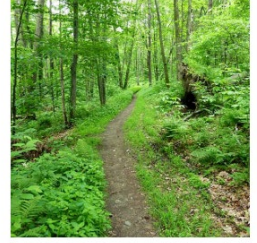
Regional Conservation Plan
Five Rivers Conservation Trust, NH



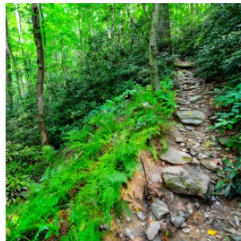
Regional Conservation Plan
Kittatinny Ridge
Conservation Landscape, PA



Open Space Plan
Portsmouth, NH



Open Space & Connectivity Plan
Stratham, NH



Integrated Land Management Plan
Susquehanna Riverlands
Conservation Landscape, PA



Regional Conservation Plan
Moose Mountains Regional Greenway, NH



Open Space Plan Addendum
Burlington, VT

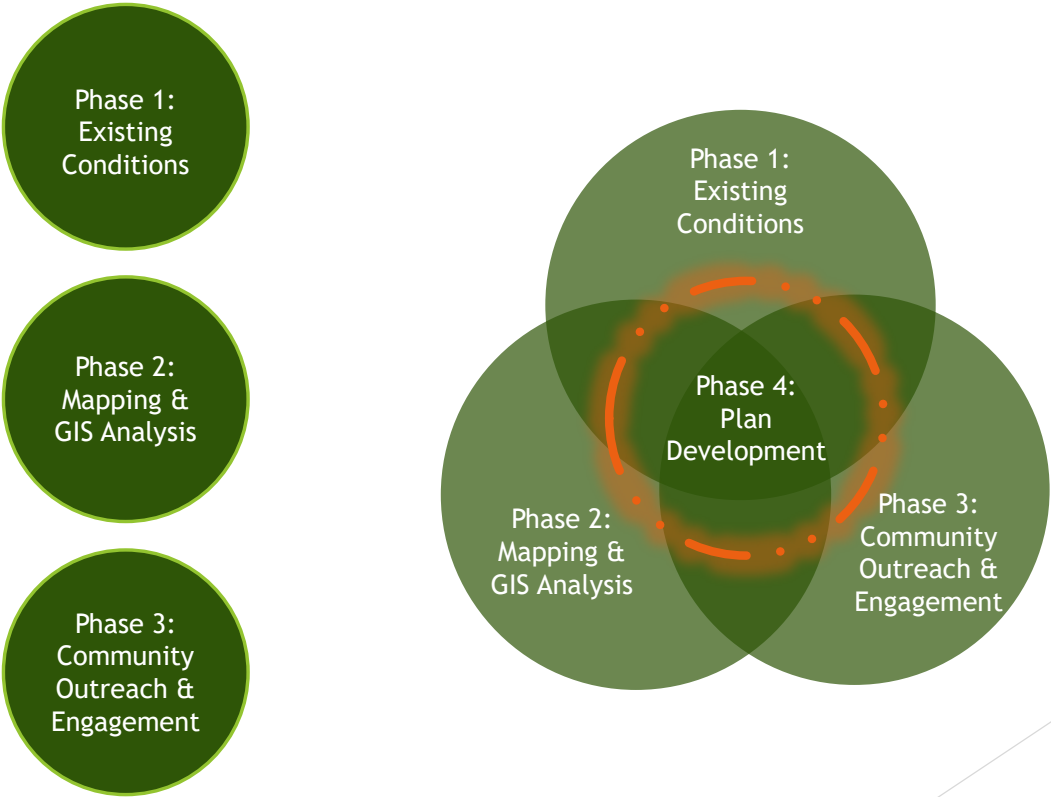
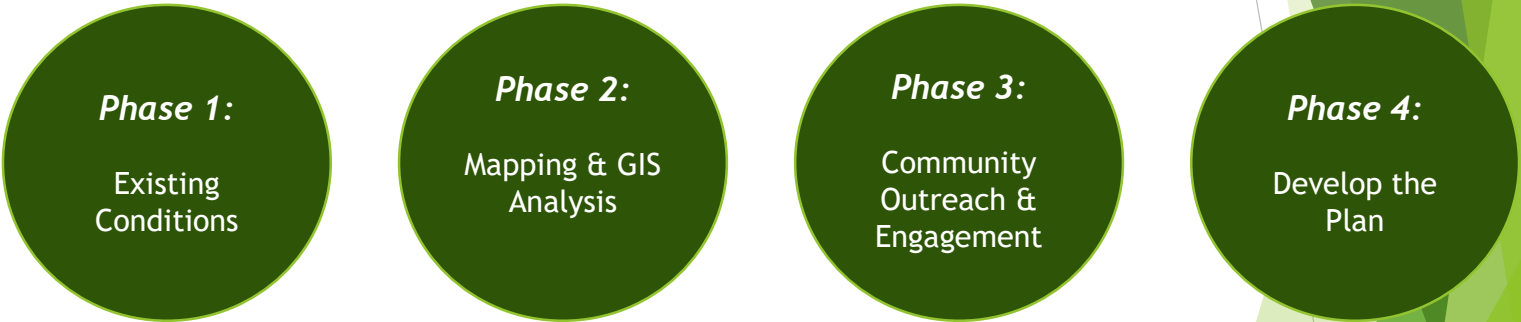


Open Space Plan
Casco, ME

Scales of Conservation Planning

- ▶ State
 - ▶ Vermont River Conservancy
- ▶ Regional
 - ▶ KRCL: Regional Conservation Plan
 - ▶ ILMP: Integrated Land Management Plan
 - ▶ 5RCT: Regional Conservation Plan
 - ▶ MMRG: Regional Conservation Plan
- ▶ Municipal
 - ▶ Portsmouth, NH: Open Space Plan
 - ▶ Stratham, NH: Open Space & Connectivity Plan
 - ▶ Burlington, VT: Open Space Addendum
 - ▶ Casco, ME: Open Space Plan
- ▶ Site level
 - ▶ Holderness, NH: Pemi-Oxbow Preserve Management Plan

Our Process for Conservation Planning in Municipalities

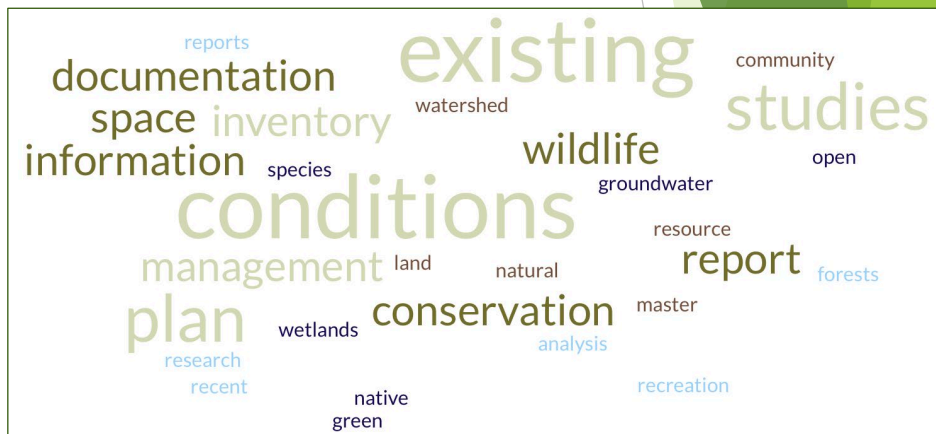


Phase 1: Compile and Review Existing Conditions



Phase 1: Compile and Review Existing Conditions

- Understand organizational goals & vision
- Identify themes and emerging issues
- Recognize opportunities and challenges
- Flag potential actions early
- Inform outreach and spatial analysis
- Deliver an Existing Conditions Summary



Phase 1: Compile and Review Existing Conditions

Key takeaways from Existing Conditions:

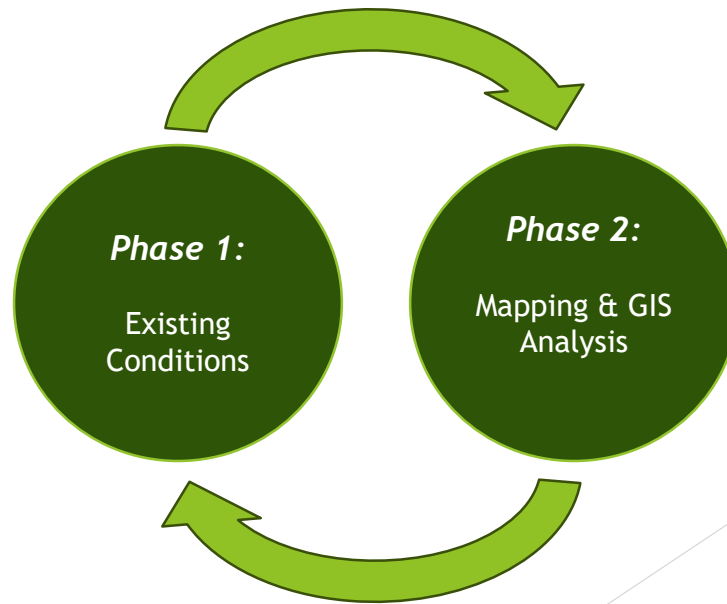
- Compile as much community knowledge (plans, reports, interviews etc) as possible
- Begin identifying emerging issues, opportunities, and themes
- Don't jump to solutions and actions too soon
- Trust the process

Phase 2: **Mapping & GIS Analysis**



Phase 2: Mapping & GIS Analysis

- Informed by Existing Conditions



Phase 2: Mapping & GIS Analysis

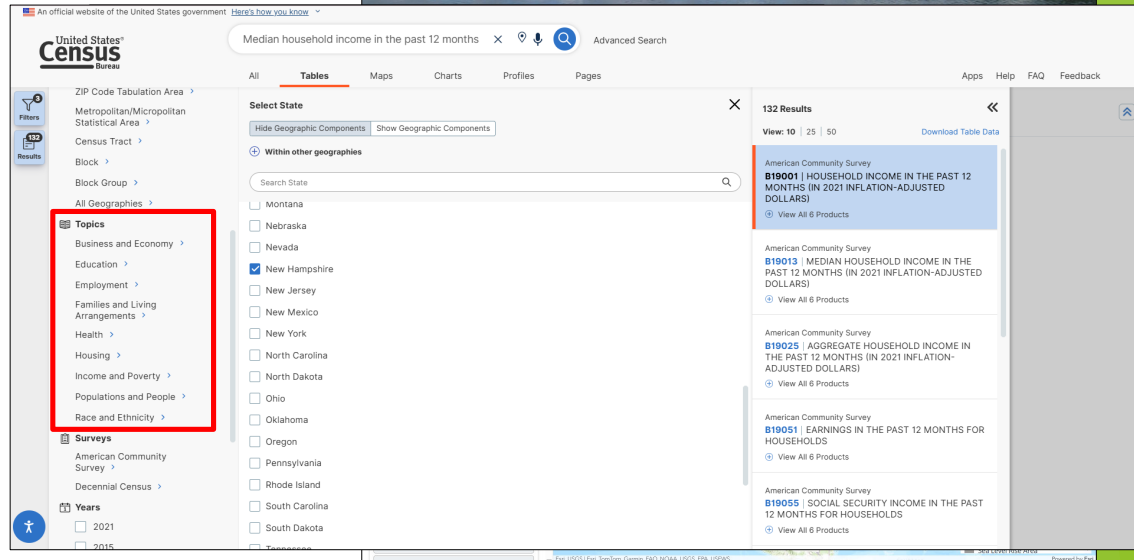
- Informed by Existing Conditions
- Compile & acquire best available data

Phase 2: Mapping & GIS Analysis

- Informed by Existing Conditions
- Compile & acquire best available data

- GRANIT

- Conservation
 - Natural resource
 - Wildlife Action Plan
- Land cover
- TNC climate resilience
- Recreation
- Municipality
 - Parcel data
 - Existing land use
- Social elements
 - US Census Bureau



Phase 2: Mapping & GIS Analysis

- Informed by Existing Conditions
- Compile & acquire best available data
- Analyze data

Phase 2: Mapping & GIS Analysis

- ▶ Informed by Existing Conditions
- ▶ Compile & acquire best available data
- ▶ Analyze data

Basic

Complex

Phase 2: Mapping & GIS Analysis

- ▶ Informed by Existing Conditions
- ▶ Compile & acquire best available data
- ▶ Analyze data

28% Of total land
is permanently
conserved

Basic

Complex

Phase 2: Mapping & GIS Analysis

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- Compile & acquire best available data
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1 / 3 Of conserved land is within 0.5 miles of a waterbody

Basic

Complex

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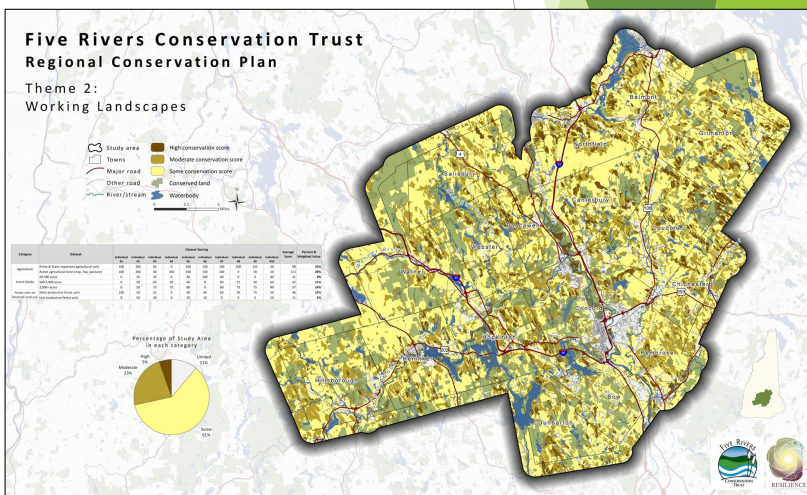
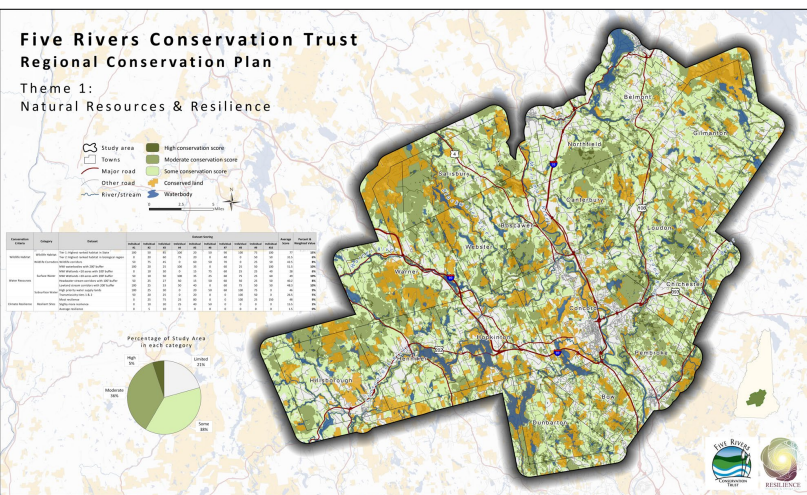
Basic

Complex

Theme 1: Natural Resources & Resiliency			Individual #1	Individual #2	Individual #3	Individual #4	Individual #5	Individual #6
Wildlife Habitat	Wildlife Action Plan	Wildlife 1 - Tier 1: Highest in state	100	50	85	100	20	50
		Wildlife 2 - Tier 2: Highest in biological region	0	20	60	75	20	0
	Wildlife Corridors	Wildlife 3 - Wildlife corridors	50	75	45	0	60	50
Water Resources	Surface Water	Water 1 - NWI waterbodies - 200' buffer	100	20	25	100	35	0
		Water 2 - NWI Wetlands <10 ac - 100' buffer	0	10	30	0	15	75
		Water 3 - NWI Wetlands >10 ac - 200' buffer	50	10	50	100	35	25
	Subsurface Water	Water 4 - Stream corridors - headwater streams - 100' buffer	50	25	27	50	15	50
		Water 5 - Stream corridors - lowland streams/ivers - 200' buffer	100	25	33	50	40	0
		Subsurface Water 1 - High priority water supply lands	100	25	30	0	20	50
Climate Resilience	Resilient Sites	Subsurface Water 2 - Transmissivity tiers 1 & 2	50	20	25	0	20	0
		Resilient 1 - Most resilience	0	25	75	25	80	0
		Resilient 2 - Slightly more resilience	0	10	30	25	40	50
		Resilient 3 - Average resilience	0	5	10	0	0	0
	Total points in Theme 1		600	320	525	525	400	350
	Percentage of points allocated to Theme 1		60.0%	32.0%	52.5%	52.5%	40.0%	35.0%

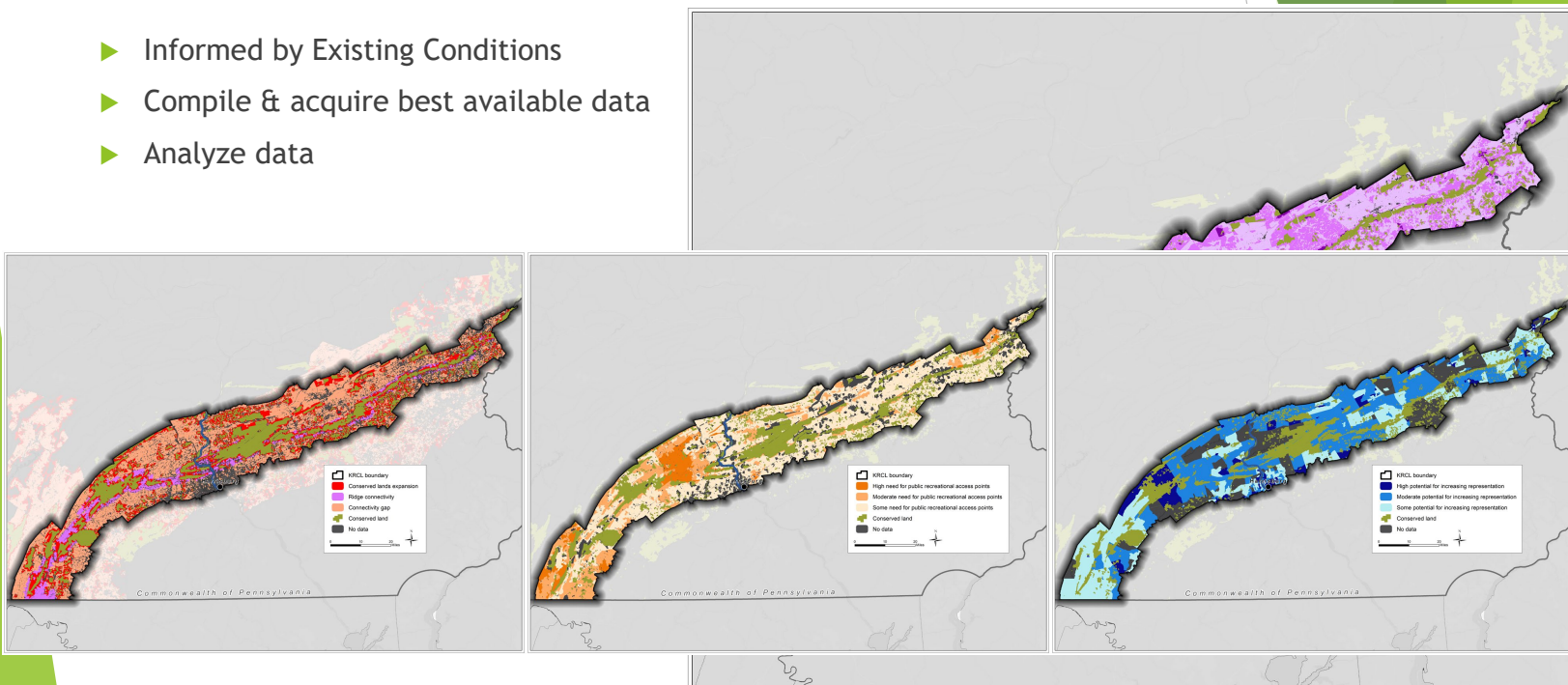
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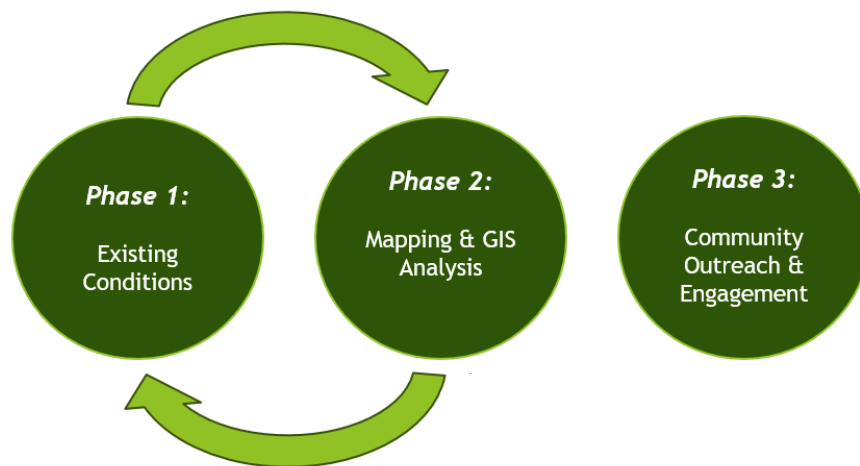
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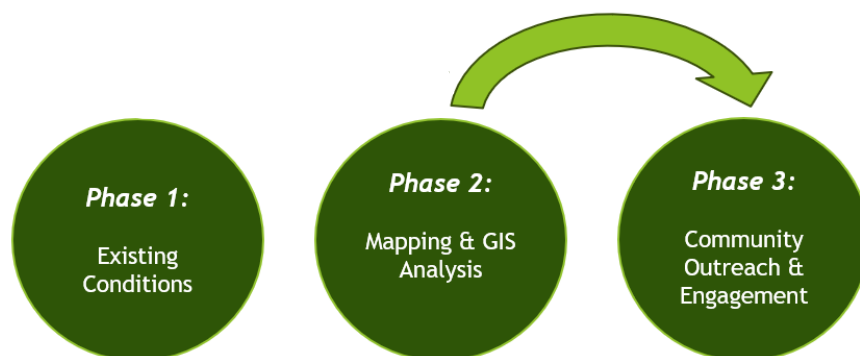
Phase 2: Mapping & GIS Analysis

- ▶ Informed by Existing Conditions
- ▶ Compile & acquire best available data
- ▶ Analyze data
- ▶ Bring materials to outreach efforts to solicit feedback on direction



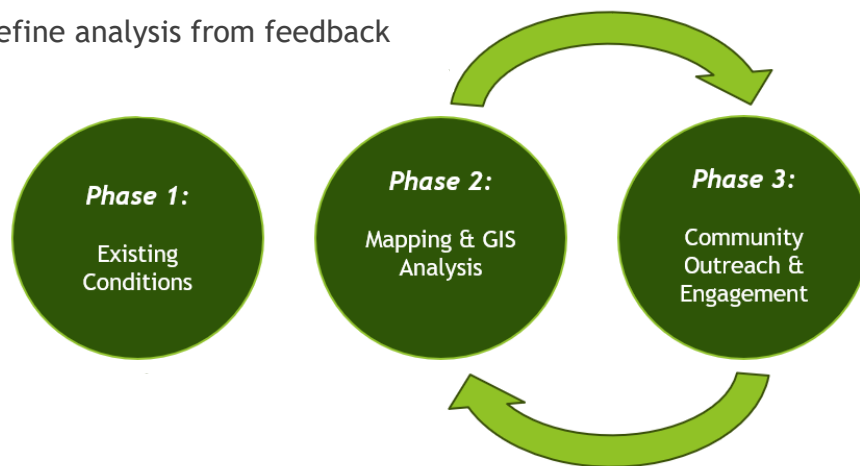
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- ▶ Refine analysis from feedback



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Phase 2: Mapping & GIS Analysis

Key takeaways from GIS Analysis:

- Collect as much data as possible
 - It's easier to cull unnecessary data than it is to insert at the end
- Choose data that works at your scale
 - Not all data works at the same scale
- Simple or complex analysis - both can be effective
 - It's more about what the data can tell you AND how the information is communicated
- Refining analysis based on feedback is critical



Phase 3: Community Outreach and Engagement

- ▶ Develop and maintain an outreach plan
 - ▶ Identify specific demographics
- ▶ Engage local nonprofits, landowners, trail and recreation groups
- ▶ Use multiple formats—surveys, forums, tabling, meetings
- ▶ “Go where people already are”
- ▶ Keep engagement balanced and consistent



Phase 3: Community Outreach and Engagement

Key takeaways from Outreach & Engagement:

- Develop outreach plan early
- Allow the outreach plan to evolve
- Touch base with as many community groups as possible...even non-traditional
- Feedback is critical for developing a community-driven plan

Phase 4: Draft the Plan



Phase 1:
Existing
Conditions

Phase 2:
Mapping &
GIS Analysis

Phase 3:
Community
Outreach &
Engagement

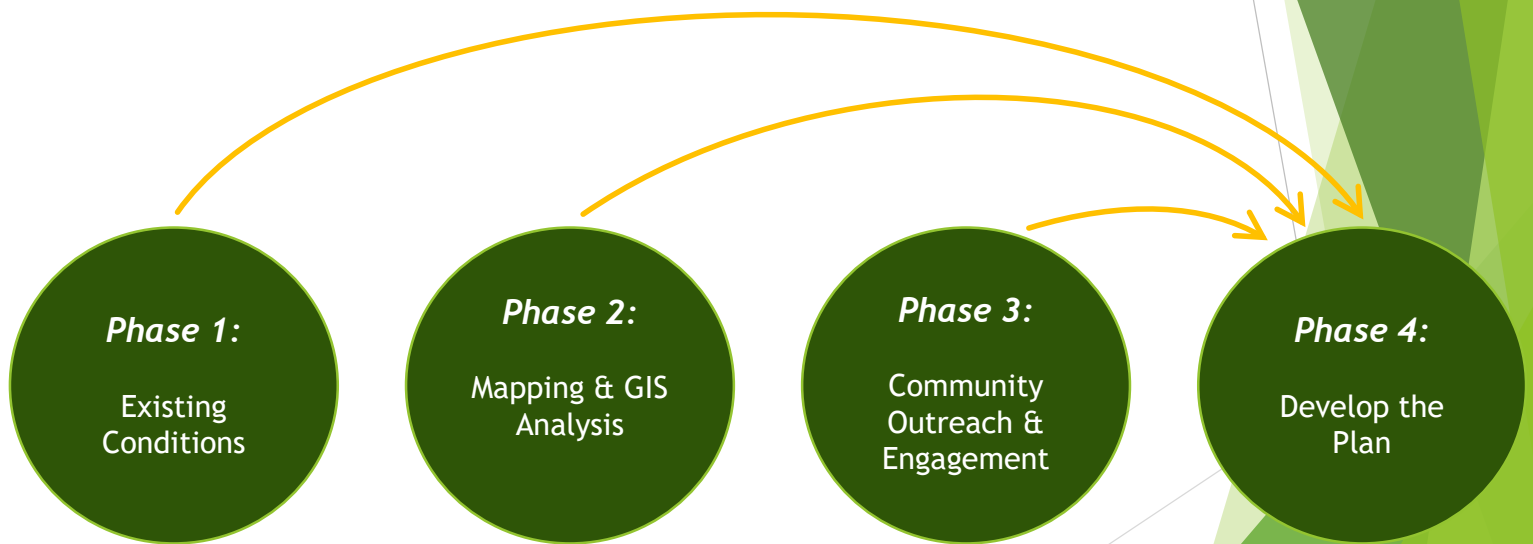
Phase 1:
Existing
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Phase 4:
Plan
Development

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Phase 4: Draft the Plan



Phase 4: Draft the Plan

- ▶ Compiling vs writing
 - ▶ Pulling things forward from each phase of the project
 - ▶ Text & stats
 - ▶ Maps
 - ▶ Data
 - ▶ Feedback



Phase 4: Draft the Plan

- ▶ Compiling vs writing
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 - ▶ Text & stats
 - ▶ Maps
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 - ▶ Actions



Phase 4: Draft the Plan

- ▶ Compiling vs writing
- ▶ Iterative process with Committee
 - ▶ Draft Review Revise Review



Phase 4: Draft the Plan

- ▶ Compiling vs writing
- ▶ Iterative process with Committee
 - ▶ Draft Review Revise Review
- ▶ Include specific Committees/groups for implementation & action items



Phase 4: Draft the Plan

Key takeaways from Plan Development:

- Trust the process will provide everything that's needed
 - More about pulling elements forward than writing everything
- Be conscious about identifying actions throughout
- The process is iterative
- Make sure the right people/Committees review drafts

Key Takeaways from Phases 1-4

Phase 1:

Existing
Conditions

Phase 2:

Mapping & GIS
Analysis

Phase 3:

Community
Outreach &
Engagement

Phase 4:

Develop the
Plan

Key Takeaways from Phases 1-4

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Other Insights and Lessons Learned

► Communicate Consistently & Effectively

- Keep outreach frequent, dynamic, and varied to build trust and transparency.
- Use simple, clear visuals and language to educate and engage.

► Engage Broadly

- Involve as many community groups and partners as possible—boards, schools, recreation groups, landowners, and nonprofits.
- The more people who participate, the stronger the sense of ownership and long-term stewardship.

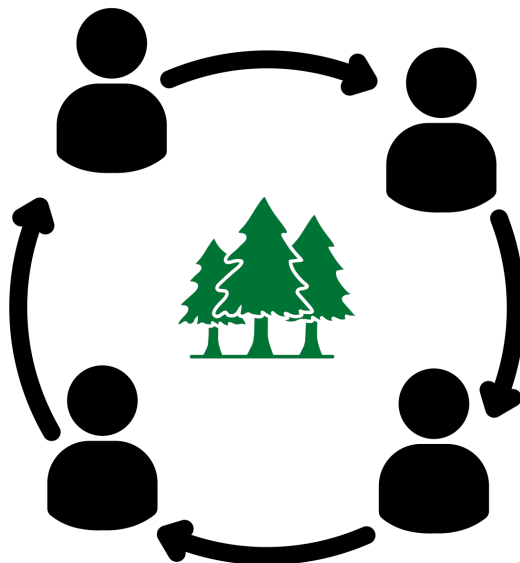
► Scale Your Approach

- Match your engagement and mapping efforts to the project's scale—local, regional, or statewide.
- Larger-scale efforts need broader partnerships and data integration; municipal efforts rely more on direct relationships and local champions.

One big idea...

One big idea...

Cross-boundary municipal planning



Questions



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