

Town & Village of Woodstock, Vermont



Comprehensive Plan 2016
Amended 2020
Amended 2022

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Dedication

The 2016 Town and Village of Woodstock Master Plan is dedicated to all citizens of Woodstock who were flood victims of Tropical Storm Irene in August of 2011 and to those who came to their aid. The destruction from the storm was immense and the task of rebuilding sometimes overwhelming. And yet, the efforts of individuals, families, businesses, and municipal workers from within our community, neighbor to neighbor, was far more powerful.

The many volunteers who helped rescue, clean up and restore shattered lives and property, rose to meet the needs of others unselfishly and tirelessly. Donations of time, money, goods, and services will never replace what was lost. Yet each resident who endured great loss and each resident who reached out to help, represent the spirit and foundation of this great community. You are also the bedrock of our future. Thank you for contributing so much to the Woodstock community.

VILLAGE OF WOODSTOCK

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THE WOODSTOCK PLAN

CERTIFICATION OF ADOPTION

TOWN OF WOODSTOCK

I, Charles F. Degener III, Town Clerk for the Town of Woodstock, in the County of Windsor, State of Vermont, do hereby certify, pursuant to Chapter 117 Title 24 V.S.A. Section 4474, that the required actions were taken by the designated parties with respect to the adoption of the Plan for the Town of Woodstock, of which the attached is a true copy.

Date

Charles Degener

VILLAGE OF WOODSTOCK

I, Donald R. Wheeler, Clerk for the Village of Woodstock, in the County of Windsor, State of Vermont, do hereby certify, pursuant to Chapter 117 Title 24 V.S.A. Section 4474, that the required actions were taken by the designated parties with respect to the adoption of the Plan for the Village of Woodstock, of which the attached is a true copy.

Date

Donald R. Wheeler

PREFACE

The Vermont Planning and Development Act (24.V.S.A. Chapter 17) enables municipalities to guide their future development through implementation of a municipal plan. The Town and Village of Woodstock first took advantage of this enabling legislation 40 years ago. The following is the latest revision of the Plan.

The purpose of this process and of the Plan has been to determine and encourage the appropriate use of all lands in the Town and Village of Woodstock, and to allow development in a manner which promotes and safeguards the health, safety and general welfare of citizens.

Several specific goals and objectives surface repeatedly throughout the Plan, all designed to lead the community to a sustainable future. These are:

1. To encourage a rational pattern of development which underscores the importance of forests, agriculture, and the historical uniqueness of Woodstock, while balancing the needs and demands of residential, recreational, commercial, and light industrial uses,
2. To provide opportunities for residents to have good jobs, affordable housing,
3. To protect soils, water, air, and other natural resources,
4. To protect the public against fires, floods and other natural or man-made dangers, in as efficient a manner as possible,
5. To protect the historic settlement pattern of one main village center and smaller hamlets, surrounded by rural areas,
6. To reinforce and strengthen a longstanding tradition of stewardship of the land, care for neighbors and involvement in affairs of the Village and the Town for the benefit of all.

PLAN PURPOSE

This Plan is a policy statement on growth and development in the Town and Village. Its purpose is to give guidance to the officials, its citizens, and landowners on the appropriate development, improvement and conservation of the Town's physical and human resource.

This Plan is a public policy document. It is an expression of values and vision for growth and management for the duration of the Plan which is five years from the date of adoption. It is not intended to be static and will be periodically revised or updated as is necessary or appropriate. The Woodstock Planning Commission has the primary responsibility for revisions to the Plan to reflect new conditions and needs. Public involvement and participation is, however, a key factor in ensuring that the Plan is reflective of the public interest.

The specific purposes of this Plan are as follows:

1. to gather and analyze data about the existing conditions within the Town, Village, and region;
2. to determine current and broadly anticipate the future land use needs for the citizens of the community;
3. to determine areas most desirable and suitable for development or conservation while encouraging appropriate and efficient expenditures of public and private funds in the process of the development and conservation, and
4. to serve as an official guide for the Town and Village and its citizens to use in meeting the needs for development and conservation, through the delineation of general policies and specific implementation procedures.

This Plan shall be used by the Planning Commission, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, Select Board, Village Trustees, and other municipal officials. Regional Planning Commission and State Agencies, and landowners:

1. As a basis for the evaluation and review of developments, and subdivisions proposed under Town and Village ordinances, including Zoning Regulations, Act 250 (10 V.S.A. Chapter 151), and other land use or permitting programs;
2. For review of proposed local, state, or federal grants, loans, or similar expenditures affecting the Town to ensure that they are compatible with community objectives and policies, and
3. To guide the decisions of neighboring towns, State agencies, and other public entities and to promote coordination of planning and public investments.

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Woodstock is located near the center of Windsor County and comprises an area of 27,384 acres. It is bounded by Pomfret and Hartford to the north, Hartland and West Windsor to the east, Reading to the south, and Bridgewater to the west. The Village occupies 726 acres at the intersection of VT State Routes 12 and 106, and with US Route 4. (GPS: N 43 37'29.8374", W 72 31' 6.6714") It is 15 miles west of White River Junction, VT/Lebanon, NH area and approximately 25 east of Killington. In addition to the Village, the Town has four hamlets or communities - South Woodstock, West Woodstock, Taftsville, and Prosper.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Woodstock's physical setting is one of narrow steep sided valleys typical of areas with a glacial past. Most of the Town is considered part of the Vermont Piedmont, although the southwest corner of the Town is classified as an eastern extremity of the Inter-Mountain Valley Region of the Green Mountains. Steep slopes and shallow soils present development limitations and may have restrictions.

The major water courses in the Town are the Ottauquechee River flowing west to east, through the Town, the Kedron Brook flowing north from Reading, and the Barnard Brook flowing south from Pomfret. They converge in Woodstock Village.

The Village is located on a relatively broad plain, surrounded by rolling hills, of which Mount Tom and Mount Peg are the most notable.

The natural vegetation is dominated by a beech-birch-maple forest. A growing number of sites support red and black spruce, and balsam fir, while lower, warmer and free-draining sites produce more red oak and white pine. Extensive forests, adequate water, and large areas of both cultivated and abandoned pasture provide excellent habitat for many species of wildlife.

CULTURAL HISTORY

The first white settler of Woodstock, Timothy Knox, arrived in the area around 1750. Six years later, his was one of ten families numbering forty-two people and together they set out the Village Green. They chose a triangular form for community pasturage. The Town of Woodstock was chartered in 1761 and by the start of the 19th century it had become the shire town of Windsor County. On November 11, 1836, the General Assembly of the State of Vermont passed an act incorporating the Village of Woodstock.

Businesses sprang up as settlers arrived. There were a wide variety of stores and proprietors to own each in the Village: grocery and clothing stores, gunsmiths, silversmiths, glove makers, a brick maker, cabinet makers, printers, manufactures of musical instruments and a piano factory. But there was always a strong mix of residences and commercial establishments. Woodstock eventually became one of the leading publishing and legal centers of the State. There was a Woodstock Railroad, running regularly from Woodstock to White River Junction, carrying visitors and delicacies, livestock and staples to and from the big cities.

In the 21st century, Woodstock remains a small residential and commercial community, with tourism and hospitality as its two major industries. Its village and hamlets, and surrounding rural landscape, provide varied recreational opportunities and a superior quality of life for its inhabitants and visitors.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The basic form of the Village of Woodstock has not been significantly altered since the early 1800's. Today, abundant greenspace, a variety of historically significant architecture, and adequate municipal facilities create an exceptional environment overall.

The Village has a distinct pattern and quality of settlement which has emerged over time. Its form has been influenced by cultural and social attitudes, as well as natural formations and processes. At one time the hillsides surrounding the Village were predominantly open fields. As farming receded from prominence however, a thick vegetative canopy of second growth trees came into existence. Today, woodlands in association with smaller acreage open fields, vernal pools and fens provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species.

The Village structure represents a development strategy which emerged during an important period in American history. Buildings of historical, architectural and cultural merit date from the late 18th and early 19th centuries. A diversity of traditional architectural styles are represented: post-Colonial, early Federal, and Greek Revival. These are complemented by some Georgian, Gothic Revival, Second Empire, and even Romanesque and Queen Anne Revival buildings.

The villagescape is more than a collection of structures with cultural value. Public and private spaces between these structures are an integral part of the Village form. Private residential grounds create a transition in scale and use from the larger open spaces of the Town. They are characterized by lawns defined further by stone walls, white fences, gates, and ornamental plantings which provide seasonal variety.

The historical land use pattern for areas outside the Village and hamlets convey a rural quality that is consistent with small farming or small timber harvesting operations. Most of today's woodlands are less than 100 years old and are selectively harvested for first growth timber with relatively small equipment. Open lands now used for crop tillage and for hay or pasture are scattered throughout the Town, but generally border the roadway. Tilled areas are generally in valley bottoms and along streams or rivers. Residences in the Town are generally along the roads, but there has been tremendous pressure for a number of years to place homes further into the landscape.

It is estimated that more than 70 percent of privately owned land in the Town is in woodland. Many old fields have been reestablished as forest by both neglect and design, and this trend is continuing.

There are several areas of public woodlands in Woodstock. In the southwest corner are four parcels of the Coolidge State Forest. In this general area, a Town forest is also located. Other forested and open public space areas include Mt. Peg, Billings Park, Faulkner Park, the Green, Vail Field, a town forest near the Vondell Reservoir, and the 550 acres contained within the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park

POPULATION

Historically, Woodstock has had an erratic pattern of permanent population growth. However, it should be noted that in the last decades of the twentieth century and the first decade of the 21st, the non-resident population has been growing and is currently one-third of all taxpaying owners.

In contrast to Windsor County and the State of Vermont as a whole, both of which experienced steady growth in the 90 year period of 1890-1980, Woodstock's population fluctuated minimally in total raw numbers during this same period. The following Table gives evidence of the

fluctuations.

Table I
Woodstock Population Count Trends 1890-2010

Year	Population	Real Change	% Change
1890	2545	0	0
1900	2557	12	0.4
1910	2545	(12)	(0.4)
1920	2370	(175)	(6.8)
1930	2469	99	4.1
1940	2512	43	1.7
1950	2613	101	4.0
1960	2786	173	6.6
1970	2608	(178)	(6.3)
1980	3214	606	23.0
1990	3212	(2)	0
2000	3,232	20	0.6
2010	3048	(184)	(6.0)

Population declines in the first 10 years of this new millennium are expected to stabilize, but significant growth is not anticipated.

HISTORICAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

During the nineteenth century, the Village evolved as a center for the surrounding rural-agricultural community. Its population supported a varied economic base. A grist mill, tannery, lumber yard, and other small manufacturing establishments provided the basis for a relatively large industrial complex for the day. As the shire town and county seat, Woodstock enjoyed an economic strength and prosperity well beyond its size. People of diverse backgrounds and economic levels lived and worked together in what was essentially a self-contained and self-sufficient community.

A variation of that economic structure has taken place over the years until the later part of the twentieth century. In that period and now into the early twenty-first century, few manufacturing operations have persisted. And while the surrounding landscape continues to present an agricultural appearance, very few working dairy farms remain. The economic base is now dominated by the tourist, recreation and hospitality industries, with smaller retail trade and service businesses playing an important role. With new Town-wide business initiatives and the ability for entrepreneurs, agripreneurs, and telecommuting professionals to locate anywhere that high quality communications links and systems exist, the uniqueness of Woodstock will play a role in broadening the economic base anew.

AGRICULTURE



Farming and all related agriculture ventures have played an important role in Woodstock's history. This heritage and way of life will continue to be showcased, protected, and preserved with our directed effort and support. Indeed, the overall quality of life for all residents in Woodstock depends on maintaining a healthy working landscape and agricultural community within town borders. Agriculture and the continued use of the landscape is critically important to the overall image, vitality and character of Woodstock.

Agriculture in Woodstock is still dominated by larger herd dairy farms and managed timber lots. In 2013, there were 4 active, larger herd dairy farms. In addition there are a half dozen smaller scaled beef and dairy operations, vegetable growers, several horse stables and breeders, and a vibrant maple syrup industry. Not unique, but significant, are the large number of recreation and competitive equestrian facilities in town and the area, spurred in part by the Green Mountain Horse Association in South Woodstock.

A significant portion of Woodstock's open land is still in active agricultural use to support these activities. This helps to preserve the town's landscape, and by extension, its tourist and non-agriculture related industries. Our remaining dairy farms continue to crop, hay, or pasture the greatest number of acres in town. Meat producers with their respective haying acreage and pastures, continue to keep land productive as well. Our equestrian facilities also help contribute to additional hay production by themselves or via off-site commercial haying enterprises

The Town should actively encourage the maintenance, protection, and expansion of existing farms and all aspects of its working landscape. It must not inhibit the formation of new agricultural operations. Under current Vermont law, municipalities have limited authority to regulate agricultural practices. While maintaining a position which complies with Vermont law, Woodstock desires to protect farmers from harassment and undue burdens while also protecting adjoining non-agricultural property from substandard and environmentally damaging agricultural practices which are incompatible with health, safety, and the rights for peaceable neighborhood coexistence.

Woodstock supports farming efforts, proper timber and wood lot management, and good land stewardship, regardless of property size. In addition, the Town has and should continue to play an active role in statewide efforts seeking to maximize the potential of the Vermont, and the Town's own special working landscape. Efforts by the Vermont Council on Rural Development, Council on the Future of Vermont, and the Working Landscape Partnership are supported and encouraged. Woodstock residents and organizations have participated actively,

often in leadership roles, in these efforts. The community is grateful to many of its residents who take leadership roles in local and statewide agriculture. This level of involvement must be encouraged to assure a strong future for the Woodstock farm, food and forestry economies.

On the local level, Woodstock agriculture will continue to prosper with the aid of several existing and new initiatives. First, to maintain a strong link to the community, the agriculture sector will need to partner with and follow the leadership of other Woodstock residents, educators, commercial property owners, private landowners, non-farming business/service sector owners, and municipal boards in efforts such as Local First, Farm to School and Farm to Table programs. In exchange, the Town will consider carefully and thoughtfully adjustments to planning and zoning regulations which encourage, broaden and support new forms of agripreneurism, or diversification of on-farm business. In the years ahead it will be important for the Town to amend or create new standards which encourage innovative use for and activity on its' agricultural properties which fit the character of a neighborhood without adding significant burdens to municipal capacities or infrastructure.

Second, as land values increase, so usually do taxes, adding a larger financial burden to Woodstock farmers. Woodstock continues to encourage its farmers and timber lot owners to take part in conservation programs as possible avenues to reduce these burdens. The State's Current Use Value Program, which is already providing tax relief to several Woodstock farmers, remains an important asset to be considered by owners. If taken in a timely manner, this step may help Woodstock farmers maintain or expand farm operations and may permit a new generation of farmers to enter the profession for their own, and Woodstock's continued benefit.

This Master Plan also encourages owners of open agricultural and forestry land to consider donating their development rights for agricultural property to a private trust, such as the Vermont Land Trust or Upper Valley Land Trust in order to protect the property in the manner of their choosing. Woodstock will benefit as well as the property owner, resulting in a preserved function and form for generations. Similarly, in the years ahead, Woodstock must be willing to act as the steward for farmland development rights if required. Woodstock may also wish to consider the direct purchase of farmland development rights when the farmland carries an identifiable resource which merits protection for the benefit of the municipality (i.e., important aquifer districts, scenic viewsheds on the Woodstock Village edge, etc.)

Third, Woodstock encourages all its' citizens to volunteer in activities and projects that provide awareness, support and understanding of local agriculture. These could include: Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park and Billings Farm and Museum; 4-H; Sustainable Woodstock; WUHS Horticulture classes.

Similarly, Woodstock schools should continue to incorporate into curricula at all levels, the study of farming, the agricultural heritage of the Town and State, horticulture, and agriculture's vital position in our community for a sustainable future.

Fourth, Woodstock encourages the use of all suitable land for farming and timber management, regardless of size. Woodstock should set up a mechanism for bringing together trained farmers (particularly young farmers and families) with landowners who have land which is idle or who wish to have their land put to a renewed use. Similarly, in order to survive in today's economy, farmers may need to expand their operations to achieve new economies of scale. But, as land is prohibitively expensive for most, using other landowner's parcels may prove a sound economic alternative. Matching the two groups would greatly benefit the Woodstock community.

Conservation Commission may be an existing, organized group in the Town to match, facilitate

and administer this, and other efforts within agriculture. The Commission can provide continued leadership and assistance to the Planning Commission, Board of Selectmen, Board of Trustees and other agencies in discussing, planning and recommending strategies for conserving and utilizing all agricultural lands within the town.

As previously stated, Vermont Current Use programs presently offer some property tax relief for agricultural and forestry lands. A local tax subsidy for agricultural activities is not currently needed. In the event that local tax subsidy programs are found to be desirable, or, if the State Current Use funds become inadequate, Woodstock should conduct studies to evaluate the impact of such programs on tax revenues. Should new programs be needed, individual property eligibility may be evaluated using information available through GIS overlays, or other suitable resources.

ACTION PROGRAM

The following are the identified goals, objectives, and actions. Those implementations with an asterisk are of high priority.

Goal 1 - Maintain a prominent presence for agriculture in the Woodstock community and landscape.

Objective 1.1. Reduce the economic pressure on landowners to convert their farmland to other uses.

Action 1.1.1. Consider the impact of public capital improvements that may increase development pressure on farms and available agricultural lands of all sizes.

Objective 1.2. Ensure that Vermont's Current Use Valuation Program is presented to all landowners who own qualifying parcels which are also suitable for agricultural activities.

Action 1.2.1. Provide all property owners of qualifying parcels with the information they need to make an informed choice about *Current Use*.

Action 1.2.2. Continue official support of *Current Use* by the Town, both locally and through elected officials. If *Current Use* is altered significantly or becomes inadequate to support the Woodstock agricultural community needs/objectives, implement a study to investigate the costs and benefits of a local tax relief program.

Goal 2 - Create awareness, understanding, and support of farm, forestry and rural enterprise based within the Town.

Objective 2.1. Create new and lasting educational forums in public settings for residents and visitors alike to learn the extent, quality, and availability of Woodstock farm products services in the marketplace.

Action 2.1.1. Provide and support field trips to farms and associated industries at the all school levels.

Action 2.1.2. Support existing horticulture curriculum at the secondary school level: look to create new agricultural, and farm to table business opportunities between Woodstock farms and food service professionals within the Supervisory Union.

Action 2.1.3. Support participation in Billings Farm and Museum,

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Park activities.

Action 2.1.4. Support efforts of the Woodstock Chamber of Commerce, Sustainable Woodstock or select other community organizations to promote and/or market Woodstock agriculture.

***Action 2.1.5.** Support programs offered at the Norman Williams Library, Woodstock Historical Society, and other venues which inform residents and visitors of the extent and vitality of Woodstock agriculture.

Goal 3 - Allow for and encourage greater farm related production, processing, and retailing operations.

***Objective 3.1.** Search for opportunities to expand the allowed uses, in a wider selection of commercial and residential zones, for retail sales of Woodstock farm produced merchandise.*

***Action 3.1.1.** Thoughtfully consider amending Town and Village zoning regulations to support sales of agricultural, forestry related products or value-added products from Woodstock enterprises when presented by a property owner.

Goal 4 - Enhance the vitality of farming and on-farm activities.

***Objective 4.1.** Create an environment which encourages the establishment of new agripreneurial activity, the re-establishment of former farm operations, or the expansion of existing farms.*

Action 4.1.1. Utilize a statewide list of Accepted Agricultural Practices (AAP) as a guide to possible new farm activity.

Action 4.1.2. Actively pursue any opportunity to match property owners who wish to increase agricultural uses on their land with existing or new farmers and foresters who can't financially afford or justify outright land purchases in town, yet wish to create new agricultural ventures.

Goal 5 - Minimize the difficulty in establishing new farming operations.

***Objective 5.1.** Create an environment which encourages the establishment of new farm operations or the re-establishment of shuttered farm operations.*

Action 5.1.1. Study the feasibility of a Purchase of Development Rights program under the auspices of the Town.

Action 5.1.2. Encourage donation of development rights for farmland to the Vermont Land Trust, similar organizations, or directly to the Town of Woodstock.

Action 5.1.3. Utilize the expertise of regional and statewide organizations to identify parcels suitable for new farming operations and for matching interested prospective farmers with landowners open to restoring farm operations on these parcels.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES



Woodstock and the surrounding region are demanding more from Woodstock's community facilities and services. As shire town of Windsor County, Woodstock has historically provided educational, cultural, library, and business opportunities for the surrounding region. This role continues as evidenced by the presence of many region-wide activities. Local business people benefit from convenient access, roads that are safe in more weather, police services, sidewalks, and sewage disposal. The tourism and retail industries depend on these quality services and we all benefit from improved parking and public restrooms.

Woodstock's determination to protect the values that make it a nice place to live also places a demand on community services. Woodstock residents contribute to the demand as they constantly seek to improve their standard of living. Public attitudes about access for the disabled, fire department training and water pollution are changing what is considered basic levels of service.

This demand is increasing in ways Woodstock residents cannot always control even though they pay most of the bills. State and federal guidelines for services such as sewage disposal and construction in public buildings mean an increase in local monies needed to support changes. Woodstock has fortunately been helped in efforts to provide community facilities and services by many public-spirited citizens who have donated time and money so visitors and residents can enjoy benefits not normally available in small towns.

Woodstock has to plan for its community facilities and services so they can continue to balance the needs of a region that will continue to experience population growth and economic activity with a rural lifestyle. One requirement that demands continued review is compliance with ADA in our public buildings. Upgrades have been part of building restorations but some situations still have waivers. The Town and Village should develop a plan to hasten the elimination of the need for waivers in public buildings.

Woodstock should continue to evaluate the impact of the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park on specific facilities and services and continue to work with the National Park Service to address the demands which are created.

TOWN HALL

The Woodstock Town Hall is an important part of the community and is projected to fulfill the needs of the community for the foreseeable future. The building houses the offices of the Selectmen, Trustees, Board of Listers, Municipal Manager, Town Clerk, Town Treasurer and the Town Planner/Zoning Administrator. All Municipal Boards meet in the conference room, located on the second floor.

Despite its age the Town Hall is in excellent condition. Many enhancements have been performed over the past years regarding fire safety, accessibility, energy conservation and fuel supply. The Town Hall has operated with a waiver from ADA requirements for some years. This situation should be reviewed and a plan to achieve compliance should be drawn up and enacted.

In 1986 Pentangle ran a successful capital campaign in partnership with the Town of Woodstock to bring the dilapidated and condemned theater (which had opened in 1900 as the Woodstock Opera

House) back to use as the cultural center of Woodstock. The theater is currently in use year-round

for town meetings, school productions, weekly first-run and documentary movies, summer dance and theater camps, political debates music lessons, live performances and community productions. In mid 2013 the film projection equipment was replaced with equipment using a digital hard-drive as the program source for rented media.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

EMERGENCY PLANNING

Emergency service personnel can provide training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) for community members. Classes are regularly scheduled in the high school but other facilities, like churches and the OHC, can also have classes. Non-professionals trained in CPR can improve chances of someone surviving after a cardiac arrest or heart attack. In addition, many public facilities in Woodstock (e.g. the high school, churches, town hall) have defibrillators which can also

improve living after a cardiac arrest. Contact Woodstock Dispatch (457-2337) for additional resources and training information.

DISPATCH AND E911

All Emergency Services are dispatched from the Emergency Services Building located on US Route 4 near the eastern entry to the Village. This 24 hour service, known as Communications, has a direct line to the Vermont E911 center and can receive local calls as well.

VOLUNTEER STAFFING

Three volunteer organizations form the strength and depth of the Emergency Services in the Town and Village of Woodstock. There are some cross memberships but largely they are separate groups.

AMBULANCE SERVICE

Ambulance services are provided by Woodstock Ambulance Service mainly with two vehicles that are replaced on a staggered basis every six years.

FIRE PROTECTION

Fire protection for Woodstock is carried out by two organizations: the Woodstock Fire Department and the South Woodstock Fire Protection Association. Both groups serve under the Fire Chief and both groups respond to all calls.

The Woodstock Fire Department has equipment at the Emergency Services Building and at the West Woodstock satellite. This includes: two pumpers, one pumper/tanker and one rescue truck.

The South Woodstock Fire Protection Association is located on Route 106 in South Woodstock and is a privately-owned and funded volunteer fire department financed by donations by the people of South Woodstock and the surrounding area. The South Woodstock equipment includes a Class A pumper, a 2300 gallon tanker/pumper and one mini-pumper. Within ten years the South Woodstock Fire Protection Association, Inc. will need to replace one truck, the mini pumper, as a major purchase.

Woodstock Fire Department may need to plan for the following:

1. Additional volunteer firefighters,
2. Additional training for new members,
3. Additional volunteer ambulance attendants.

The South Woodstock Fire Protection Association, Inc. would like to increase the number of EMT's and first responders on its force to better serve the area as initial response to medical emergencies within the fire area. A SWFPA rescue squad was created and named the South Woodstock "Jumpers."

It is to Woodstock's advantage to have a South Woodstock Fire Protection Association, Inc. It is hoped that the Woodstock and South Woodstock Fire Protection Association, Inc. will continue to train and work together as they have in recent years.

Woodstock is concerned that homes scattered in the countryside need to be accessible to firefighting and other emergency equipment. A major issue is that during inclement weather steep inaccessible driveways make it difficult, if not impossible, for emergency service vehicles to arrive at the scene.

When asked to comment on Act 250 permits, the Fire Department should respond in a timely manner after considering the combined effect of this permit and the effect of other past and present projects. Residents are encouraged to contact the Fire Department for residential fire safety inspections.

There is a short supply of volunteers to support the fire and ambulance departments in Woodstock. This shortage is not unique to Woodstock, but the problem needs to be addressed. The alternative is a full-time staff at a substantial cost to the community.

Woodstock may wish to consider a retirement fund for emergency volunteers who risk their lives helping others in need. A full-time paid staff alternative would change the nature of the volunteer service and add greatly to municipal costs.

The E911 program has been upgraded within the town, in an effort coordinated with the US Postal Service. All Town residences and commercial buildings have new location identification. (This ID number marks the distance of the driveway from the road origin in thousandths of a mile.) (Residences in the Village were not renumbered as the existing system is considered rational and has lots of history.) This change means that our location format is the same as the one used everywhere else in the state, making it much easier for emergency service personnel (even from another town) to locate homes and businesses. The Town encourages residents to make sure their new E911 numbers are placed in a well maintained visible area.

POLICE

The Village is being served by a Police Chief and four full-time officers. The Town contracts police coverage from the Village force and is served by one officer on daytime assignments and by the

Village duty officer on an emergency basis. Two elected Constables fulfill other assignments.

Additionally, the Windsor County Sheriff's Office in the Village and the Vermont State Police stationed in Bethel are available.

THE WOODSTOCK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

This non-profit organization (a 501C-6) has represented the business community of Woodstock area since its inception in 1949. Over 297 businesses have joined together from Taftsville, Quechee, White River Junction, South Woodstock, Reading, Bridgewater, Killington, Mendon, Barnard, South Royalton, Windsor and Woodstock. Of the member businesses, about 23% are lodging and dining

establishments that benefit from tourism to the galleries and 57% fall into a wide range of services from real estate to psychotherapy. The Chamber markets Woodstock's many attractions state-wide through close relations with the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing. It maintains an extensive website www.woodstockvt.com with a comprehensive community calendar which receives close to 7,000 visits a week from national and international visitors looking for information on the area.

The office includes a full-time Marketing Director and part-time assistant who manage a staff of ten volunteers who greet visitors in the Information Booth on the Green as well as the new Welcome Center with public restrooms on Mechanic Street. A Board of Directors comprised of fifteen business owners supervise the office and are involved in the economic viability of the entire community.

LIBRARY SERVICES

The Norman Williams Library was built in 1883 and is housed in a beautiful pink sandstone building on Woodstock's famous Green. The library, which is to this day, a non-profit corporation, receiving only about a third of its budget from the town, provides the community with the full and complete services of a public library. The mission of the library is to enrich the town's intellectual and cultural life, provide free access to literature and information, to encourage reading, foster the exchange of ideas, and to promote lifelong learning. The library offers stimulating cultural events, book and poetry readings, writing classes, documentary films, art shows and other events. During 2012 alone 71,539 children and adults, patrons and visitors alike, walked through its doors. The library provides the community with both public and private meeting rooms free of charge as well as free internet access. NWPL offers gallery space in the Mezzanine level for Woodstock artists of all ages. It also acts as a venue for local musicians, student and adult alike, and offers many musical programs to the community. NWPL partners and collaborates with local non-profits including Pentangle, Zach's Place, Artistree and the History Center to provide stimulating programs to the community. The library is also a founding member of the Network of Nonprofits.

Electronic services include work stations and a WIFI hot spot. The Library also hosts "Wireless Woodstock" a WIFI service that has expanded beyond the walls into the village.

To maintain a high level of service to the area residents the NWPL seeks:

1. Support for the library in its goal to stay technologically current.
2. Increased financial support for operations from both Woodstock and surrounding towns which comprise the service area.
3. Recognition that the importance of the library as an historic building and assistance in the building maintenance and improvements.
4. Assistance for the library in providing more patron parking.

CEMETERIES

Woodstock has 19 cemeteries of which the following eight are maintained by the Town: Highland, Hendy, Smith, Cushing, Randall, Jacquith, Kendall-Ransom and Shaw Cemetery. The Commissioners are considering taking over the maintenance of four additional small cemeteries. The hilly and rocky terrains of the Highland Cemetery limit the plots available to approximately 20 sites. A possible increase in sites could be attained with plots for cremated remains. Space is available in many of the small cemeteries.

The Riverside Cemetery, located on U.S. Route 4, has sites and land available for the foreseeable future. The Taftsville Cemetery has sites and land available for a projected 40 to 50 years.

There are a number of private cemeteries of varying sizes located throughout Woodstock. One of the larger ones is the River Street Cemetery located in the Village of Woodstock. Although all plots are not yet used, they are all under ownership. At this time there is no available land for expansion of the River Street Cemetery.

Cemetery commissioners are encouraged to maintain municipally owned cemeteries so as to propagate grounds which are neat and orderly.

UTILITIES

ELECTRICAL POWER

Overhead wiring work in 2005 near the Woodstock substation improved the service capability to its present level. GMP currently has no plans for additional upgrades.

The Town should develop a clear understanding of the degree of dependence of the Town upon the transmission line from Taftsville to the Village and alternatively what fraction of normal and peak loads can be supplied by alternate routes.

GMP is in the process of installing “smart meters” throughout the town to its customers. The Town looks forward to energy conservation benefits this technology can provide.

COMMUNICATIONS

POTS (plain old telephone service) is, for all practical purposes, universal within the Town.

Fairpoint has increased coverage of its DSL service but it is not available everywhere in the Town. Comcast cable service is wide spread also but also not universal. Vtel which provides service (POTS) in the western corner of the Town is upgrading service to some areas that may include fiber to the home.

Cable TV, cell phone and broadband internet services are widely available from one or more providers but no current provider offers universal coverage. Vtel has Federal funding to provide universal WIFI Broadband service within Vermont. This coverage will emanate (mostly) from existing cell towers. The tower on Mt Peg will be such a site.

In recent years, cellular telephone towers have become more prolific as cell phone use becomes more commonplace. The providers have located towers to aim their coverage at the Route US 4 corridor. Directional antennae on these towers often provide coverage along the corridor but not for

the space facing away from the corridor. The Town and Village should seek better coverage from the providers holding tower permits. The current zoning requirements for both the Town and Village have sections that govern the permitting of these towers.

The Town, along with twenty two other towns, formed ECFibernet in 2008. Their goal is universal FTTH (fiber to the home) broadband internet and phone service. Tight capital markets delayed their initial start up but they have established service in three towns and will spread to six more in 2013. The Town should continue to support this effort as it will provide the technology with the best current performance and the service most likely to meet future needs.

UTILITY LINES

Woodstock has identified the unsightliness of utility lines as undesirable and proposes that Woodstock encourage Green Mountain Power, Fairpoint, ECFiber and Comcast to run transmission lines along one side of a Town Highway and encourages that all development and subdivisions install underground utilities. Those utility companies responsible for placement of lines are encouraged to involve individual landowners in discussions with municipal officials as early as possible in the planning process so as to avoid delays and adversarial interactions for the parties concerned.

WINDSOR COUNTY BUILDING

The former correctional facility property is owned by Windsor County and is currently being used by the Windsor County Sheriff and Windsor County Courts. Woodstock should keep abreast of developments affecting this property.

WINDSOR COUNTY COURT HOUSE

There are buildings in Woodstock which are uniquely valuable for their historic usage as well as their architecture. When necessary to preserve historic usage, compromises should be reached between renovation and architectural integrity. Methods of reaching such compromises can include zoning variances and special exceptions

At the present, the Windsor County Administration is in the process of upgrading the building to make it ADA compliant and increasing the number of court rooms. Woodstock is opposed to moving the courthouse to another location.

WOODSTOCK AQUEDUCT

Representatives of the Woodstock Aqueduct Company report that facilities are continually being upgraded and expanded to meet increasing demand. A deep well on Route 12 provides water for domestic use, with a one million-gallon well water storage tank as the primary supply located near the Cox Reservoir. Both Cox and Vondell reservoirs are maintained for fire protection and emergency domestic backup but are not part of the daily supply stream.

Fire protection is adequate where hydrants are located along large distribution mains, but is limited by capacity in outlying areas due to smaller pipe sizes. An ongoing effort is underway to transform spurs into loops to help minimize this limitation.

High river currents resulting from Tropical Storm Irene caused damage to the distribution piping. It appears essential that Woodstock should work closely with the Woodstock Aqueduct Company and initiate an analysis of this vital resource and to assure an adequate water supply and modernization of the system, and if water for fire protection cannot be provided by the Woodstock Aqueduct Company, then alternative water supplies should be provided by developers to take care of fire protection needs.

POST OFFICE

The downtown site of the Post Office is adequate for the next five years although there are problems with parking and dock space. The representatives stressed that the Postal Service would work closely with Woodstock to make sure that the site is accessible, attractive and in keeping with the municipal plan. South Woodstock and Taftsville Stations provide needed service to the hamlets and because of the high traffic they perform an unnoted communication function of great importance to the communities.

THE GREEN

Woodstock's famous Village Green is the most distinctive of the many features which have attracted visitors to the area over the years and is constantly enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. The Green is under the supervision of the Village Trustees, and is tended by the Village and Town Highway Departments. The planting and care of its trees have always been the responsibility of an appointed, uncompensated Village Tree Warden. About 20 years ago a program was undertaken to recondition the soil and grass cover. The recent work on Route 4 included drainage improvements to the Green.

The condition of the Green and the Route 4 corridor environment which flows around it is carefully described and analyzed in the Route 4 Corridor Street Tree Master Plan which was prepared by Village Tree Warden. Woodstock strongly supports the Plan and its recommendations for improving the Village Green environment. Woodstock also supports ongoing efforts to assure that the Village Green is brought to a consistent high level of tree and grounds health as evidenced by the elm planting program. This effort has resulted in a line of elms along the northwest edge that is already showing promise. There is concern that the increasing number of events taking place on the Green may adversely impact the soil and grass.

WELCOME CENTER and INFORMATION BOOTH on THE GREEN

The Chamber of Commerce operates the Welcome Center located in the Mechanic Street Parking lot on a year round basis and the Information booth on The Green on a seasonal basis. The Information Booth staff provides a key service for many whose first contact with Woodstock is a stroll on the Green. The Welcome Center also houses public restrooms.

SOLID WASTE

Woodstock is a member of the 11 town Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District which is a municipal corporation, approved by the legislature, whose principal purpose is managing solid waste.

The Solid Waste District offers member towns a means to retain local control of solid waste management. The District gives its members greater ability to negotiate contracts with third parties than they have individually. Currently, Woodstock trash is taken to the Lebanon City landfill directly or by way of the Recycling Center in Hartford. Recycling and household hazardous waste processing is handled by the Hartford Recycling Center under arrangement with the Solid Waste District.

The District owns and has a permit for a new landfill site in Hartland.

RECYCLING

In April of 1991, the Board of Selectmen adopted a recycling and waste disposal ordinance. The ordinance mandates the separation of certain recyclables from the solid waste stream. Generally, glass bottles, plastic milk jugs, clear beverage containers, metal cans, newspapers,

white office paper, cardboard and yard waste are required to be separated by the customer and then disposed of in the proper manner by the trash hauler. The ordinance is enforced through the licensing of the commercial haulers by the Selectmen.

The recycling ordinance has been responsible for over forty percent reduction in the waste carted off to the landfill. That material is now reused in one form or another, thereby reducing our dependence on raw materials.

Recycling of waste products is a very important element in solving the trash disposal problem. Woodstock should continue to work to increase the volume of trash recycled.

PUBLIC WORKS

The Town of Woodstock public works site is located on U.S. Route 4 in the Westerdale section of town. The lot was recently increased to 8.0 acres and is considered adequate for its current use.

The new maintenance building has been in operation for several years and has proven itself to be very beneficial to operations. The old garage is being used for storage. There is also a salt storage shed, a six bay equipment storage shed, a sand pile and gravel pile.

The Village public works garage is located on Mechanic Street in the Village of Woodstock. The building is over 100 years old and is in very poor condition. The Village will need a new, three bay facility within the next five years. A potential site is at the wastewater treatment plant where a foundation already exists. This valuable central village location of the existing garage should be adapted to a higher and better use.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT

The Town of Woodstock owns and operates three Wastewater Treatment Plants. The main plant, located on U.S. Route 4 East, is licensed to treat 450,000 gallons per day (g.p.d.) and is currently treating approximately 280,000 g.p.d. The demand increase over the last 17 years has been 20,000 g.p.d. Available excess capacity should handle any growth for a long time. Upgrades are planned to remove more foreign material from the inflow stream.

The Taftsville Plant is a 10,000 g.p.d. facility located adjacent to the covered bridge in Taftsville. This plant is currently processing in excess of 5,000 g.p.d. and is capable of accepting additional wastewater. There is an additional capacity of 3,000 g.p.d. for which permits may technically be issued. Recent curtailment of infiltration now limits peak inflows to levels below the capacity limit.

The South Woodstock plant is located in the Village of South Woodstock on Route 106. The plant is designed to process 50,000 g.p.d. and is currently treating 5,000 g.p.d. The South Woodstock plant has the capacity to treat an additional 35,000 g.p.d. under current regulations. (The Town is not allowed to accept wastewater in excess of 80% of the design flow.)

The State of Vermont is concerned with groundwater infiltration into the sewer lines, which reduces the capacity of each plant to treat additional wastewater. Woodstock should continue to work to reduce the infiltration of groundwater into the sewer lines of each system.

Expansion to the west has taken place with a four inch, forced main going to the motel construction site on Route US4. The line installed is capable of servicing additional sites through the existing pump station.

PARKING

For the past 30 years, both daylong and short-term parking has been recognized as a serious problem in the Central Business District (CBD) of the Village of Woodstock. In recent years this lack of parking has been greatly exacerbated by: first, the increased number of small shops, offices, stores

and restaurants in the CBD of which a majority are currently tourist-oriented and operated and staffed by persons not living in the Village; second, area population growth; and third, greatly increased tourism. These three demands peak at the same time namely on holidays, summer weekends and throughout foliage season.

Daylong Parking:

Currently, about 110 to 120 vehicles are parked most of the day in unmetered areas of Elm, Central, Pleasant Street, South Street and the north side of North Park Street. The metered parking areas near the CBD are well monitored by the Village Police Department. In 2013, the Frost Mills parking lot (which is located off Pleasant Street, and averages 20-30 vehicles per day with an 80-car capacity at peak use) was sold and is no longer available. A second public parking area, available only when school is not in session, is at Woodstock Elementary School.

Short-term Parking:

In 2004, expansion of the Mechanic Street lot was completed, increasing the capacity from 23 to 34 cars. Fortunately, completion of the Public Restroom did not lower that capacity.

Recent events have altered the degree of “crunch.” These were: several on-street spaces were lost in favor of sight lines when Route 4 was repaved; the Village now rents the Library lot and metered spaces are available there; the economic climate has limited visitor influx. Needless to say, Woodstock needs to plan for the recovery of the third condition.

This lack of parking facilities seriously impacts traffic flow through and in the Village and has a detrimental effect on central business activity and services. It also creates noise, fumes and inconvenience resulting in a reduced quality of life for Villagers and visitors alike. Cooperative planning and implementation by both the business community and the Village and Town will be necessary for a comprehensive solution. Numerous attempts have been undertaken to this end without significant change. It seems important that another attempt be made especially addressing the special needs of peak demand.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY ACT

The Woodstock Area Accessibility Task Force is an ad hoc group working to improve physical access to the buildings in Woodstock for persons with disabilities due to age or circumstance. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires public accommodations (businesses and organizations) to provide goods and services to people with disabilities on an equal basis with the rest of the public. Businesses that serve the public are required to remove architectural barriers when it is “readily achievable” to do so. In 2012 a number of local businesses were cited by the U.S. Attorney’s Office and the Vermont Human Rights Commission for ADA violations. The task force is developing a master plan to address accessibility within the community. The plan will establish priorities, clarify rules, identify the tools and resources to get it done, get a sense of the economic benefits, and effectively educate whole community (businesses and residents) on the issues and the process. This issue has been present in our community for some time, but current complaints and lawsuits have highlighted the need for action.

ACTION PROGRAM

The following are the identified goals, objectives and action steps for resolution. Those Actions with an asterisk are of high priority.

Goal 1 - Maintain the vitality of The Green.

Objective 1.1. Carry out the Route 4 Corridor Street Tree Master Plan.

***Action 1.1.1.** Implement the “Route 4 Corridor Street Tree Master Plan”.

Goal 2 - Render physical improvements to public garage in the Village.

Objective 2.1. Provide a facility to accommodate Village highway maintenance and Construction equipment and facilities.

***Action 2.1.1.** Move Village garage site.

Goal 3 - Maintain public access to Town cemeteries.

Objective 3.1. Maintain public right-of-way to the Town cemetery.

Action 3.1.1. Remove brush and related barriers in the public right-of-way to Town cemeteries.

Goal 4 - Provide an environmentally safe, economically sound method of trash disposal.

Objective 4.1. Recycle trash to the maximum extent possible.

Action 4.1.1. Determine current rate of recycling and materials separation.

***Action 4.1.2.** Promote and encourage recycling and source separation of tin, newspapers, and other items.

Goal 5 - Increase fire safety within Woodstock.

Objective 5.1. Extend hydrant system within Woodstock.

Action 5.1.1. Work with the Woodstock Aqueduct Company to improve the Village hydrant system.

Action 5.1.2. Continue program to locate dry hydrants where needed, notify Fire Department when a pond is constructed.

Objective 5.2. Enlarge firefighting force.

Action 5.2.1. Encourage volunteer firefighting membership to remain at 50 people.

Objective 5.3. Enhanced fire protection for new subdivisions.

Action 5.3.1. In cooperation with the Fire Department consider writing regulations that take into account: a) NFPA formula for water availability; b) year round accessibility for a fire truck; c) an onsite water source.

Goal 6 - Update Town Hall Theatre.

Objective 6.1. Provide adequate facilities for theater programs.

Action 6.1.1. Provide handicapped access to state/dressing rooms and bathroom facilities.

Action 6.1.2. Improve theater lighting and light equipment.

Goal 7 - Support Norman Williams Public Library.

Objective 7.1. Support library services

Action 7.1.1. Increase Town allocation of funds to the library for circulation,

programming and other services.

Action 7.1.2. Allocate funds for technology needed for improvement of public access to library collections.

Action 7.1.3. Help expand WIFI access via Wireless Woodstock.

Goal 8 - Provide ample high quality water supplies.

Objective 8.1. Upgrade the Woodstock Aqueduct Company distribution system.

***Action 8.1.1.** Help facilitate improvements to infrastructure of the water system.

Objective 8.2. Protect aquifers providing water supplies.

Action 8.2.1. Cooperate with WAC in identifying and protecting aquifers which may be needed for future water supplies.

Goal 9 - Minimize pollution from wastewater.

Objective 9.1. Manage the municipal sewage treatment plants so they surpass state Standards

Action 9.1.1. Plan and implement a strategy that will halt unwanted groundwater infiltration into each of the sewer lines.

Action 9.1.2. Plan and implement a strategy to eliminate discharges of untreated wastewater.

Action 9.1.3. Continue compliance with discharge requirements for treated wastewater discharged from the municipal sewage treatment plants.

Goal 10 - Coordinate future construction densities with public sewage treatment capacities.

Objection 10.1. Develop high building densities in areas served by public sewage facilities.

Action 10.1.1. Zone high density uses for areas accessible to sewer lines.

Action 10.1.2. Restrict sewer lines from areas where low densities are to be maintained.

Goal 11 - Minimize unsightly overhead utility lines.

Objective 11.1. Bury and hide utility lines.

Action 11.1.1. Encourage subdivision and development applicants to bury utility lines.

Action 11.1.2. Encourage utilities to lay out rural lines so they are hidden from view.

Goal 12 - Address cellular telephone service coverage

Objective 12.1. Define, then correct current service dead zones.

***Action 12.1.1.** Encourage cell phone operators to maximize antenna coverage from existing towers.

Goal 13 - Improve access to broadband internet service.

Objective 13.1. Define, then correct access to broadband internet service in town.

***Action 13.1.1.** Identify underserved areas and encourage communication companies to enhance service to these areas.

Goal 14 - Maintain and improve U.S. Postal Service for Woodstock.

Objective 14.1. Improve parking and loading areas.

Action 14.1.1. Work closely with U.S. Postal Service and Town/Village officials to ease congestion in and around the Post Office.

Objective 14.2. Support continuation of Postal Service at hamlet Post Offices

**Action 14.2.1. Work with community groups to identify unique needs of hamlet residents.*

Goal 15 - Alleviate parking congestion in the Central Business District

Objective 15.1. Expand the available day-long off-street parking in or near the Central Business District for primary use by business owners and employees.

Action 15.1.1. Develop a plan of action for acquiring and developing land earmarked for parking.

Goal 16 – Educate the public of the need for emergency training

Objective 16.1. Continue CPR training and other workshops

Action 16.1.1. Encourage CPR training at WUHS and other public locations

Goal 17 – To improve accessibility in public accommodations in the community.

Objective 17.1. Increase awareness of the need for accessibility

Action 17.1.1. Establish a town accessibility taskforce.

Action 17.1.2. Complete a survey of public businesses to determine compliance.

**Action 17.1.3. Encourage cooperative solutions for accessibility*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Woodstock must continue to be proactive in determining and guiding economic development in the Town and Village. Consideration is regularly given to how much and what type of development or growth is desirable and where it should occur. Woodstock strives to balance commercial development with the needs of its' existing resident and tourist services base, traditional settlement patterns, and remaining open spaces. Important to this strategy is the recognition that each area within the Village and Town has unique requirements and objectives that must be considered thoughtfully when striving to maintain and build a vibrant, diverse and sustainable economy.

In February of 2010, the Town Select Board and Village Trustees jointly authorized the establishment of the Woodstock Economic Development Commission (EDC). There was consensus that a renewed framework to channel and support existing business and to encourage new activity was needed. Specifically, the EDC was tasked with the following:

1. Encourage and help existing and new businesses to prosper, create jobs, and become more environmentally conscious in their operations,
2. Make this a livable and welcoming community for a diverse, multi-generational population,
3. Improve and make the best use of land, existing buildings and other existing infrastructure,
4. Promote development tools and business services which capitalize on the uniqueness and potential of Woodstock,
5. Identify and utilize the best emerging technologies to facilitate the establishment and growth of local business.

To initiate their efforts, the EDC conducted a survey of Woodstock for-profit businesses to determine the needs of this segment of the business community at that point in time, and to establish targets, benchmarks, and measurements for all future initiatives. The results of this survey were informative and are contributing to an actionable plan within a reasonable time horizon. Together with other community organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Sustainable Woodstock, it is hoped that the EDC will help the community take full advantage of opportunities to broaden our economic base.

A valuable 2012 report prepared by Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission identified other factors, some broader in scope and impact, which will be influencing our local, regional and statewide economies in the next decade. Woodstock will consider and work within these

recommendations as appropriate. Also, the Green Mountain Economic Development Commission (GMEDC) continues to act as a valuable resource to the community, supplying useful data and support to our businesses and entrepreneurs. It is expected the GMEDC will be a strong partner in helping to plan and execute Woodstock's business development efforts in the next five years.

LAYOUT AND ENVIRONMENT

The physical layout of the community with a central village, surrounded by a broader town with small, existing hamlets within those boundaries, necessitates special consideration when future business development is proposed. Each area has a unique personality, character, history, priorities and business opportunity. Woodstock will preserve the existing balance of residential and commercial properties in all zones. Clustering developments should be encouraged whenever possible to retain open spaces between structures.

Within this framework, the Village, Town and the appointed EDC must strive to take at least two important actions over the next five years: 1) support efforts to fully utilize vacant or underutilized properties in the Village, Town or hamlets, and 2) evaluate the need for and suitability of zoning updates, infrastructure improvements or expansions, and other service needs to accommodate sustainable business growth. Improvements and new offerings for high quality, fast and reliable telecommunications systems must be an integral part of any plan or action in all areas of Woodstock.

THE VILLAGE

Two distinct areas with a clear need for economic support and/or reinvigoration exist within Village limits. Both areas, the Central Commercial District and the East End, have different criteria and potential.

Central Commercial District

Traditionally, the economic engine for the Woodstock community has been its Central Commercial District. Historically this may have been fueled by the fact that Woodstock was the county seat. Today, the business of accommodating residents and thousands of visitors in all seasons is paramount. Tourism is one of the greatest economic drivers of business, hospitality services, not-for profits and increasingly, regional agricultural and forest products producers who bring their wares to the central area for sale in farmers markets.

Yet, vacant and under utilized commercial space in the Village is a drain on opportunity and growth for the entire community. Solutions that benefit property owners and merchants can be found so that occupancy rates remain high and turnover minimized.

Woodstock is concerned with changes that might influence the character of the commercial district of the Village of Woodstock. Further commercial expansion in central business area must be sensitive to the needs and demands for parking, open space and existing settlement patterns. Infrastructure improvements and upgrades must be addressed. It is important that the Village encourage expansion of commerce through infill in the current districts in preference to strip development.

East End

A group of properties situated in the East End area of the Village offer a second, much greater opportunity for revitalization. While this may have been the case for any number of years, significant opportunities may exist to finally initiate and complete positive action. It is an entirely suitable area for development. A considerable amount of time and effort has already been spent on the first phases of creating a riverfront park on the land owned by the Village in

this area. It is

expected that this park will be a cornerstone for future property development and revitalization of adjacent and surrounding parcels.

Parcels within the East End area are situated at an entrance to the Village and border along Route 4. These parcels are all serviced by Woodstock Aqueduct Company, a privately owned water company, and a public sewer system. Portions of this land have been developed into business and retail establishments, each of which has individual access onto Route 4. A considerable amount of open land to the north and west of Route 4 is adjacent to the floodplain and considered marginal, but possible, for development. Concerns relative to the future use of this area center around:

1. The physical limitations of the water company to support further commercial development;
2. The increase of strip development adding to further traffic congestion and haphazard growth of the East End;
3. The expansion of commercialism, which threatens the aesthetic beauty and creates a loss of open space to the entrance of the Village;
4. Acknowledgement of the historical value of former railroad buildings and structures, and how these may be retained or showcased in any new designs.

THE TOWN

The Town of Woodstock should use the next five years to evaluate the suitability and availability of additional parcels of land to accommodate business expansion. Due to the geographical limitations of the river basin, intersecting streams and brooks, the desire to preserve agricultural land, and the intent to participate in regional efforts to maintain or enhance wildlife corridors, among other important initiatives, this effort will not be an easy task. Nonetheless, from an economic development strategy perspective, it is imperative that the Town find new locations in which local businesses might expand, thereby providing commercial viability and employment opportunities.

Woodstock should seek out and rezone land where necessary to allow existing clean, light industries and business of a non-retail nature to expand. This may also encourage new businesses to move into the area. To maximize the opportunity for use of these designated areas as well as protecting the fragile river basin environment, Woodstock should consider providing sewer line extensions into the identified districts. Any further economic development should continue to adhere to all aspects of existing zoning regulations. Clustering is encouraged to retain open space.

South Woodstock

Any commercial designation of South Woodstock must not be detrimental to this historic village/hamlet district. Retail commerce, in terms of the existence of the inns, country store, and garage, is regarded as sufficient, but provisions should be made for non-retail activity.

The importance of the country store as a community center must be recognized and every effort made to continue its existence. Continued support of the Post Office is also critical to the economic health and civic vitality of the hamlet.

South Woodstock is encouraged to apply for a Village Center Designation so it may have the opportunity to apply for grant funding that can be made available under the program.

West Woodstock

There is need for more affordable retail commercial space, especially to serve the local community. Woodstock should consider revising the Light Commercial/Light Industrial zone to allow for expanded commercial use. Progress on installing safe bicycle and pedestrian paths to and from commercial zones to the schools and nearby residential neighborhoods, with a possible extension to Senior Lane, has been slowed in recent years, but should be reinvigorated.

Taftsville

In 1997, a Residential/Office District was established to allow office use for property located along the south side of Route 4.

As with South Woodstock, the importance of the country store as a community center must be recognized and every effort made to continue its existence. Continued support of the Post Office is also critical to the economic health and civic vitality of the hamlet.

Taftsville is encouraged to apply for a Village Center Designation so it may have the opportunity to apply for grant funding that can be made available under the program.

BUSINESS CLASSIFICATIONS DESERVING SPECIAL NOTE

Home Enterprise

Woodstock encourages entrepreneurial activity in the rural area. The Home Enterprise designation in the Zoning Regulations provides an opportunity for such activity. In an effort to preserve open space while allowing for economic development in the rural district, this designation can protect residential land, provide property owners with reasonable use of their properties for commerce, and offer employment opportunities. The EDC is encouraged to reach out and bring more of these types of businesses to Woodstock

Home Occupation

Woodstock does not encourage businesses of size in residential areas. However, the operation of a home occupation in owner-occupied residences is allowable in many zones. This designation will continue to be available in the future. And, providing that improvements to communications technologies and other business-to-business services can continue, there is no reason that home occupations cannot play an increasingly important role in the economic diversity and sustainability efforts being made throughout Woodstock.

Bed & Breakfast

Woodstock has long recognized that Bed and Breakfast establishments are an integral part of our community. Over twenty years ago, the proliferation of bed and breakfasts/tourist homes was seen as a problem requiring limitations to help maintain the character of residential neighborhoods. Woodstock should review the regulations in the current competitive climate, and in consideration of new opportunities for homeowners to connect with visitors via internet connections and services, to assure that the balance between the rights of residences and those of fully permitted bed and breakfast operations are maintained.

Inn District

Specific zoning districts exist for some hotels/inns. These will be maintained into the future. Inn districts are often in close proximity to zoned residential districts and therefore require open, thoughtful, and thorough reviews by Town and Village officials or appointed boards when expansions, permitted uses or proposed activities are presented.

Our hospitality industry businesses contribute immeasurably to the vitality and economic

strength of the community. The Woodstock Resort and Spa, and all of its related services for example, is and remains an invaluable community partner. This plan encourages them to continue their active participation in our community.

Woodstock Village Center Designation

The Village Center Designation program was first approved by the State in May 2006 and renewed in 2011. A map of the designated area is displayed on the following page. Participation in the Vermont Village Center Designation Program provides benefits to businesses located within the designated boundary.

This program offers tax credits for the revitalization of buildings within the designated areas, which is beneficial to existing commercial landowners within the designated area and the designated village receives priority consideration for some state grants (see text box at right for a list of the benefits).

Vermont's Downtown and Village Center tax credit program is one of the primary benefits of Downtown and Village Center designation, and supports revitalization seen in community centers across the state. In 2016 for example, \$2,200,000 in state income tax credits are available to projects that enhance the historic character and improve building safety of older and historic commercial buildings in these designated communities. The credits support general rehabilitation work, code compliance work, data and network wiring, and exterior improvements and may be combined with the federal program.

The residents of Woodstock recognize the economic importance of their Village Center; therefore, in order to continue access to these benefits for the commercial landowners and the village, it is the intention of the Town to continue to participate in the Village Center Designation program.

Being a designated village supports the traditional Vermont development pattern of a compact village center surrounded by rural countryside, as well as the Town Plan's goals of continuing to support historical, economic and land use patterns of Woodstock itself.

ACTION PROGRAM

The following are identified goals, objectives, and actions for resolution within the scope of this Plan. Those action items with an asterisk are of high priority.

Goal 1 - Plan and implement strategies for sustainable economic development and job creation.

Objective 1.1. Support the Woodstock Economic Development Commission in its' efforts to strengthen and grow a strong, dynamic, and diverse business base in Woodstock.

***Action 1.1.1.** Ask the EDC to develop a working strategic plan for the Village and Town which addresses current issues, but also establishes a planned direction forward with attainable and measurable goals.

Action 1.1.2. Support the hiring of an Executive Director of the EDC.

***Action 1.3.5.** Encourage alternative energy development that is in keeping with all regulations.

Action 1.3.6. Support energy conservation efforts by business.

Action 1.3.7. Support new or enhanced sewer line extensions, particularly to clustered business development

Goal 2 - Promote Woodstock as a great place for business, to reside, and to visit.

Objective 2.1. Create new media and new marketing efforts to herald the opportunity and potential to do business in Woodstock.

Action 2.1.1. Under the leadership of the EDC, support collaborations between all local and regional business development organizations or authorities to increase the exposure of Woodstock in all appropriate media outlets with targeted outreach efforts.

Action 2.1.2. With community and business input, routinely update the Woodstock website.

Goal 3 - Expect high occupancy rates for commercial properties in the Central Commercial zone.

Objective 3.1. Consider all strategies to achieve full occupancy of all available commercial rental space in the core business zones of the Village.

Action 3.1.1. Ask the EDC to mediate regular discussions between owners of properties, lessors, and related third parties aimed at identifying issues and trends which are negatively or positively impacting commercial occupancy rates in the Village.

Goal 4 - Protect and maintain the integrity of business opportunity in South Woodstock.

Objective 4.1. Maintain the present commercial/residential mix in the Village of South Woodstock.

Action 4.1.1. Continue the zoning district for Inns.

***Action 4.1.2.** Participate in efforts that support and strengthen the economic health or viability of the South Woodstock Store and Post Office.

Action 4.1.3. Only consider non-retail commercial operations proposals in rural districts that will reflect and maintain the existing character of the neighborhoods.

Action 8.1.4. Encourage South Woodstock to apply for the Village Center Designation to further the goals identified in this section and in the Town Plan.

Goal 5 - Prevent haphazard growth of commerce and congestion along public rights-of-way or that results in random strip development.

Objective 5.1. Minimize ingress from and egress to State highways.

Action 5.1.1. Permit clustered commercial development with limited and controlled access routes.

Goal 6 - Allow for the orderly development of the East End Commercial Districts.

Objective 6.1. Improve the vehicular and pedestrian interface while maximizing the potential for growth and development.

Action 6.1.1. Work with State Transportation authorities to explore ways to improve vehicular traffic flow at Richmond Corners, and to provide walking and/or bike paths from the Central Village to the East End.

Action 6.1.2. Address public safety, noise and light pollution, and other community concerns associated with development or improvements to the area.

Objective 6.2. *Improve or update all connections from the existing Central Commercial business district to any new East End commercial development.*

***Action 6.2.1.** Provide walking and/or bike paths between and throughout commercial districts in the East End.

Action 6.2.2. Work with the Woodstock Aqueduct Company, regional electrical power, communications, and internet technology providers to improve or upgrade all connections and service needs.

Objective 6.3. *Capitalize on efforts to improve and transform Village-owned property in the area.*

***Action 6.3.1.** Participate in the design, implementation and on-going maintenance of a riverfront community park on Village land including the relocation of the Village snow dump.

Goal 7 - Allow for the orderly development of West Woodstock commercial districts.

Objective 7.1. *Improve traffic flow and manage potential growth and development.*

Action 7.1.1. Work with State Transportation authorities to explore ways to improve vehicular traffic flow in the area.

Action 7.1.2. Address public safety, noise and light pollution, and other community concerns associated with development or improvements.

Objective 7.2. *Improve or update all connections from the existing Central Commercial business district to West Woodstock commercial developments and the WUHSMS campus.*

***Action 7.2.1.** Continue to plan for the construction of safe walking and/or bike paths between the Central business district of the Village, to West Woodstock businesses, and the WUHSMS campus.

Action 7.2.2. Work with the Woodstock Aqueduct Company, regional electrical power, communications, and internet technology providers to improve or upgrade all connections and service needs.

Goal 8 - Protect and maintain the integrity of business opportunity in the hamlet of Taftsville.

Objective 8.1. *New retail business development and operations are not appropriate near or in the hamlet.*

Action 8.1.1. Continue the zoning district for Inns.

***Action 8.1.2.** Participate in efforts that support and strengthen the economic health or viability of the Taftsville Country Store and Post Office.

Action 8.1.3. Only consider non-retail commercial operations proposals in rural districts that will reflect and maintain the existing character of the neighborhoods.

Action 8.1.4. Encourage Taftsville to apply for the Village Center Designation to further the goals identified in this section and in the Town Plan.

Goal 9 - Anticipate increased demand for vehicular parking to support business growth, larger business employee populations, residents, and visitors to the Town and Village.

Objective 9.1. *Concurrent with business development and growth, there will be a need for parking, safe walking routes, or transportation services.*

***Action 9.1.1.** Continue to evaluate park and ride, ride share, shuttle parking lot possibilities within the Town and seasonal transportation options within the Village.

***Action 9.1.2.** Acquire either by lease or purchase additional village parking spaces.

***Action 9.1.3.** Work with downtown enterprises to efficiently or thoroughly utilize existing parking options, as well as to analyze future needs.

***Action 9.1.4.** Enhance and improve the condition and existence of safe walking and bicycling routes, particularly throughout and between higher density zones in the Town and Village.

Action 9.1.5. Identify new or expanded tour bus parking options.

Goal 10 - Support State programs that help property and business owners in financing upgrades to Village businesses and structures.

***Objective 10.1.** Help maintain historic structures and provide for code and technology improvements to Village Center businesses.*

Action 10.1.1. Work with the State and TRORC to review and renew the Village Center Designation every five years.

Action 10.1.2. Educate local Chamber of Commerce, property owners, and businesses of Village Center Designation benefits.

EDUCATION



EDUCATION

The quality of Woodstock’s public schools is critical to the fabric and future of the town as well as the school’s constituent communities. The Windsor Central Modified Unified Union School District (WCMUUSD), which administers the public schools serving Woodstock—the Woodstock Elementary School (WES) and the Woodstock Union High School & Middle School (WUHSMS)—is facing significant challenges that must be addressed directly and aggressively in order to ensure that the town’s students receive the best possible education and that the town remains an attractive destination for families with school-aged children.

Woodstock has historically had an excellent educational program but this has been compromised in recent years by challenges that are currently facing many Vermont schools. Statewide property taxes for school funding implemented in 1998 have effectively limited investment for local education in “sending towns.” Demographic changes and increased housing costs have affected enrollment at our schools, but a statewide mandate to merge schools has led to increased enrollment from area towns, tuition students and school choice keeping overall population relatively steady.

Restoring the academic excellence that has historically been a hallmark of Woodstock is the single most important issue for the long term viability and vibrancy of our community. This is an ambitious and necessary undertaking. It is imperative for the children currently in our community and for their children. The cost of doing nothing will be substantial to the Town in the form of lower property values and tax base as people leave town in search of better school facilities.

Windsor Central Modified Unified Union School District (WCMUUSD)

The Windsor Central Modified Unified Union School District encompasses the towns of Barnard, Bridgewater, Killington, Plymouth, Pomfret, Reading, and Woodstock and includes WUHSMS and associated elementary schools. The WCMUUSD School Board oversees all of the schools and member towns approve one budget for all schools.

There are currently serious deficiencies within the school district and particularly at the WUHSMS—many of which are exasperated by the broader challenges—that demand deliberate and urgent intervention. Our schools should be a magnet which brings families to our

community, when in fact they do just the opposite. Many families, particularly those with higher performing students, are actually pulling them out of our schools. The town must take immediate action to address issues with the WUHSMS facilities, academic performance, and social and behavioral concerns.

The WCMUUSD school board and administration have begun to take some action to address these issues, including the adoption of a new Strategic Plan in 2019. These efforts must be expanded, and implementation timeframes need to be established.

Woodstock Elementary School (WES)

The WES has served the children of Woodstock at the present site since 1957. The school currently serves students from Woodstock, Pomfret, Bridgewater, and Reading in grades Pre-K through Grade 6. The school has historically had enrollments as high as 390. With the increased enrollment from neighboring district towns and an increase in academic programs, the WES facilities are approaching their ideal capacity.

WES School Population*

<u>Class/Year</u>	<u>PreK</u>	<u>K</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>Total</u>
'04-05	0	21	31	27	27	28	25	41	200
'09-10	0	27	28	29	26	28	22	36	196
'14-15	1	15	22	24	34	16	34	30	176
'18-19	47	21	26	28	23	25	27	36	233
'19-20	19	37	28	40	38	38	37	44	281

('18-20 reflects additional students from Pomfret, '19-20 additional students from Reading)

* '03-19 Stats from Vermont Agency of Education
'19-20 Stats from Windsor Central Supervisory Union

WES continues to provide a wide array of programs to enrich and support student learning across the spectrum. The school offers Art, Library, Music, Physical Education, and STEM lab to all K-6 students. The STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) Lab and Makerspace is an exploratory learning space that strives to infuse the STEM disciplines into the broader curriculum. In the 2019-2020 academic year, Spanish instruction was reduced from a school-wide instruction to [grades 3-6]. WES also has an Educational Support Team (EST) to assist teachers with the classroom accommodations and remedial services for children with educational or emotional needs. The school also has a dedicated staff member for behavioral and emotional support.

Community involvement is very high. Parents and other community members volunteer time on a regular basis, and the PTO is active in fundraising for the school. In 2012 a new outdoor playground and learning areas were built with funds raised privately.

In 2011-12 Woodstock Elementary School completed a Safe Routes to School assessment program which encouraged offsite solutions to making the community more accessible to walkers and bikers. Fund-raising for improvements to the playground is underway in 2019-2020. Woodstock encourages the Elementary School to maintain a village location.

WES has deferred maintenance issues. The school recently failed routine lead tests conducted by the State of Vermont. Out of 28 taps sampled, 12 taps had levels at or above the action level.

Most (9) were at 4-5 ppb. 2 at 6-7 ppb. and 1 at 11ppb.

WES Pre-K

The Woodstock Elementary School Pre-K is an inclusive, play-based program serving families of young children ages 3-5 in Woodstock, Vermont and its surrounding communities. They are part of a network of quality programs in the Windsor Central Supervisory Union that serve families in the district. The program was full for the 2019-2020 school year and they needed to turn away children from the town. The school is currently considering increasing the capacity of the Pre-K program which needs to be balanced with the space needs of the Elementary School.

After School Program (ASP)

The After School Program (ASP) at WES serves children from the Woodstock Elementary School. They provide childcare for children in grades Pre-K through 6th grade. The program runs from 2:50-5:30 everyday school is in session. The goal of the ASP is to provide a safe, happy, warm environment where the children can enjoy a healthy snack and have both structured and free-play time in and outdoors. For the 2019-20 school year, ASP was full and needed to turn away students.

Woodstock Union High School & Middle School (WUHSMS)

The WUHSMS serves as the public middle and high school for students from Barnard, Bridgewater, Killington, Plymouth, Pomfret, Reading, and Woodstock, and also accepts tuition students from other towns.

While the WUHSMS has a long and proud history and continues to produce many successful students, there are some clear and urgent problems that must be addressed through the full implementation of the newly-adopted (2019) 21st Century Master Plan and other measures.

Middle/High School Population*

<u>Class/Year</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>Total</u>
'04-05	112	96	115	108	98	98	419
'09-10	86	92	102	96	101	109	408
'14-15	70	75	73	93	107	74	347
'18-19	79	60	104	98	88	72	362
'19-20	74	73	80	98	92	78	348

(Of the 887 students, 2020 (PreK - 12), 112 are tuition students and 9 are school choice students)

* '03-19 Stats from Vermont Agency of Education
'19-20 Stats from Windsor Central Supervisory Union

Facilities:

In 2017 a parent-driven, privately-funded study by the architectural firm Lavalee/Brensinger determined the WUHSMS building to be at or beyond its useful life and spending additional funds to maintain existing systems was no longer cost effective. The building is 60-plus years old and fails to meet health and safety codes in a host of critical areas. The building does not fulfill ADA requirements, it does not meet snow load or seismic code, the air quality tests “poor”, and fire suppression operates in only parts of the structure. Aesthetically, the building

has limited natural light, low ceilings, and outdated furnishings throughout.

According to a recent analysis by the Harvard School of Public Health, a healthy, safe, and well-designed learning environment can have broad and far-reaching positive impacts. “The evidence is unambiguous, the school building is as important as any other factor in academic achievement and student health,” and the impact of moving students to a school building that meets 21st Century criteria is “measurable and immediate.” The report notes that these impacts extend beyond academic achievement, and include mental health, physical health, safety and security, substance abuse, and even extracurricular involvement.

The campus currently has a football field and other athletic fields, as well as a privately funded ice hockey rink. Some athletic facilities are not equal to other towns in our division, especially lacrosse fields, basketball courts and the lack of a track. Despite these deficiencies, our athletic teams are competitive at a state level.

In 2019 at the recommendation of the Campus Configuration Committee, the school board voted to investigate financing options for implementing the recommendations of the 21st Century Master Plan; rebuilding the Middle and High School buildings. The school will need significant help generating support for replacing the building and navigating the challenging education funding environment.

Beyond the facilities, there are several significant areas of concern that need to be addressed if the town hopes to not only retain, but attract new families to our community.

Academics

In US News and World Report’s 2018 rankings of public high schools, Woodstock Union High School ranked 17th in the State of Vermont out of 54 eligible schools, and 3,826th nationally, out of more than 17,000 schools. The Woodstock Union High School “Math and Reading Performance” was just under the 78th percentile nationally in the US News’ rankings, or 12,760 out of 17,425 high schools. The Hanover High School ranking, an alternative to families looking to relocate to the Upper Valley, ranks 238.

College enrollment rates stated in the WUHS High School Profile 2020 are as follows:

Class of	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total %	72	78	75	75	76

Woodstock Union High School offers various courses, programs, and learning opportunities on site and outside of the school that allow students to demonstrate achievement toward the Woodstock graduation requirements. Students may also design their own learning opportunities toward graduation as long as they meet the criteria for graduation. Programs include the C3 (Center for Community Connections), Hartford Career and Technology Center, Virtual High School (online learning) and programs at Vermont colleges and Dartmouth College.

Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey Report

Per the 2017 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey Report, 49% of Woodstock High School students have used tobacco vaping products versus the state average of 34%; 47% have used marijuana versus the state average of 37%; 7% have used cocaine versus the state average of 4%; and 31% of Woodstock students have been offered, sold or given illegal drugs while at school, versus the state average of 15%.

Act 60

Woodstock continues to suffer financially under ACT 60. The implications are increasingly critical to the town as it looks to find funding for the new Middle/High School building, among other projects the town must address. ACT 60, passed in 1997, redistributes education tax dollars from towns like Woodstock, with above average property tax bases to towns within the state that have average or below average property tax bases. For FY20, Woodstock sent \$13.64 million to the state in education tax dollars and received back \$6.37 million (\$2.70m to MS/HS and \$3.67m to WCMUUSD) to fund our school expenses, i.e. in 2020 alone, Woodstock effectively gave \$7.27 million to the rest of the state.

In terms of funding the new building, estimated to cost \$50-\$70 million, the State of Vermont has indicated that it cannot provide financial assistance. The School Board is looking at financing this project through public and private fundraising in combination with a bond which must be approved by voters in all district towns and will increase local taxes. Funding for capital expenditure is exempt from the Act 60 multiplier, but any increase will exacerbate the housing affordability issue the town currently faces. How this building is funded will have an impact on the entire town, in addition to the School Board, residents of the school district must be fully engaged in this process.

ACTION PLAN

Goal 1 - Fully support the funding and construction of a new Middle School and High School per the recommendations outlined in the 21st Century School Master Plan.

A. The Select Board should form a School Action Working Group composed of elected town officials, School Board members, active community members and others with interest and expertise, who can focus on the funding of a new building.

B. The School Action Working Group should obtain legal advice, from counsel with expertise in Vermont's school funding mechanisms, to help the Town understand its options. This expert will inform, assess and assist the School Board's efforts to effectively finance a new building and build public support for this project. The following specific questions are a start and an expert will likely have further areas to explore;

- 1.** Does the state have any legal obligation to fund, in total or part, a new school building when the current building has exceeded its useful life and fails to meet numerous code requirements?
- 2.** If there is no obligation to fund, is it possible that the need to rebuild a school can lower the amount of money Woodstock must share with the State for education?
- 3.** If a bond is required to fund this infrastructure project, does the State have any legal obligation to participate with the Town in the financing expense?

Goal 2 - Improve the Academic Performance and Ranking of Woodstock Schools

A. The Planning Commission recommends that an independent education expert be engaged to help identify the issues that need to be addressed, and provide options for dealing with academic and behavioral issues. Specifically this person would provide the following:

- 1.** An assessment and recommendation in regard to the School Board's Strategic Plan for improving student performance. This would include an evaluation of the resources requested, the costs to be incurred, the implementation timeframes, and the metrics for evaluating success against the strategy.

2. An assessment of each school's administrative staff (WES) and WUHSMS), including an assessment of their policies and practices for evaluating and managing their classroom teachers and specialists.
3. An assessment of teaching staff and their classroom practices. This will require the consultant to spend time in each classroom.

B. The consultant would work closely with the school board, superintendent, the principal and teachers. However, to assure independence, it is important that the consultant report directly to the Select Board.

C. The successful implementation of the recommendations laid out in this chapter requires finding and retaining the best leadership possible.

Goal 3 - Reduce Substance Abuse Issues in the School

A. The Select Board should recommend that the District hire an independent consultant to interview students, teachers, and administration and assess current uses of illegal and dangerous substances, including tobacco, alcohol, vaping products, and illegal drugs. The consultant should compare our district's use rates with state and national averages, and identify causes of problematic levels of use and abuse.

B. The Select Board should recommend that the District dedicate funds for Substance Abuse and Drug Counseling training for all behavioral counselors at the middle and high schools.

C. The Select Board should convene a Community Substance Abuse Task Force to address the substance abuse problem that exists in our schools. The Task Force should include parents, teachers, a substance abuse specialist, a representative of the Police Department, and a representative from the Ottawaquechee Health Center.

Goal 4 - Address the crippling effect of Act 60 on our Town's ability to maintain critical infrastructure

- A.** The Town needs to urge its elected state representatives to push for changes to the financial obligations of ACT 60. The taxes required to fund school operations at a basic level, when factoring in the Act 60 multiplier it is difficult or impossible to maintain existing Town assets, let alone improve them.

Goal 5 – Broaden access to higher education and vocational training opportunities.

- A.** Existing opportunities should be expanded to improve community access issues and reduce opportunity gaps.

ENERGY



Purpose

Energy is a vital factor in the economic, environmental, and social well-being of our community. Energy from various sources, including petroleum-based “fossil” fuels (oils, gas, coal, etc.), biomass (wood, pellets, etc.), renewable (solar, wind, hydro, etc.), and electricity generated from these sources is required to heat buildings, run transportation, power industry, light the dark, and perform most of the functions of daily life.

Energy is a major component of the costs of living, and costs are increasing. The sources of most of our energy are imported either domestically or from other parts of the country, or from foreign countries, often adding to global political instability. Our current generation and use of energy has significant negative impacts on the environment, including air quality, natural habitat and land use. The use of fossil fuels in particular, in adding carbon to the atmosphere, is contributing to accelerated global climate change and poses a serious threat to our environment. Our current pattern of energy use is not sustainable in the long term.

The production of energy is global in scope and therefore out of the direct control of residents of Woodstock. This Plan, however, calls for action where it can be achieved, in anticipation that local actions can precipitate global change. This Plan also supports the goals that the State of Vermont has set out in its Comprehensive Energy Plan.

(http://publicservicedept.vermont.gov/publications/energy_plan/2011_plan)

It is in the best interest of all residents of the Town, for economic, health and environmental reasons, that we reduce the amount of energy per capita that we use, and that we limit and work toward the reduction of the use of fossil fuels and energy generated from these sources. The overall purpose of this section of the Town Plan is to promote energy efficiency and energy conservation, limit the use of carbon-based fossil fuels, and encourage the development and use of renewable energy sources among the Town’s residents, businesses, educational and municipal affairs.

Current Conditions

Woodstock, like the region and the state, relies on a variety of sources for energy, the vast majority of which are imported, either domestically or from other countries. Recent trends include an increase use of natural gas, and a slower rate of increase in renewable sources such as solar, wind, and biofuels. Usage of energy is dominated in our region by the demands for transportation fuel and heating for buildings.

For a more detailed description of energy generation, usage and trends, refer to documents published by the Two Rivers Regional Planning Commission (<http://trorc.org/pubs.html>), the State of Vermont and other sources (<http://www.eia.gov/beta/state/?sid=VT>).

ACTION PLAN

Goal 1 - Reduce energy consumption for residents, businesses, schools and the municipality through energy efficiency and conservation.

Objective 1.1. *Increase conservation and energy efficiency for existing buildings, alterations to existing buildings, and new construction.*

Action 1.1.1. Require confirmation of compliance with all applicable State Energy code for Town/Village building permits.

Action 1.1.2. Periodically review Town and Village regulations for conflicts with building energy goals.

Action 1.1.3. Increase the energy efficiency of existing Town and Village owned buildings and implement energy conservation methods in municipal facilities.

Action 1.1.4. Encourage all buildings to meet LEED standards.

Objective 1.2. *Reduce the use of non-renewable energy for transportation.*

Action 1.2.1. Reduce the mileage driven by Town and Village vehicles.

Action 1.2.2. Implement a program of vehicle maintenance and purchasing to maximize fuel efficiency of municipal vehicles.

Action 1.2.3. Establish and enforce regulations to limit engine idling for all vehicles.

Action 1.2.4. Improve the safety and convenience of sidewalks and other facilities to facilitate pedestrian traffic.

Action 1.2.5. Develop infrastructure to facilitate bicycle traffic including bicycle racks in public locations.

Action 1.2.6. Encourage the development of town-wide broadband internet connection to provide an alternative to energy-consumptive physical travel.

***Action 1.2.7.** Provide a location for a regional Park and Ride.

Action 1.2.8. Pursue alternate solutions for village parking to replace Frost Mills.

***Action 1.2.9.** Engage regional transportation authorities and transportation providers to bring bus service to Woodstock with connections to the Upper Valley and points beyond.

Objective 1.3. *Establish land use policies that will result in reduced energy demand.*

Action 1.3.1. Encourage development at higher densities in established village and town centers and other established growth centers.

Action 1.3.2. Encourage development of housing, businesses and institutions within walking distance to each other.

Goal 2 - Transition from existing use of “fossil” fuel to renewable sources.

Objective 2.1. *Transition from “fossil” fuel used in buildings to renewable energy sources.*

Action 2.1.1. Promote installation of heating, cooling and other building systems that use renewable energy in all Town and Village buildings.

Objective 2.2. *Transition to the use of renewable energy for transportation.*

Action 2.2.1. Develop infrastructure for “plug-in” electric vehicles.

Goal 3- Develop new local sources of renewable energy.

Objective 3.1. *Establish regulations that encourage the development of local sources of renewable energy in a responsible way.*

Action 3.1.1. Evaluate the Village Design Review guidelines for flexibility in the use of solar panels on buildings in the district while maintaining design standards.

Action 3.1.2. Evaluate development and site plan review criteria for flexibility in the development of solar panel, wind power, micro-hydro, biomass and other renewable energy facilities.

Objective 3.2. *Develop and build new local renewable energy facilities to serve the energy needs of the Town properties.*

Action 3.2.1. Encourage the use of municipal property, capital, and credit in the development of new local renewable energy sources.

Goal 4 -Support non-municipal programs and private initiatives to encourage businesses, institutions and residents to conserve energy, increase energy efficiency, transition away from the use of carbon-based “fossil” fuels, and develop renewable sources of energy.

Objective 4.1. Establish a Town appointed Energy Committee

***Action 4.1.1.** Appoint a Town appointed Energy Committee.

***Action 4.1.2.** Maintain and encourage municipal participation in the Town appointed Energy Committee.

Action 4.1.3. Support and promote initiatives and recommendations from the Town Energy Committee.

Objective 4.2. Encourage Town and District schools to adopt energy goals similar to those in this Town Plan.

Action 4.2.1. Encourage energy conservation and energy efficiency for Town and District school buildings, transportation policy and land use.

Action 4.2.2. Encourage the transition away from carbon-based fossil fuels and the development of new local sources of renewable energy for district schools.

Goal 5 - Monitor energy usage and production on a continuing basis to assess progress in reaching the above goals.

Objective 5.1. Perform a comprehensive audit of energy usage and production throughout the Town to be used as a baseline for future analysis.

Action 5.1.1. Collect available data from all sectors of the Town, including municipal, commercial, institutional, industrial and residential on annual energy usage.

Action 5.1.2. Collect data from all sectors of the Town on local sources of energy supply and generation.

Action 5.1.3. Continue to refine the baseline energy audit by seeking more accurate data and more localized sources of data.

Action 5.1.4. Employ a model or other analysis tools to summarize the data and project the future effects of proposed actions. Energy usage should be described in consistent energy units, in current dollars, and in the amounts of atmospheric carbon emissions.

Objective 5.2. Perform periodic updates of the data in the energy usage and production models to track progress toward the above goals.

Action 5.2.1. Work toward an efficient system to gather accurate and comprehensive data on an annual basis.

The following is a description of municipal facilities in Woodstock and their existing energy systems with recommendations for improved energy efficiency.

Town Garage

The Town Garage is a relatively new building with radiant floor heating and a waste oil heat backup. An air-or ground- source heat pump system (either air-to-air or air-to-water) should be installed to reduce or potentially eliminate fossil fuel use at the site. The cost for this system would be between \$50,000 - \$80,000, depending on the type of equipment selected and the amount of fossil fuel use displaced.

Old Town Garage

This building is concrete block construction with no insulation and is used for storing vehicles. The space only needs to be maintained at 55 degrees since it is needed to keep equipment from freezing in the winter. An air-or ground- source heat pump system should be installed as the primary heat source, and the existing heating system could remain as a backup system. The cost would be between \$50,000 - \$60,000. The lighting should be converted to LED and occupancy sensors installed, and weatherstripping should be added to all exterior doors, for about 35,000.

West Woodstock Fire Station

The West Woodstock Fire Station is a small, 2-bay apparatus building with radiant floor heating through a small LP gas condensing boiler. An air-or ground- source heat pump system should be installed at this facility to reduce or eliminate fossil fuel use. The heat pump can also be used as a dehumidification system when the building is closed for long periods of time in the summer. The cost of the system would be around \$50,000. The lighting in the building should be converted to LED, for an estimated \$4,000.

Visitor's Center

The Visitor's Center is heated and ventilated by a single LP gas fired furnace. To reduce or eliminate fossil fuel use, a small heat pump with a wall console fan coil unit should be installed. The estimated cost of the heat pump system is around \$10,000.

Wastewater Treatment Facility

The main wastewater treatment facility consists of a heated maintenance garage building and an office/lab area. These structures are of concrete construction and have no insulation in the walls. The office/lab area does not have any ventilation for the occupants. The space is heated by an oil-fired boiler. A small heat recovery unit (HRU) should be installed to ventilate the lab and office area, and a small heat pump should be installed to cool, dehumidify and heat the office.

The unit heater in one of the maintenance garages is not currently functioning. Additionally, the unit was not installed to code. A heat pump should be installed in this space to maintain a 55-degree setpoint, and the unit heater should be repaired and brought to code to serve as a backup and as an instant source of heat when the space is occupied.

Weatherstripping should be added to all exterior doors throughout the facility. The cost for the HVAC improvements is estimated at \$120,000, and the weatherstripping is estimated to cost \$15,000.

Town Hall

The Town Hall is Woodstock's largest energy user with significant opportunity for energy improvements. However, the building needs major structural improvements and a complete renovation is planned. The renovation should include a plan to make the building net-zero or net-zero ready, and to get the building entirely off of fossil fuel. A cost estimate is not available at this time.

Financing

Given the magnitude of the energy improvements that should be made at town buildings, the town should consider financing options to fund the projects. One option is to enter into a municipal lease agreement for the equipment, which would allow the town to finance the project over several years at a low interest rate and own the equipment at the end of the lease term. Another option would be to pay for the improvements with a bond.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES



INTRODUCTION

There are many resources in Woodstock that make it a healthy place to live and there are great opportunities to work with existing and new partners to improve the health of those who live in and visit Woodstock. This section includes both resources that promote health and those that treat illness and restore health.

Woodstock, like other rural communities, has unique needs when it comes to health care including:

- A more rapidly increasing proportion of older citizens
- A higher burden of chronic illness
- Lower ratios of health care providers per citizen-patient
- Greater transportation needs to get to clinic or hospitals
- Lack of access to specialist care
- Higher costs per person of advanced technology (telecommunications, home care equipment, etc.)
- Higher suicide rates
- Greater incidence of drug and substance abuse
- Limited access to oral healthcare for low income citizens

According to the World Health Organization, “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” Health includes access to doctors and medical care, but it also includes other resources that impact quality of life including feeling connected to our neighbors, a sense of belonging to community, having safe options for walking and the availability of fresh and local foods. Many other elements of this Town Plan also have an impact on health including: preservation of green space, clean water, sidewalks that encourage walking, design of new development to promote human interaction, reduce the use of vehicles, and support local and healthy food.

Health Impact Assessment (HIA). The Town of Woodstock acknowledges that many decisions have an impact on health and will assure that a Health Impact Assessment will be used to evaluate policies and projects that could have an impact on health. An HIA is a systematic process that uses an array of data sources and input from stakeholders to determine the potential effects on the health of a population. HIAs provide recommendations on monitoring and managing those effects. HIAs are conducted *before* decisions are made, so that there is an opportunity to design or implement projects that maximize positive health outcomes.

Town Health Officers are given authority by the Vermont statutes to investigate and mitigate any potential or existing public health hazard in his/her town. The health officer conducts an investigation upon receipt of information regarding a condition that may be a public health hazard and enforces the rules and permits issued by the Vermont Department of Health. The Town Health Officer may be contacted through the Town Hall.

Ottawaquechee Health Center (OHC). In 1958 the citizens of Woodstock and surrounding

communities raised funds to acquire the Simmons House (32 Pleasant St.), purchase medical equipment and hire medical staff including a physician, a dentist and nurses. Woodstock is unique in that the residents of the community created its own Center; most health centers have been created by government, business or medical organizations. In 1973 the state-of-art Ottauquechee Health Center was built behind the Simmons house along with up-to-date equipment. By 1996 it became impossible to operate a free-standing clinic so an agreement was reached with Dartmouth –Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC) to run the Health Center. This, along with a significant donation from a devoted community member, enabled the formation of the Ottauquechee Health Foundation. In 2007 Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center (MAHHC) took over management of the Center from DHMC. In 2013, the Ottauquechee Health Center was sold to DEW Properties who will upgrade and modernize the building.

We are fortunate to have a Health Center in our rural community because:

- It makes it possible to have specialists present on a scheduled basis.
- (Ophthalmology, Dermatology, Gynecology, and Mental Health are current examples)
- Allows a Community Care Team to provide a best practice state-of-the-art approach in caring for community members with chronic care needs, the frail elderly, uninsured and under insured. They also provide a strong wellness approach to care.
- Allows expertise in caring for children as well as the elderly.
- Has routine lab work and immunizations readily available.
- Provides physical therapy services.
- Free care is available for those without insurance or the ability to pay.
- Allows anyone with urgent medical needs who lives here or is visiting to be seen at the Center during regular hours. The Ottauquechee Health Center is open to everyone in the community even those who are not regular OHC patients.
- OHC has created a community advisory committee so that people can have a voice in programs and events at the Health Center

Since MAHHC is one of the designated sites for Vermont's 'state of the art' Blueprint for Health, residents seen at the OHC will participate in the new version of primary care. The Blueprint emphasizes team-based comprehensive care, monitoring quality, and providing for mental as well as physical health.

Community Care Coordinator: MAHHC has partnered with Ottauquechee Health Foundation to offer the services of a Community Care Coordinator (CCC), who is a member of the Community Care Team, located at the OHC (457-3030) and the Thompson Senior Center (457-3277). The CCC helps people find health care resources that they need whether it's a visiting nurse, a home care provider or mental health professional. The CCC also helps people navigate the insurance network and find resources for which they may be eligible. The CCC also works with family members who are helping a parent or loved one living in our region. When residents are ready to leave a hospital, the CCC can help ensure there are adequate and suitable people to help at home. The CCC meets with the providers at the OHC on a regular basis to ensure that the patient's home care needs are met. Since the CCC is integrated into the Thompson Senior Center, its programs can be effectively integrated into a home care plan. This integrated approach represents "state of the art" health care.

Mt. Ascutney Hospital Outreach: Prevention, Education, and Promotion for Health (Pep) at Mt. Ascutney Hospital in Windsor and Woodstock, VT offers health education and disease prevention resources to the community. Group educational offerings include Tobacco Cessation, Parenting for Prevention, and Chronic Disease Self Management (Healthier Living, Wellness Recovery Action Plan, and Healthier Living with Chronic Pain.) In addition to groups, clients can meet 1-1 with a Health Coach for personalized plan for improved living.

Ottauquechee Health Foundation (OHF): Created in 1998, OHF's mission is to promote and

support programs that identify and help meet the health care needs of the community. The OHF owns the Simmons House and has an endowment of approximately \$2,000,000. The income from donations, rental income from its property and a modest endowment is used to fund three kinds of programs:

- Good Neighbor Grants for health care needs of people in our community who are unable to pay.
- Organizational Grants which support programs in our community that promote health (such as transportation for medical care, nutrition in our schools, exercise programs, medical emergency equipment, etc.)
- Loan Forgiveness Grants for providers who serve our residents (physicians, physician assistants, nurses, etc.) to encourage them to continue working in our community.

Over the past 14 years the OHF has granted approximately \$2,250,000 for health care in our community.

OTHER MEDICAL SERVICES

Primary Care: In addition to the Ottauquechee Health Center, two private physicians who have offices on The Green also provide primary care. One has served people in our region for more than 50 years and the other has privileges at the Rutland Medical Center.

Dental Services: In addition to two dentists in the OHC, there are five dentists in the Sunset Farm Complex.

Mental Health Providers: There are 17 mental health providers who service our region. The best way to find a provider is through the Community Care Coordinator at the OHC.

Health Care and Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont (HCRS) offers comprehensive mental health and substance abuse services for independent living skills and psychiatric and psychotherapy case management, vocational services, peer support and substance abuse services as appropriate to each individual's need. HCRS also operates one adult special needs group home in Woodstock.

Pharmacies: There is one pharmacy in Woodstock.

Emergency Services: The Woodstock Ambulance Para Medic Service (general information call 457-2337) serves the towns of Bridgewater, Hartland, Pomfret, Plymouth and Woodstock. In the event of an emergency call 911. In 2013 there were three ambulances and 22 first responders. When an ambulance is used for transportation, it goes to an area hospital since there are no emergency services available in Woodstock. Dartmouth-Hitchcock is the logical place for major emergencies less acute or minor emergencies are taken to Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center, as well as the facilities listed below depending on the best available medical resource and/or the person's wishes.

In addition to Dartmouth-Hitchcock, in Lebanon, NH is the area's major tertiary care facility, there are 7 other hospitals servicing Woodstock: Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center (Windsor, VT), Gifford Medical Center (Randolph, VT), Alice Peck Day (Lebanon, NH), Rutland Regional Medical Center (Rutland, VT), Valley Regional Hospital (Claremont, NH), Springfield Hospital (Springfield, VT) and the Veterans Administration Hospital (White River Junction, VT).

In an emergency, access to a person's electronic medical record is often important. At this time the OHC is a MAHHC facility so they use the same electronic medical record system. Therefore, Woodstock residents who see providers at OHC will have their records easily accessed at MAHHC.

COMMUNITY HEALTH RESOURCES

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England: Planned Parenthood maintains clinics in Vermont and New Hampshire. Planned Parenthood provides contraceptive, abortion services, and family planning (call 866-476-1321 or www.plannedparenthood.org for the nearest clinic information). It offers many

educational programs for community schools. It is funded by federal grants, state grants, fee for service (50%) including third party payers and a fund drive.

Blood Donation: Woodstock provides the opportunity for residents to donate blood on a bimonthly basis through the American Red Cross. To volunteer for the program or give blood, go to www.redcrossvtnhuv.org

Domestic Violence: WISE (866-348-9473, www.wiseoftheuppervalley.org) provides advocacy, crisis intervention, support services, and community education to those affected by domestic and sexual violence and stalking in the Upper Valley Region.

Human Services

The **State of Vermont** offers a variety of social, health, welfare, and rehabilitative services to Woodstock from offices located in the Gilman Office Complex, Holiday Drive, White River Junction, VT.

Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA)

Southeastern Vermont Community Action Inc. (SEVCA), a non-profit Community Action Agency, has provided assistance to low income Vermonters in Windsor and Windham Counties since 1965. SEVCA administers Housing Assistance, and Home Weatherization programs; operates clothing thrift stores; provides small-business-start-up assistance, budget counseling and acts as an advocate for those in need. SEVCA also runs the Windsor County Head Start Program. SEVCA's motto is "Helping People Help Themselves." Outreach workers are located throughout the two county area.

Obesity Prevention

Farm to school programs in each of Woodstock's public schools are increasing access to local healthy food and education in schools. The summer Market on the Green accepts EBT cards, so individuals with low income have equal access to local healthy food.

The Woodstock Food Shelf has increased its services to include local healthy food. The Local Healthy Food Council is working with regional efforts to increase access to local healthy food for all individuals. The Safe Routes to School Team in Woodstock conducted a comprehensive assessment of walking routes to Woodstock Elementary School, and is working with the town to implement recommendations on creating safer walking routes throughout the town.

Ottawaquechee Community Partnership (OCP)

OCP is a non-profit organization with a mission of engaging individuals and organizations in developing healthy environments and positive intergenerational relationships in the WCSU area. Programs include OCP's Mentor and Buddy Program and Youth Health Advocacy initiatives including Vermont Kids Against Tobacco, Our Voices exposed, Woodstock Healthy Teens and the Vermont Youth Action Network. OCP also works with START (Stop Teen Alcohol Risk Team), the Vermont Department of Health and the Windsor County Prevention Coalitions.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

Windsor County START

START stands for Stop Teen Alcohol Risk Team and is a statewide group of local law enforcement and community prevention leaders who coordinate efforts to respond to and proactively prevent underage drinking especially through enforcing laws related to providing alcohol to people under the legal drinking age of 21. Agencies throughout the county work together to respond to reports of underage drinking and support community change. The Windsor County program is coordinated through Mount Ascutney Hospital.

Prevention Consultant

The State of Vermont Department of Health division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs supports a prevention consultant that supports substance abuse prevention and prevention broadly at the community

level. Effective substance abuse prevention at the community level looks like changing norms around substance use, and changing policies as necessary. The prevention consultant covering Woodstock is based in White River Junction and can be reached at 802-295-8835.

Alcohol Anonymous & Al-Anon

Woodstock is served by Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon (802-295-7611 or www.aavt.org). The meeting schedule is available on the website.

Upper Valley Turning Point

The Turning Point provides a safe, substance-free environment populated by people in recovery who offer peer support seven days a week at no cost to the consumer. It is located off Route 5 at the Wilder/Norwich border in eastern-central Vermont.

Youth Substance Abuse Meetings

Meetings for youth who are considering or committed to getting clean and staying clean from substance use are offered by Second Growth in Wilder at Turning Point and include *Making Change* for youth in early recovery.

Wit's End is a weekly Parent Support Group targeted towards parents, family members or guardians of young people who are engaging in risky substance abusing behaviors. Weekly support groups are led by a certified substance abuse counselor at the Turning Point Club in White River Junction, VT (802-295-5206).

Narcotics Anonymous (802-773-5575, www.gmana.org/docs/meetinglist.pdf) Support groups for recovering addicts in the region. The closest support groups for adults are in Wilder, VT. Call or see the website for meeting details.

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Senior Citizens

The Thompson Senior Center in West Woodstock is run by the Woodstock Area Council on Aging (457-3277). The Thompson provides a wide variety of programs and services for seniors and their families that support independent living and healthy aging. Lunch meals are provided on site and home delivered "Meals-On-Wheels" are provided for people who can't come to the Center. Door-to-door transportation is provided for seniors and disabled community members for transportation to and from the Center and for errands and medical appointments. Suggested donation or amounts are given for meal and transportation services, but services are provided for seniors and disabled community members regardless of ability to pay. A social worker can help navigate complexities like health insurance, Medicare, and social security; assistance with income tax is also available without charge. Exercise classes, social events, day trips, and lectures are just some of the other programs available. A monthly newsletter/calendar lists programs, events and menus.

The Thompson Senior Center in partnership with RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) also offers a service to call seniors at home on a regular basis to be sure they are ok. This is especially useful for seniors who are at risk for falls, accidents or social isolation. Seniors can also receive assistance signing up for Lifeline. Lifeline (1-800-380-3111) is a company that offers a device which is connected via person's telephone line to a service that can respond to an emergency as well as to check with the person on a regular basis.

Long-Term Care Facilities

Woodstock has three long-term care facilities: Mertens House, a skilled nursing care facility (457-4111); The Homestead, a residential care/independent living facility (457-1310); and The Woodstock Terrace, an assisted living facility (457-2228). Each offers different levels of care and different prices. Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center also offers a skilled nursing facility. Depending on availability, each can be used for temporary or respite care for an elder who cannot live alone and whose regular care giver needs to get away for a brief period. This kind of respite care can also be arranged with the CCC

to have in-home care givers to come in for a period of time.

Home Care

Woodstock is now served by multiple agencies that can provide skilled nursing and medical care at home. For information about in home care providers, please call the Community Care Coordinator at 457-3030.

Types of in-home services can include the following:

- ☐ Nursing care - medication management, wound care, intravenous therapy, etc.
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy including home modifications to allow better care
- Speech therapy
- Access to a social worker
- Home Health Aides
- Personal care
- Companionship

Hospice Care

Both VNA (888-300-8853) located in West Lebanon and Bayada Hospice (802-526-2380) located in Norwich provide hospice services for people with a life-threatening illness (likely to die in 6 months or less) and who have decided to not pursue curative treatment. A doctor's order is required for hospice services. Hospice services include a number of elements: nursing care, social assessment, attention to spiritual needs, pain control, and bereavement services. In addition, hospice care can be provided in a hospital or in the home, depending on the circumstance. MAHHC and Gifford Hospital have specific rooms for hospice patients. Call the Community Care Coordinator for additional information at 457-3030.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Youth engagement

Woodstock demographics document that the community does not retain youth after high school and is challenged to attract young adults. In Youth Risk Behavior Surveys conducted biannually through the Woodstock Union Middle and High School, only half of students report that they feel valued by the community (YRBS 2009/2011).

Increasing youth connection to community means:

- Supporting opportunities for youth connection to positive adult relationships
- Opportunities for internships and apprenticeships with local businesses and organizations
- Providing a place for young people to socialize, do homework, play music/games after school.

Childcare

There are four licensed child care facilities in Woodstock. These and many more options in the surrounding communities can be found on the Department of Children and Families' Bright Futures page www.brightfutures.def.state.vt.us. The State of Vermont also has a Step Ahead Recognition Systems (STARS) which indicates child care program quality that can be accessed at <http://def.vermont.gov/cdd/starts/>. To find referrals for registered child care options in the Woodstock area, call the Child Care Project at 1-800-323-5446. Other child care providers or programs that are not regulated by the State of Vermont Licensing program may be found in local publications such as Parent Express, community newspapers or bulletin boards.

Children with Special Needs

The special education needs of handicapped pre-school children to age three are handled by a Vermont Department of Public Health. The needs of school age children are being handled by special education

programs offered through local schools. Zack's Place at 73 Central Street, a community enrichment center that specializes in enrichment programs for people of all ages with disabilities (802-457-5868 or www.zacksplacevt.org)

Additional health resources can be found in the Ottauquechee Resource Manual available at: <http://www.mtascutneyhospital.org/community/manual-community-services>

ACTION PROGRAM

The following are the identified goals, objectives and action steps for resolution. Those Actions with an asterisk are of high priority.

Goal 1 - Support the availability of comprehensive health care in the Woodstock community.

Objective 1.1. Support use of the Ottauquechee Health Center

Action 1.1.1. Regular articles in the Vermont Standard.

Action 1.1.2. Community conversations on health care.

Action 1.1.3. Recognize availability of free care for those unable to afford medical care.

Action 1.1.4. Ensure awareness of the range of care available (ophthalmology, dermatology, etc).

Objective 1.2. Work with Mt. Ascutney Hospital to ensure efficient and effective functioning of the Center

***Action 1.2.1.** Appoint a town designated representative to work with the Ottauquechee Health Center Advisory Council.

Action 1.2.2. Create a welcoming and informative environment in the Center, possibly through a volunteer program.

Action 1.2.3. Help promote the importance of the Center in Vermont's Blue Print for Health.

Objective 1.3. Support the Community Care Coordinator Program. Recognize this as a crucial community-based health program to provide access to resources.

Action 1.3.1. Provide town funds for this service.

Action 1.3.2. Recognize the importance of access to the CCC at the Senior Center as well as at the Health Center.

Action 1.3.3. Provide regular on-going feedback of the program ensuring community member access and satisfaction.

Objective 1.4. Explore and study ways to provide an emergency care facility in Woodstock to treat individuals who need immediate emergency lifesaving care on an economically viable basis.

Action 1.4.1. Consider providing an emergency treatment facility in Woodstock.

Objective 1.5. Provide Support for the terminally ill and their families.

Action 1.5.1. Establish a hospice.

Goal 2 - Consider how new developments (e.g. housing, transportation, infrastructure, policies, zoning, road construction, water treatment plants) impact health.

Objective 2.1. Ensure that a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is conducted with every major project.

Action 2.1.1. Use HIA trained individuals to lead a HIA with every proposed major project.

Action 2.1.2. Use the results of the HIA to adapt the project to maximize the positive health impacts and minimize the negative health impacts.

Goal 3 - Make resources available locally to adults, youth, and parents to help with substance

abuse issues.

Objective 3.1. Reduce the incidence of substance abuse and addiction.

***Action 3.1.1.** Work with quality substance abuse support programs to have regular local support groups for youth and parents with substance abuse dependency or addiction, and for parents with children suffering from substance abuse dependency.

Objective 3.2. Substance abuse prevention.

***Action 3.2.1.** Work with Ottawaquechee Community Partnership and other organizations to support local substance abuse prevention efforts in the schools and the community.

Goal 4 - Support infrastructure policies and organizations which promote healthy eating and active living and address obesity and other health consequences.

Objective 4.1. Increase access to local healthy food for all.

Action 4.1.1. Support local Farm to School efforts.

Action 4.1.2. Support access to Healthier Living workshops for the Woodstock Community.

Action 4.1.3. Support expansion of existing farmer's market and creation of new farmer's markets that accept EBT cards.

Action 4.1.4. Support policies that limit availability of sugar-sweetened beverages in schools.

Objective 4.2. Promote a built environment and programs that support physical activity.

***Action 4.2.1.** Implement the Safe Routes to School Plan adopted by the Village of Woodstock Trustees. Use the Plan as a basis for developing a more robust plan for a Walkable Woodstock.

***Action 4.2.2.** Expand Safe Routes to School Travel Plan to include the greater Woodstock area to create a safe walkable town center.

Action 4.2.3. Support other programs that promote healthy, physical activity.

Goal 5 - Increase access to local mental and behavioral health services.

Objective 5.1. Reduce suicide and self-inflicted injuries risk and rate

Action 5.1.1. Promote awareness that suicide is a public health issue.

***Action 5.1.2.** Develop and implement strategies to promote positive public attitudes toward being a consumer of mental health including substance abuse and suicide prevention services.

Action 5.1.3. Training for recognizing at-risk behavior and delivering effective treatment.

Action 5.1.4. Improve access to mental health and substance abuse services and better coordinate services in a variety of community institutions.

Goal 6 - Increase youth connection to community.

Objective 6.1. Support opportunities for youth to connect to positive adults through mentoring.

Objective 6.2. Develop opportunities for internships and apprenticeships with local businesses and organizations.

Action 6.2.1. Work with schools to encourage local businesses and organizations to engage youth in local enterprises during school, after school and in the summer.

Objective 6.3. Provide a safe, supervised place for young people to socialize, do homework, and play music/games after school.

Action 6.3.1. Work with Woodstock Rec and other after school entities to support

after school programming and staffing.

Goal 7 - Build a stronger community for healthy aging.

Objective 7.1. Access to physical activity, medical care, nutritious food, social engagement, and mobility.

Action 7.1.1. Learn about walkways, homes, and neighborhoods that meet the needs of older adults.

***Action 7.1.2.** Work with Thompson Senior Center and other entities to create a community that supports healthy aging in place.

Action 7.1.3. Encourage increased day care facilities for senior citizens

Goal 8 - Coordinate health and human services issues

Objective 8.1. Ensure that the recommendations of the Town Plan Health and Human Services section and other health-related decisions are implemented in a coordinated way.

Action 8.1.1. Appoint a Town Health and Human Services commission to identify needs and resources and coordinate efforts to implement the actions identified in the Town Plan

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND VISUAL ENVIRONMENT



For more than a century Woodstock has been renowned as one of the most picturesque places in the United States. It owes this well-deserved reputation to the way in which the natural and the built environment combine and reinforces one another to produce a total environment that is both beautiful and characteristically "New England." Woodstock looks the way that the American mind thinks a New England town and village should look. These characteristics have attracted people to Woodstock and have motivated Woodstock residents to preserve and to cultivate the beauty of their natural and built environment.

Historically, Woodstock's citizens have achieved a balance of growth and conservation in their activities, enterprises, institutions, and culture. This produced a place and a way of life that had value and that gave the community an identity. More than most other Vermont towns, Woodstock has had residents who possessed both the means and the will to maintain and develop the Town and Village in sound and tasteful ways. Today, Woodstock's values, culture, and identity are in flux, with change driven by tourism, recreation, economic and development pressure.

Because Woodstock's environment is characteristically historic and aesthetic, the issues of historic preservation and preservation of the visual environment are central to town and village planning. Woodstock's historical built environment is among its chief assets, and its integrity must be protected from unwise development. At the same time, it would be a mistake to attempt to freeze Woodstock in time. To do so would further Woodstock's drift toward a tourist based "monoculture."

Woodstock's visual environment, both built and natural, is the foundation of its identity, its assets, and its future. The health of Woodstock's economy and its social fabric depend on preservation and conservation of this resource. Thus, preservation of the visual environment requires that we must be advocates for Woodstock's heritage and, at the same time, we must be sensitive to Woodstock's needs and the dynamics that will shape its future.

The architecture of Woodstock mirrors its history. There are many buildings from periods when Woodstock's fortunes flowed, and fewer from times when they ebbed. Much of Woodstock's historic building stock was built between 1790 and 1850, the period of greatest growth in rural Vermont. As one would expect in a provincial New England town, the buildings from this period are largely vernacular forms, built with indigenous materials by local craftsmen. Most contain elements of the

Federal, Georgian, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival and Italianate styles, revealing the decades in which they were built or underwent early remodeling.

The decades from the mid-19th century into the 20th century are somewhat less well represented in the rural parts of the Town, reflecting the exodus of northern New England farm folk to the West and to

urban

centers during the period. Because it was a locally important center of commerce and government, the Village continued to develop during this period. Although most of the grand houses on the Green and Elm Street had already been built, public and commercial buildings were built and replaced, and a number of Victorian residences were added to the community.

In the decades of the second half of the 19th century, Woodstock fared better than most towns in northern New England. During this period the region suffered agricultural reversals and severe population decline. By the end of the century, the region had begun to stabilize although, the population would not return to pre-Civil War levels until the 1950's. The chief agents of recovery were commercial dairying, tourism and recreation.

By the 1880's and 1890's, affluent residents of coastal cities were rediscovering northern New England as a place to go to escape the heat, grime and problems of the city. Select, picturesque communities became resorts and second-home meccas. Encouraged by a number of key residents, the Woodstock Railroad, the Woodstock Inn, and its salubrious environment and beauty, Woodstock became one of the early New England resort towns.

This rediscovery of Woodstock a century ago transformed it into a tourist and second-home destination. Architecturally, the transformation is reflected in the large number of Federal and Classical Revival houses that were remodeled in the Colonial Revival fashion at the end of the 19th and through the 20th century. The ubiquitous color scheme of "white with green shutters" became the standard during this period. The Colonial Revival has been the nation's longest-lived and most pervasive architectural style, and it became an emblem of the rediscovery of rural New England and its traditions. Colonial Revival taste gradually permeated Woodstock's fabric, and the Village became a famous exemplary of the Colonial Revival ideal of rural New England.

Economically, Woodstock has enjoyed "imported income," earned elsewhere and spent here. In lean times, Woodstock has fared relatively better than much of rural Vermont. In times of prosperity, the Woodstock area faces development pressure sooner and with greater intensity than other parts of Vermont. Increasingly, land in Woodstock has become a scarce commodity and the cost of Woodstock real estate is twice the state's average.

The quality of the visual environment is central to Woodstock's identity and is a fundamental asset of the Town and Village. The built environment, both historical and contemporary, the landscape and immediate settings of structures and surrounding natural environment are all contributing factors to the total aesthetic environment. Attention must be paid, therefore, to all levels of the physical character of the Town and Village.

The preservation of the visual quality of the built environment should consider all structures in the village, hamlets and outlying town areas. Residential, institutional, commercial and agricultural buildings all contribute to this environment. Many of our most important structures are historic and should be valued for their place in the history and culture of the Town and the region. Structures with less historic significance, however, can be equally important to our visual environment.

The landscape and setting of structures play a vital role in defining aesthetic quality. In the Village, the "street scape" environment as a whole and the spaces between buildings are of equal importance to the buildings themselves. Likewise, in the hamlets and outlying town areas, the landscape elements such as driveways, parking lots, lighting, fences and plants all contribute to the quality of the visual environment.

On the largest scale, the patterns of open space and woods, pastures, ponds, roads and natural elements have developed over time, through the works of both man and nature, into what we now consider to be typically "Vermont." At this scale, too, it is important to consider and to preserve the quality of the visual environment.

It is important to recognize the separate but complementary issues of historic preservation and the enhancement of our visual environment. The preservation of an asset for strictly its historic or cultural value and the protection of an important visual asset, can be separate goals. A historically important building may not necessarily be aesthetically valuable, while a visually important structure may have no historical significance. The richest environments are those which have both, and Woodstock has a good share of these.

Although Woodstock recognizes the effects of climate change and supports alternative energy as a means to lower ones carbon footprint, it is well known that its historic character is key to the local economy. Many of the homes, especially in the Village, are well over a hundred years old and were not built for energy conservation. Proper insulation, energy efficient windows/doors and improved heating systems are just a few of the methods one can do to reduce energy loads without changing the historic look. Geothermal energy is a proven technology that allows one an “invisible” form of alternative energy. To this end, the municipality supports conservation and energy efficiency as a first priority above the placement of alternative energy devices such as solar panels or wind turbines.

Historic preservation and the preservation of the visual environment for Woodstock include eight broad goals:

1. Recognize and protect outlying and isolated visual and historical resources throughout the Town.
2. Protect identified visual and historical resources within the Village.
3. Protect open space and other environmental resources that are scenic or historic or both.
4. Protect the integrity and authenticity of Woodstock's aesthetic and historical character and its place in history.
5. Improve Design Review procedures, possibly incorporate Historic Preservation review into the process where appropriate, and possibly establish additional Design Review/Historic Preservation districts and landmarks in the Town.
6. Review and improve laws, ordinances, bureaucratic, and educational procedures as they relate to historic preservation and the visual environment.
7. Develop a balanced relationship between aesthetic and historical resources and future needs.
8. Provide guidance for appropriate energy upgrades.

Proposed solutions to these goals are listed separately, but a number of issues raised in the goals bear further discussion.

Protect Historical Resources

Although most attention has been paid to the historical resources of the Village, the outlying areas of the Town have been addressed in a thorough and systematic survey. Completion of a thorough survey of the Town was a major accomplishment. The survey identified a number of districts, such as South Woodstock and Taftsville, which ought to be protected as such. It also identified a number of individual properties which may be protected individually as landmarks. The hamlets of South Woodstock and Taftsville are currently listed with the National Register of Historic Places and have design review protection.

Protect Village Resources

The historical resources of the Village are well documented. Measures can be taken to afford protection of these resources while accommodating state and local codes.

Protect Environmental Resources

Environmental surroundings are crucial elements in the preservation of historical resources. Views and other vistas, open space, green spaces, river views and access, are all key elements that bear upon historic preservation both in the Village and in the Town. The Town's rural agricultural character is essential, as is the Village's character as a modest rural community related to its surrounding farms and hills.

Preserve Integrity & Authenticity

Woodstock is a living community with a visible historical heritage, and its past should be protected authentically. History is a continuum, with the past providing perspective, place, and continuity, and with the present becoming the future's past. Thus, the community must both preserve its heritage and continue to evolve into the future while allowing protection of important key features such as the Windsor County Courthouse.

Design Review & Historic Preservation

Design Review may be expanded into other areas of the Town where appropriate or to encompass historic preservation.

Improve Procedures

Local procedures should be streamlined where possible. Criteria should be communicated better to property owners. Enforcement should be strengthened in reviewing projects and certifying for occupancy, and generally to enforce codes and design rulings.

Historical, Contemporary & Future Resources

Design Review, Historic Preservation Review, and Environmental Review by the Conservation Commission should continue to work hand in hand to ensure overall preservation and proper development of Woodstock.

Guide Alternative Energy Alterations

Encourage conservation of energy and proper insulation/weatherization techniques before considering energy production devices. Encourage geothermal as a first choice versus placement of alternative energy devices that may not fit the historic character of structure or neighborhood. Encourage alternative energy devices to be placed in private areas located out of the public view.

ACTION PROGRAM

The following are identified problems and issues and corresponding goals, objectives, and implementations for resolution. Those implementations with an asterisk are of high priority.

Goal 1 - Protect historical resources in the Town and Village.

Objective 1.1. Recognize historic preservation efforts within the Town.

Action 1.1.1. Educate the public and provide materials about historic resources.

Action 1.1.2. Inventory all historic landmarks and structures in the Town.

Objective 1.2. Promote historic preservation efforts within the Town and Village.

Action 1.2.1. Encourage the use of preservation easements and protective covenants.

Action 1.2.2. Educate the public and provide materials concerning historic resources.

Action 1.2.3. Designate all historic landmarks and structures in the Village and develop a plan for appropriate preservation.

Goal 2 - Protect open spaces which are scenic or historic

Objective 2.1. Establish awareness of historic preservation and protection of the visual environment.

Action 2.1.1. Support incentives for maintaining agricultural land use.

Action 2.1.2. Study the feasibility of a scenic easement program.

Action 2.1.3. Study the use of a transfer of development rights programs.

Action 2.1.4. Study the idea of a program for the acquisition of land with scenic and/or historic characteristics.

Action 2.1.5. Develop strategies to encourage sensitive and enlightened use of community resources.

Objective 2.2. Recognize farming, forestry and agricultural open space as key threatened elements of Woodstock's heritage and identity.

Action 2.2.1. Take steps to preserve ways of life and land use.

Action 2.2.2. Support working landscape initiatives that promote our agricultural heritage.

Goal 3 - Protect the integrity and authenticity of Woodstock's place in history.

Objective 3.1. Encourage community involvement in preservation and evolution of our community.

Action 3.1.1. Involve schools in historic education and town planning.

Action 3.1.2. Continue to utilize our local resources such as Woodstock Historical Society, Billings Farm and Museum and the Marsh Billings Rockefeller National Historic Park to educate the public about our heritage.

Goal 4 - Improve Design Review procedures.

Objective 4.1. Modify the Design Review procedures.

Action 4.1.1. Disseminate information to prospective applicants in a timely manner.

Action 4.1.2. Re-evaluate design review criteria and districts for current applicability.

Goal 5 - Ensure that Design Review and the Conservation Commission work hand in hand for the overall preservation and appropriate development of Woodstock.

Objective 5.1. Develop an interrelationship between design review, and environmental review by the Conservation Commission.

Action 5.1.1. Monitor criteria for design review and environmental review by the Conservation Commission to ensure that they are complementary.

Goal 6 - Allow placement of alternative energy devices while maintaining character of historic districts.

Objective 6.1. Develop criteria for placement of alternative energy devices in historic districts.

***Action 6.1.1.** Assure appropriate energy savings have been met through conservation and energy efficiency before placement of devices.

***Action 6.1.2.** Choose devices that mesh best with proposed location.

***Action 6.1.3.** Assure alternative energy devices are placed in least visible area of property.

***Action 6.1.4.** If placed in Design Review District, assure compliance with underlying criteria.

HOUSING



Shelter, like food and clothing, represents one of the most essential of human needs. In an affluent society, shelter also represents a ‘want’. Wanting to purchase a “first home” in this beautiful town for the average citizen is a very difficult task. Wanting to own a “second home” in Woodstock for vacation and recreational use has long been a reality.

The decision to limit the quantity of housing in favor of the quality of life engendered by retaining traditional settlement patterns and land use has the effect of confrontation between those who “need” and those who “want.” A policy designed to protect and preserve the continuity of life in Woodstock has produced a lifestyle that many native Vermonters, dependent on local sources of income, are finding it difficult to afford. The competition for limited housing is no contest at all, and those people most responsible for the sense of place that non-natives admire will have to seek shelter elsewhere.

Local businesses are forced to import labor from nearby – and some not so nearby - areas because affordable housing for middle-income people is not available in Woodstock. There is a growing recognition that a broader diversity of housing values is needed to respond to these needs, as well as to encourage young families with children to settle here in order to increase enrollments at the public schools and to maintain a viable, healthy community.

To alter a future that would create a lovely, but homogeneous environment of temporary citizens will take a commitment of Woodstock’s financial and environmental resources. It involves a measure of compromise as higher density housing, or subsidy, appears to be the only solution to lowering the cost of home ownership or rentals.

This is not to say that there is no real limit to growth. The key word is “real,” because if Woodstock is to be more than an echo of history it must continue to house the variety of people Vermont has always represented, who in the pursuit of their daily lives generate interesting sounds and sights of genuine human industry.

Woodstock should strive to maintain the existing land use pattern of development, encouraging higher density in certain areas, such as the villages and hamlets, and allow rehabilitation and conversion of the larger existing structures to multi-family units without changing exterior appearances. Woodstock should guide and encourage any new residential construction to areas that are contiguous to existing development and within easy access to existing services. The open spaces on hills and scenic vistas should be preserved, as well as the wetlands and deer yards.

Woodstock needs additional affordable housing units for its current residents and employees in order to maintain a broad social-economic base. Workforce housing is needed for those in the tourist/service industries, as well as in fields as diverse as teaching, law enforcement and health care, to name a few,

especially at entry level salaries. Zoning should allow for cluster housing units and other high-density forms of housing including accessory dwellings. Additional rental housing units are encouraged for all economic levels. The trend to convert residential units to commercial and/or professional use is discouraged in most cases, and repeated short-term rentals to transients in residential zones where the owner or primary tenant does not occupy the premises, are prohibited.

Home occupations will be protected as long as the existing residential character of the neighborhood is not adversely affected.

New luxury multi-family condominium/townhouse development is discouraged. New development aimed entirely at the second home market is not deemed desirable, as it is not conducive to a “sense of place.” However, Woodstock recognizes that second homes are an integral part of our community; we should understand the effect that second homeowners have on our community.

If any new development project has a significant adverse economic and/or social impact on the community resources, then said costs should be considered appropriate to pass on to the developer as a cost of development.

High density housing should be discouraged in town-designated open space and ridge areas. The open space and ridge lines should be protected and maintained.

Trends and Existing Conditions

Woodstock and other communities in the Upper Valley have enjoyed the benefits of a relatively stable period of economic growth for the past thirty years. Unfortunately, with limited exception, the pace of housing development for area residents has not kept pace with this economic growth. The result is a chronic problem – a shortage in the supply of housing and an escalation of housing costs and values. Concurrently, the demand for second homes has become an even larger component of the overall housing market, leading to increased competition for local home buyers and renters seeking to secure housing at an affordable price.

Additionally, housing costs have continued to grow at a rate far faster than resident income levels. This, coupled with the limited housing supply, has restricted first-time home buyers from getting into the market. Today, the housing dilemma has grown to include an entirely new segment – middle income families. This includes a generation of starter households, public employees, teachers, service workers, and skilled trades’ people. These people are increasingly confronted with limited housing options near their place of employment. Frequently they have to travel further distances where housing values are more closely matched to income levels.

Outlined below are key factors that have been identified as affecting the cost and availability of housing in Woodstock:

1. The average price of housing has risen at a rate faster than consumer prices and income. This has created an “affordability gap” in the housing market.
2. Land ownership continues as a favorable investment prompting investors to retain their holdings rather than sell. The increase in land values has contributed to a larger portion of overall housing costs, limiting options for suitable housing to fit market demand. The availability of building lots is limited by the market.
3. Changing demographics in our community have impacted housing supply. The baby-boom generation now occupies a relatively large portion of the total housing stock, which limits access to a sizable portion of the younger generation seeking housing. Additionally, the growing trend of single persons and the elderly seeking to remain in their homes longer have affected market values and availability.
4. Federal tax law benefits second home ownership, including favorable mortgage interest deductions against incomes or other incentives for second home purchasers. Accordingly, a large portion of the housing development has been directed towards vacation homes and away from year-round homes.

5. As noted above, the lack of affordable housing for a segment of the population working in Woodstock has resulted in an increase in the average commuting time to work. While increases in Woodstock's overall housing units have been very slow for the past twenty years or more, a more positive rate of development has occurred in neighboring municipalities in the Upper Valley, including the Vermont towns of Hartland, Hartford, Royalton, Sharon, and Norwich and in New Hampshire, the towns of Lebanon, Enfield, and Canaan. Living within these communities are persons whose place of work is in Woodstock. For some out-of-town owners, while the cost of housing is more favorably matched to their incomes, the costs associated with longer work commutes and access to key services, reduces the favorability of living outside of the community.
6. Furthermore, the emigration of younger people away from Woodstock continues. This is due to limited well-paying jobs relative to the high cost of housing. As a result for the past several years, school enrollments have decreased and are likely to remain on the decline or stable for the next several years. Finally, this factor has contributed to an overall increase in per pupil cost and has placed a disproportionate burden on local taxpayers to cover the costs of education.

For 2013 Woodstock's labor force was estimated at 1740. Commuters working in Woodstock, but residing outside of the town represented approximately 75% (1387) of all commuters (University of Vermont, Kevin Stapleton – Woodstock, Vermont – Town Profile, 2013 County of Windsor). This percentage of workers coming into town for work far exceeds the County and State average. From this, it can be reasonably concluded that some of whom work in Woodstock may desire to live closer to their place of employment, but cannot find affordable housing.

The 2020 U.S. Census Report noted Woodstock's resident population at 3048 of which 3003 were living in owner-occupied or rental units.

The trends associated with housing demand and supply will continue. The Woodstock community will continue its' commitment to take affirmative steps to ensure its fair share of affordable housing. Furthermore, it will participate in programs that benefit its citizens who are at risk in terms of housing, but who offer valuable contributions to the ongoing life and character of Woodstock.

The measure of affordability is that a household should not pay more than 30% of its total income for housing and related expenses. This disproportionate housing cost strains other financial decisions long-term and short-term. Thirty percent is universally employed in housing data analysis and in lending transactions, such as determining mortgage eligibility requirements.

ACTION PROGRAM

Following are the identified problems, issues and corresponding goals, objectives, and implementations for resolution. Those implementations with an asterisk are of high priority.

Goal 1 - Maintain existing land use pattern of development

***Objective 1.1.** Allow high density development to encourage rehabilitation and conversion of existing structures, particularly for multi-family living units, without changing exterior appearances, and to preserve existing open space.*

****Action 1.1.1.** Continue to evaluate opportunities to increase densities in selected Village and hamlet areas.*

***Objective 1.2.** Maintain lower density outside Village/hamlet areas.*

***Action 1.2.1.** Continue to evaluate the opportunities to decrease densities in areas outside of concentrated settlement.*

***Objective 1.3.** Continue to restrict housing in flood hazard areas*

Goal 2 - Provide additional affordable owner-occupied and/or rental housing units.

Objective 2.1. Continue to support subsidized housing.

Objective 2.2. Provide municipal and private incentives for the development of affordable housing.

***Action 2.2.1.** Consider tax incentives for affordable housing projects.

***Action 2.2.2.** Maintain the ability to reduce lot size for affordable housing units.

Objective 2.3. Evaluate land for possible residential higher density development, encouraging locations for cluster housing and other high density forms of housing.

Action 2.3.1. Due to proximity of sewer, water & other amenities, consider zoning properties for high density development.

Goal 3 - Plan for anticipated future housing needs for elderly

Objective 3.1. Plan for future elderly housing needs.

Action 3.1.1. Encourage a regional housing entity to identify specific changes to zoning.

Goal 4 - Guide and encourage any new residential construction to areas which are contiguous to existing development and within easy access to existing services.

Objective 4.1. Upgrade and expand municipal services to designated areas of desired growth.

Action 4.1.1. Investigate feasibility of expanding/upgrading municipal services including sewer facilities.

Action 4.1.2. Increase zoning density where sewer and water exist to enable additional housing in the town.

Goal 5 - Maintain the ability to amend density restrictions to create economically feasible multi-family residential use.

Objective 5.1. Reduce lot size requirements in certain zoning districts.

Objective 5.2. Provide parking requirements.

Action 5.2.1. Provide opportunity to create additional public parking.

Objective 5.3. Discourage conversions of residential properties to non-residential uses.

Action 5.3.1. Maintain residential, or residential office areas along Pleasant Street between the central business district and the East End.

Action 5.3.2. Maintain the residential/commercial balance in the Village.

NATURAL ELEMENTS



The quality and quantity of Woodstock's forests, waters, and open land define its rural character and are vital natural resources to be maintained or enhanced. The diversity of native plant and animal life that inhabit our natural environment not only contributes to our enjoyment, but is also an indicator of the health of the ecosystem to which all natural resources are connected. Clean surface waters support diverse aquatic plant and animal life and provide areas for swimming and fishing. The preservation of wetlands, the creation of naturally vegetated buffer areas around waterways, and the conservation of large connected forested areas provide wildlife habitat and corridors while recharging groundwater for the health of Woodstock residents. To ensure that these important natural resources remain usable for wildlife, recreationists, and residents for generations to come, development must occur intelligently and with minimal visual and ecological impact.

OTTAUQUECHEE WATERSHED

A watershed is all the land surrounding a particular river, stream, lake, marsh, wetland, pond, or underground aquifer. For this reason, watersheds are also referred to as drainage basins or drainage areas.

Water that travels across the landscape carries many pollutants that are associated with land-based activities (oil residues, pesticides, dirt, animal wastes, toxic chemicals, salt, and trash), leading to substantial degradation of receiving waters. Water quality can also be degraded by land-based activities, such as snow-making and hydro-power generation that alter the water's flow and/or temperature. To maintain a level of water quality that is acceptable for fish and other aquatic species as well as for human health and recreation, the amount of water withdrawn or diverted and the amount of pollutants that drain into surface waters must be contained to levels that allow inhabitants of the watershed's natural system to thrive.

Because watersheds cross both political and private boundaries, protection and enhancement of surface water quality, including wetlands, can only be achieved if stakeholders, including landowners and officials from all towns within the watershed, collaborate and cooperate toward that common goal.

The Ottauquechee River originates on the eastern slopes of the Green Mountains in the town of Killington. From its point of origin it travels approximately 32 miles through several towns and dams before reaching its confluence with the Connecticut River. The land that forms this watershed includes over 124,000 acres, of which only 3% are surface waters and 1% are wetlands.

Although population growth in the Ottauquechee watershed has stabilized since its peak growth, the number of housing units being built continues to grow, particularly in the area near the headwaters region in Killington. Because development in or near a headwaters region can dramatically impact water quality and quantity downstream, Woodstock's interests are directly impacted not only by what happens near Killington, but also by what occurs on all the streams that lie upstream and feed into the Ottauquechee.

The watersheds of the Ottauquechee River and the Black River form what is known as Basin 10, which is one of 17 basins in Vermont required by federal law to adopt a basin plan to help guide land use decisions and manage development at a basin-wide scale.

In June 2000, the Agency of Natural Resources released its "Water Quality and Aquatic Habitat Assessment Report" for Basin 10 as a first step in the planning process. The ANR's Basin 10 Water Quality Management Plan issued May 2012 will guide all state regulatory decisions impacting

wetlands and surface waters associated with the Ottauquechee and Black Rivers, including possible future diversions, impoundments and withdrawals of water. Given existing upstream uses and growth trends in the headwaters region and the potential future impacts of regulatory decisions, Woodstock's landowners and town officials must actively participate in development of this management plan to assure that the interests of Woodstock and its downstream neighbors are thoroughly considered and addressed.

Ottauquechee River Watershed Stream Geomorphic Assessment Bridgewater and Woodstock, Vermont

A stream geomorphic assessment of the Ottauquechee River was conducted by Bear Creek Environmental, LLC (BCE) in the summer of 2012. The study was funded by the State of Vermont Ecosystem Restoration Program and prepared under contract to Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission. A planning strategy based on fluvial geomorphic science was chosen because it provides a holistic, watershed-scale approach to identifying the stressors on river ecosystem health. The stream geomorphic assessment data can be used by resource managers, community watershed groups, municipalities and others to identify how changes to land use alter the physical processes and habitats of rivers. The stream geomorphic assessment data will be used to help focus stream restoration activities within the watershed and assist with town planning.

The Ottauquechee River watershed was divided into nineteen reaches for the 2012 assessment, eighteen on the main stem and one on Reservoir Brook, a tributary. The study encompassed approximately nineteen miles of stream channel. This assessment was helpful in identifying major stressors to geomorphic stability in the Ottauquechee River watershed. The primary problem is channel straightening and corridor encroachment associated with the existence of major roads and development. In some cases, this encroachment has limited floodplain access and has caused moderate to extreme channel degradation (lowering of the bed) resulting in sediment buildup, channel widening, and planform adjustment (lateral movement). Channel straightening has resulted in a reduction in habitat quality and diversity. A lack of high quality streamside buffers along the Ottauquechee River and parts of Reservoir Brook are exacerbating instability and erosion.

A list of 35 potential restoration and conservation projects was developed during project identification. Types of projects include: river corridor protection through easements, improving riparian buffers, improved stormwater management, and alternative analyses for removal of an old road, a windrow berm and two old bridge abutments. Phase 3 surveys for active restoration projects, may be required at some point in the near future for project design and permitting.

GROUNDWATER

The groundwater that supplies the Town's public and private wells is pumped to the surface from aquifers. These aquifers are replenished naturally with precipitation. The surface area that drains into and replenishes an aquifer is called a recharge area.

Virtually all of Woodstock's residents depend on groundwater for their drinking water supply. Groundwater is also relied upon by agriculture and commercial enterprises, and it is vital to the health of our surface waters and wetlands, which in turn protect and support wildlife. It is, therefore, essential that Woodstock identify and map its groundwater resources and develop local ordinances, zoning regulations, and other strategies that maximize the protection of the quality and quantity of our groundwater.

The Village's water supply is fed by wells located primarily on Thompson's Flat. The provider, the

Woodstock Aqueduct Company, is required by state law (10 VSA Chapter 56) to prepare Source Protection Plans that set long-term protection and conservation strategies for these sources of public water.

Although the quality of Woodstock's groundwater is generally good, potential for contamination exists because the region's thin soils and fractured crystalline bedrock provide little in terms of protective filtration. Aquifers and recharge areas that are currently or potentially sources of private or public drinking water should be protected from activities that pose risk of groundwater contamination. Use of these recharge areas should be restricted to activities with minimal impact to land and water resources, such as non-motorized outdoor recreational activities. Management practices commonly considered acceptable for agriculture and logging in Vermont do not adequately protect groundwater resources from contamination and are inappropriate for recharge areas. For this reason, low density pasturing of livestock or sustainable tree harvesting may be acceptable uses of these areas only if riparian buffer requirements and other best management practices (BMPs) are strictly followed.

The primary sources of potential groundwater contamination in Woodstock are underground storage tanks, agricultural runoff, and on-site septic systems.

Leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs) are widely-recognized as a significant and widespread threat to the quality of groundwater. Vermont has developed programs to prevent releases of gasoline and other petroleum products into the soil and groundwater. Woodstock relies on these state programs to regulate these pollution sources. In source water protection or recharge areas, however, relying solely on the state to protect drinking water from petroleum releases may not be enough. Due to gaps in the law and lack of regulatory funding, potential sources of contamination continue to threaten our groundwater. Among these threats are abandoned USTs that still contain petroleum, improper installation, operation and maintenance of active UST systems, and tanks that fall between the regulatory cracks (e.g., home heating oil and aboveground storage tanks).

Agricultural runoff deposits nutrients, pesticides, pathogens, and organic materials directly into our waterways and is now considered a primary source of water pollution both in Vermont and across the nation. Because the soil and bedrock found in Woodstock offers little protective filtration, pollutants associated with agriculture also threaten the quality of our groundwater. Pesticide contamination of drinking water is linked to many illnesses including birth defects, reproductive disorders and cancer. Less than one percent of Vermont's private wells are tested regularly for pesticides and other volatile chemicals, so the true extent of contamination is unknown. To better protect surface and groundwater from pesticide contamination, Woodstock should consider establishing a buffer distance of at least 100' from all water bodies and known recharge areas within which no toxic substances may be applied.

On-site septic systems are another primary source of potential groundwater contamination when they are

not properly designed, constructed, sited, or maintained. The potential for contamination increases as the number of systems in any given area exceeds the capacity of the soils in that area to assimilate effluent. Although Woodstock currently requires on-site septic systems to meet fairly stringent state standards, as of July 1, 2007, the state's on-site waste disposal rules allow installation of alternative performance-based systems that, in effect, permit development on slopes and soils that could not have been developed a few years ago. It is important, therefore, to determine what areas in the Town will become developable and use this information to plan and regulate accordingly.

Other noteworthy sources of potential groundwater contamination (as well as contamination of soils, surface water, and indoor air) include old or abandoned industrial and waste disposal sites, hazardous waste generators, industrial floor drains, and chemical, herbicide, and salt applications to town roads, driveways, lawns, golf courses, and utility rights-of-way.

The State of Vermont lists a number of "active hazardous sites" in Woodstock where contaminants have entered the environment and are being managed and monitored for further releases by the State. The sites may be viewed at the website of the Agency of Natural Resources: www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/wastediv/sms/hazsites.html.

In addition to these sites, Woodstock also has one of the state's five hazardous sites that qualified for clean-up funding under federal and state Brownfields programs. After many years of cleanup activity the site known as the Gerrish/Woodstock East property received a certificate of completion from the State on June 5, 2012.

Some naturally-occurring contaminants (radon, arsenic, radionuclides, and a variety of metals) found in rocks, soil, and water may also be of concern to Woodstock residents. Contamination from these natural elements is most likely to occur, if at all, in wells or aquifers that lie in bedrock.

The Vermont Geological Survey is creating a new bedrock geologic map, to be completed in the next few years that will help define ground-water availability and quality as well as information on bedrock types that may be associated with natural contaminants.

Protection of groundwater requires protection of surface waters, wetlands, watersheds and recharge areas in a coordinated, ecologically sound fashion. Protective and preventative measures to ensure the quality of drinkable groundwater are less expensive in the long term than restoring the quality of polluted groundwater or finding substitute water sources. The State is developing groundwater resource mapping techniques that will provide more detailed information on the characteristics and extent of Vermont's aquifers. Once complete, the groundwater resource mapping project should indicate both the local and regional nature of Woodstock's aquifers and where the Town may need to coordinate with neighboring towns in establishing groundwater protection goals. In the meantime, the Town should consider adopting its own groundwater protection ordinance based on the Groundwater Protection Model Ordinance developed and recommended by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.

The Vermont Geological Survey completed a study of the bedrock and surficial geology of the town in the summer of 2006. This study includes a preliminary investigation of groundwater recharge potential and possible aquifers based on the mapping of glacial deposits and bedrock including the use of existing water well data. The thickness and extent of saturated sand and gravel, the nature of the glacial overburden and the fractures and layering in bedrock are important factors in understanding the groundwater resources of the town. This report should be examined as the town plans for future town water needs and as the town considers the impact of larger scale commercial and residential development in these areas.

RIVERS AND STREAMS

The quality and character of the Ottauquechee River and its tributaries contribute greatly to the quality of

life that defines Woodstock and its rural character. Once heavily polluted by a nearby woolen mill and untreated sewage the renewed quality of the Ottauquechee River represents an ongoing commitment to protecting this valued natural resource.

The headwaters of Woodstock's streams feed the Ottauquechee River and ultimately the Connecticut River. Providing a healthy aquatic environment for fish, invertebrates and all other forms of wildlife depend on maintaining the delicate complexity of these upland wet areas.

The ability of the river and its streams to support fish populations and associated recreational benefits, however, is largely dependent upon improving water quality and lowering water temperatures for native populations of brook trout, longnose and blacknose dace, sculpin, and other native fish species. Rainbow trout, a western species introduced in the 1800s, is stocked annually by the state for the benefit of sports fishermen.

For native species to thrive as they once did, our surface waters must be able to provide adequate supplies of oxygen and support the plant, animal, and insect life on which these fish populations feed. Warm temperatures, low flow levels and contaminants threaten the ability of fish populations to survive. Removal of shading vegetation and development in and around rivers and streams can be harmful to fish habitat unless care is taken to prevent turbidity, sedimentation, decreased dissolved oxygen, temperature changes and flow alteration.

Potentially damaging uses of our surface waters, streambanks and floodplains shall not be permitted. Our river and streams are physically connected to and dependent upon the groundwater, wetlands, land cover and land uses that surround them. The impact on water quality, therefore, must also be considered in all decisions affecting any of these resources.

Non-point pollution sources are the greatest cause of water quality impairment. The principal sources of these impairments are agricultural runoff, streambank destabilization and erosion, removal of riparian (streamside) vegetation, upstream impoundments, flow modification, land development and highway maintenance/runoff.

Buffer strips of naturally growing grasses, shrubs, and trees are essential to the health of our surface waters and the easiest, most effective means of protecting water quality. Without vegetated riparian buffers, silt covers spawning beds, impeding or eliminating the necessary oxygen exchange to fish eggs provided by free-flowing, cool water. Silt depletes oxygen as well and interferes with the oxygen exchange through the gills of adult fish. Eutrophication caused by increased nutrient runoff into surface waters also decreases the amount of oxygen available to aquatic life.

Vegetated shorelines enhance water quality and shoreline protection in the following ways:

1. Provide bank support and stabilization;
2. Help prevent bank undercutting and bank collapse;
3. Provide food and shelter for fish and wildlife;
4. Intercept, absorb, and filter out pollutants such as silt, fertilizers, toxic chemicals, and livestock wastes;
5. Keep water temperatures cool during hot summer months when fish are susceptible to heat stress;
6. Slow surface water runoff;
7. Increase wildlife diversity;
8. Reduce flood and ice damage to stream channel, and adjacent lands and structures;
9. Preserve natural character of waters.

WETLANDS

Wetlands are one of the earth's most productive ecosystems. They provide travel corridors and critical habitat for wildlife, including food, cover, breeding and nesting grounds. Wetlands often lie at the headwaters of rivers and streams and help maintain flow during periods of drought. They also provide open space and aesthetic qualities in addition to recreational and educational opportunities. Wetland boundaries are not fixed; they may change depending on such factors as season, precipitation, geological processes, animal activity, and human alteration.

The numerous small wetlands scattered throughout Woodstock provide functions and values that maintain the ecological integrity of our natural environment and provide many other benefits to our community. Many of these wetlands provide temporary storage of flood waters, thereby decreasing adverse effects on downstream communities and habitats while reducing the severity of flooding within our own town. They also recharge groundwater and improve water quality by retaining sediments, nutrients, and pollutants that otherwise contaminate surface waters.

Wetlands are important feeding and breeding areas for a variety of plants, animals, and insects. Many mammals depend on the food resources of these areas in early spring when other sources of food are less available. Because small wetlands thaw faster than larger wetlands, they provide early, high protein foods for migrants and early nesting hens. They are also critical in the flight paths of migrating aquatic birds and waterfowl. The changing dynamics of beaver-influenced wetlands create diverse, rich invertebrate and plant life that support mink, bats, turtles, salamanders, swallows and numerous other species. Because only 0.8 % of Windsor County is covered by wetlands, the lowest of any county in the state, protecting these limited, life-sustaining resources and wildlife access to them is critical to preserving the biodiversity of Woodstock's fauna and flora.

Vernal Pools are ephemeral wetlands that fill with water in the spring and generally dry out during late summer. A whole suite of wildlife species, including fairy shrimp, fingernail clams, many invertebrates and three salamander species, rely specifically on vernal pools to complete all or part of their life cycle. Because they are not fed by streams, vernal pools provide an environment free of predatory fish for the birth of amphibians including two species currently on Vermont's list of Species of Special Concern, the spotted and Jefferson's salamanders.

Seeps are formed when groundwater rises to the surface creating a small, wet opening in the forest canopy. The purity and functional integrity of seeps is vital, both as wildlife habitat and to the health of our surface waters.

Ferns, rushes, sedges and other wetland plants dominate seep communities which are often too wet to support shrubs and trees. These small wetland areas cleanse waters of phosphorus and nitrogen as well as provide clean, cold groundwater to many surface waters that flow through the town. Because seeps are groundwater driven, many do not freeze in winter making them important watering holes for many species.

The functional and ecological importance of seeps merits an effort by the town to identify and protect them. As a result of land clearing, many seeps in Woodstock are now found in open fields where wet areas are often considered a nuisance in spite of their ecological importance.

Identification and protection of woodland seeps will require effort and commitment on the part of Woodstock and its landowners. Members of Woodstock's Conservation Commission support and will join the effort of wetland specialists around the state to learn more about and to protect these valuable assets.

Woodstock Wetlands Inventory, Assessment & Mapping Project

In 2002, the Woodstock Conservation Commission conducted a comprehensive review of Woodstock's

wetlands. The study focused on identifying and mapping the town's wetlands, identifying the natural communities supported by Woodstock's wetlands and assessing the functional values of each wetland type. Color-infrared aerial photos, digital ortho-photographs, NRCS soil maps, topographical maps and Vermont Significant Wetland Inventory maps were used to locate and map 365 wetlands and potential wetlands within the town.

Only 162 of Woodstock's wetlands appear on State Wetlands Inventory maps and are classified as Class II wetlands, affording them a certain amount of regulatory protection. The remaining 203 wetlands are considered Class III wetlands and are not protected under Vermont State Wetland Rules unless hydrologically connected to a Class II wetlands.

The Wetlands Inventory, Assessment and Mapping Project provides the first step in protecting and preserving Woodstock's valuable wetland resources. Project findings reveal that due to their small size, protecting Woodstock's limited wetland resources is especially critical in maintaining clean water, hydrological integrity (equilibrium), wildlife and plant diversity. The report concluded with management recommendations emphasizing the need to avoid use of heavy equipment in wetland areas to prevent disruption of local hydrology, erosion and compaction of wetland soils.

Natural Communities

A natural community is an interacting assemblage of plants and animals, their physical environment, and the natural processes that affect them. (*Wetland, Woodland, Wildland* Thompson & Sorenson, 2000) Because we know certain plants, animals and invertebrates are important, but in many instances are not able to conserve them species by species, we can best protect them through identifying the natural communities/habitats that support them. As these assemblages of plants and animals repeat across the landscape wherever similar environmental conditions exist, it is possible to describe these repeating natural assemblages as natural communities. Examples of some common natural community types in Vermont are northern hardwood forest, shallow emergent marsh, and alder swamp.

In 2008, Brett Engstrom, Ecologist/Botanist, completed a town-wide inventory of Woodstock's natural communities. The goal of the project, initiated by Conservation Commission, was to raise awareness of Woodstock's natural heritage and to better understand how to protect the town's important natural and wildlife habitats, and overall ecological health. The report, "Identification, Assessment, and Mapping of Natural Communities in Woodstock, Vermont" identified 13 upland and 27 wetland natural communities, plus 20 rare, threatened, endangered, or uncommon plant species that contribute to the biodiversity and health of our functioning environment. Each natural community and plant species was ranked based on their ecological importance in maintaining biodiversity at both the town and state levels. Thirty clusters of natural communities of especially high biological value were also identified. The inventory provides essential information needed to inform town planning and to establish priorities in safeguarding Woodstock's significant natural resources. Local zoning regulations and proposed changes in land use should reflect the importance of these biologically significant areas in supporting a healthy and resilient natural environment. A large scale map of Woodstock's natural communities is available in the town planning office.

FORESTS

Seventy to eighty percent of Woodstock's land area is covered by northern hardwood forest widely interspersed with stands of hemlock, white pine and red spruce. These lands are used for commercial timber production, a short section of the Appalachian Trail and provide a variety of recreational opportunities. Other benefits to humans that are not as easy to quantify include the forests' role in providing a healthy environment by purifying air and water of pollutants, preventing erosion, and reducing the frequency and magnitude of floods. Equally important is the role our forests play in supporting species diversity. The diversity of species in our forests is an indicator of a healthy environment for humans.

Among Woodstock's largest forested parcels are those located in the southwestern part of town. This area includes 797 acres of the 5,267 acres that make up the Coolidge State Forest. Together with similar areas in Bridgewater, Plymouth and Reading, this extensive, relatively undeveloped forested region provides critical habitat for moose, bear, bobcat, fisher, and snowshoe hare and contributes significantly to our local forest economy.

Until recently, forestland was regarded as nonproductive land of little monetary value. It remained wooded simply because it was too rough or inaccessible for agriculture. Advances in telecommunications and transportation systems have now enabled people to move to rural Vermont while still pursuing careers historically centered in cities. Consequently, the demand for building sites in Woodstock is growing, threatening the integrity of what we now recognize as valuable forest ecosystems.

Of particular concern is the clearing of forestland for new home sites, which results in forest and habitat fragmentation, impacting the health of entire forest ecosystems and threatening populations of moose, bear and other wildlife that require large tracts of contiguous forestland for survival and reproduction. Also of concern is the subdivision of large parcels of forestland, which impedes good commercial forest management. The integrity and health of our forests are also threatened by air pollution and a changing climate, both of which increase the likelihood and impact of disease and pest infestations within our forests.

Woodstock should protect forestland located within the town through educational programs that promote the principles of forest stewardship and sustainable forestry practices. Woodstock should also develop a stewardship plan for its municipal forests. In 2005, approximately 12,000 acres of privately-held forest land were enrolled in the state's Use Value Assessment Program (Current Use), requiring owners to have a state-approved forest management plan. Although this program provides incentive for landowners to at least temporarily retain large parcels of forestland, it does little to thwart the clearing and subdivision of forestland for home sites. For this reason, the town should also consider regulations that encourage landowners to keep their woodland parcels intact.

EARLY-SUCCESSIONAL FOREST AND SHRUBLAND

Early-successional forest and shrub habitats are declining statewide. A wide array of native plants, mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles depend on these early-growth habitats. Maintaining, or increasing, early-succession forest and shrub acreage to benefit wildlife should be a conservation priority for Woodstock. The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) sponsored by the USDA provides funds and technical assistance to landowners interested in maintaining a portion of their land in early-successional growth to benefit wildlife.

GRASSLANDS AND GRASSLAND NESTING BIRDS

Woodstock's hayfields provide nesting habitat for bobolink, eastern meadowlarks and many other ground-nesting bird species. Forest succession, agricultural pesticide use and changes in mowing practices are factors that have contributed to the loss of suitable nesting fields and consequent population decline of grassland birds within Windsor County and throughout the state. The North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) has designated grassland birds as priority species in Vermont.

Where appropriate, management of hayfields of five acres, or larger, to accommodate nesting grassland birds should be encouraged. Grassland bird nesting success in hayfields can be optimized by delaying mowing until most young are out of the nest and able to fly. Audubon Vermont provides outreach and management guidelines to landowners wishing to enhance grassland bird habitat on their properties.

WILDLIFE HABITAT & ENDANGERED SPECIES

Woodstock contains valuable natural habitats that are critical to local plant and wildlife populations. Intensified development and the pressure felt by the Town's planning commission and development

review boards to compromise the continued viability of these habitats is of particular concern. Of immediate concern are critical habitats, such as wetlands, vernal pools, rivers and streams, deer wintering areas, and those areas supporting endangered and threatened species. Woodstock should consider adopting habitat protection measures to ensure that these important habitats remain intact, that common species remain common, and to safeguard those unique habitats that support uncommon and rare species identified by Vermont's Natural Heritage Program.

INVASIVE PLANTS

Invasive, exotic plants introduced into our region from elsewhere are a growing threat to the diversity and ecological function of Woodstock's natural ecosystems and to the productivity of local agricultural enterprises. These invasives decrease the available habitat for native species, reducing the breeding and feeding opportunities. Over a dozen non-native, invasive plant species currently on Vermont's Noxious Weed and Watch Lists are invading the town's cultivated fields, woodlands, wetlands, river and stream banks and other natural areas. Exotic plant populations are well established on Mt. Peg and along the Ottauquechee River, Kedron Brook and the Gulf Stream.

Early detection and removal have proven to be the best remedy to the spread of invasive plants. The Conservation Commission is actively working to raise public awareness of the potential harm these aggressive imports pose to our native plants and animals and the health of our natural communities.

DEER YARDS & WINTERING RANGE

Deer annually migrate, often several miles, from fall habitats to wintering areas. The size and shape of the town's mapped deer yards, vary slightly from year to year depending on winter weather severity and deer numbers. These sheltering areas, composed primarily of mature hemlock and white pine, help minimize the impact of severe winter conditions and energy loss white-tailed deer experience living near the northern limit of their range. Of primary concern are activities that threaten these critical winter refuges, such as housing, recreation, commercial development, highway construction, and some logging practices. Due to the importance of winter shelter in maintaining deer populations, Woodstock should take the steps necessary to ensure protection for these areas.

EXCAVATION OR EXTRACTION OF SAND, GRAVEL AND NATURAL MATERIALS

The removal of any material from land for commercial sale shall employ best management practices designed to prevent erosion, debris and other materials from flowing into or filling any drainage course, body of water, street or neighboring property. Upon completion, the site shall be regraded as closely as possible to the original contours to prevent drainage problems. Once regraded, the topsoil shall be replaced onto the site and the site shall be reseeded, mulched and suitably planted with native trees, shrubs and grasses to prevent erosion. Replanted areas shall be monitored for invasive plant species until desired vegetation is established. Prior to excavation or construction of access roads, a restoration plan fully describing the specifics involved in the above reclamation provisions shall be approved by the appropriate municipal panel.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

To oversee and help protect the Town's natural environment and resources, Woodstock has formed a Conservation Commission with duties and powers set forth in Vermont's state statutes. Woodstock will provide an annual budget for the running of the Commission.

DEVELOPING LAND CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

To safeguard Woodstock's natural heritage and identify the town's most urgent conservation needs, the Conservation Commission should develop a Conservation Priorities Plan. The plan will serve as a guide to the Planning Commission, local land trusts and other groups reviewing development proposals and making land use decisions. Such a plan might include the identification of large blocks of undeveloped open land and contiguous forest, core wildlife habitats, corridors linking both large land tracts and water resources used by wildlife, key wildlife habitats along the Ottauquechee, and natural

communities supporting uncommon and rare species.

TOWN ROADS AND TRAILS AFFECTING CONSERVATION AREAS

Town roads and legal trails are the primary means of access to land in conservation areas. Principal users of these roads or trails are local residents, seasonal camp owners, hikers, snowmobilers and loggers. Some of these roads accommodate relatively few vehicles. The Select Board retains jurisdiction over local roads. Roads are classified by the Town. Class three highways include the typical back road. Class four roads are not regularly maintained and are only improved to the extent required by the necessity of the Town. Legal trails are not highways and the Town is not required to maintain them.

Future land use planning and development needs to be compatible with and complement the long-term land use goals and policies of this Plan. Public investment decisions that have the potential effect of altering the stated land use goals of this Plan are to be discouraged. In considering whether to reclassify or improve a Class 4 road or legal trail, or to lay out or accept a new highway in conservation areas due consideration should be given as to the extent of development likely to result from the action and whether such action supports the goals of the Plan for the area affected.

ESTABLISH A CONSERVATION FUND

Establishing a conservation fund would enable Woodstock to make a long-term investment in land conservation. Most municipal conservation projects involve financing from multiple partners. A local conservation fund is often critical to making conservation projects a reality because it represents a community's commitment to conservation and provides leverage to raise dollars from other funding sources.

G.I.S. & DATA RETRIEVAL

To provide a "pool" of information on Woodstock's natural resources, a data retrieval system is maintained, by the Planning and Zoning Office, to help the Planning Commission and Development Review Boards, as well as other groups and individuals, make more informed decisions.

To better protect Woodstock's diverse plant and animal life for all future generations to enjoy, the Conservation Commission plans to expand the town's natural resources database to include native plant and animal populations and the habitats that support them. Town-wide natural communities mapping together with flora and fauna inventories of representative communities will provide detailed baseline data against which future development proposals and suggested changes in land use may be evaluated.

OPEN SPACE

Of prime importance to the quality of life and character of Woodstock are its open spaces, which include not only open fields and meadows, but also wooded hillsides, forests, stream corridors and other natural vistas.

The Woodstock Conservation Commission will oversee open space issues and act as an advisory group to the Planning Commission, Select Board, Village Trustees, Town and Village Development Review Boards and the community at large. Involvement by the Conservation Commission should be encouraged when any development is proposed involving the town's open spaces.

Woodstock's appealing landscape is defined by its unique combination of rural countryside and densely settled villages and hamlets. The Village of Woodstock is the largest of these, with the centers of South Woodstock, Taftsville, Prosper, and West Woodstock serving as important as sub-centers. These hamlets are the result of historical development that was influenced by the flow of transportation along the flat river bottoms as well as a diversified economy of in-town trade and rural agriculture.

Protecting and maintaining Woodstock's open spaces is vital to the community's economic, social and

environmental future. Maintaining the economic base provided by both tourism and agriculture in the Town requires a generous resource of scenic beauty in the countryside, in the Village, and in the areas adjacent to the Village and hamlets of Woodstock. The primary threats to the rural character of the town and its open spaces are natural reforestation of previously farmed fields, and development, both residential and commercial, that is insensitive to the agrarian heritage and pastoral aesthetics that have historically defined the unique attributes of Woodstock.

U.S. Route 4 (a major East-West artery) and State Routes 12 and 106, are well-traveled corridors leading to and from Woodstock. Currently the character of these roads varies from residential and commercial development to relatively sparsely populated open spaces. Recent years have seen increased development along these routes that pass directly through the center of Woodstock Village and the Town's hamlets. Resulting loss of scenic differentiation between the Village and hamlets and the rural countryside that surrounds them could unduly impact the aesthetic and environmental quality of the entire town. Woodstock should establish clear definition of commercial and open space zones along Routes 4, 12, and 106. Concepts for these zones should include provisions for scenic vistas, preservation of agricultural lands, river corridor conservation zones, and creative use

of setback requirements to create a clear "greenway" through which travelers to Woodstock would move.

Many residents view the continued commercial expansion along these state and federal roads as uncontrolled "strip development." This sort of development raises the following concerns, which should be considered by the Town when reviewing applications for development along these corridors:

1. Loss of scenic vistas and open wooded hillsides;
2. Loss of the scenic differentiation between town and countryside;
3. Loss of natural habitats along stream/river corridors;
4. Loss of prime agricultural lands and flood plains;
5. Traffic congestion and environmental impacts resulting ill-designed commercial expansion along major thoroughfares;
6. The proliferation of unattractive commercial properties and continuous curb cuts unbuffered by sufficient landscaping;
7. Traffic patterns designed exclusively for automobile use that are dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists.

VILLAGE PARKS/OPEN SPACES

The Village of Woodstock is fortunate to have a broad range of parks and open spaces. Ranging from active playing fields to trail-laced woodlands, these parklands are well used by many citizens, visitors, and organized groups. Each park has a group of civic-minded persons who are involved in their upkeep and basic maintenance.

The presence of these open spaces is a primary component of Village and hamlet identity. The Village Green is an excellent example of a public landscape. Faulkner Park (11 acres), privately owned and maintained by The Faulkner Trust, provides a quiet, more passive park environment. Vail Field is a recreational park run by the Woodstock Recreation Department,—with assistance from Woodstock Associates. Billings Park on Mt. Tom (130 acres) and Billings Park on Mt. Peg (62 acres), managed by the Billings Park Commission, provide hiking trails and spectacular views from their summits and serve as important wooded backdrops to the densely settled Village.

Another important component of Village identity is its open expanse of riverscape and residential areas that remain unbroken by high, solid fencing. These neighborhoods and the riverscape's open and unbroken vistas epitomize and enhance the sense of congeniality and security that has defined this community for generations. The openness of our riverscape and neighborhoods must be preserved, unbroken by solid fences, private docks and other structures.

Plans for a proposed riverside park are outlined in the East End Study and the earlier Woodstock Conservation and Development Report. The Village also encourages construction of a pedestrian/bike path that will enhance enjoyment and access to the envisioned riverside park. This path has been designed and mapped to run from the Frost Mills lot eastward along the river on land abutting the Billings Farm fields.

The "Route 4 Corridor Street Tree Master Plan", completed in 1994, mapped all existing trees along the Village portion of Route 4. Incorporated into the plan were recommendations to add future tree plantings within this corridor to enhance the scenic qualities of the Village. Expansion of the tree plan to include other highly visible residential streets in the Village should be considered.

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park

In 1992, the Billings mansion and approximately 550 acres of the land abutting the Pogue between the Prosper Road and Route 12 was given to the United States government to create the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park

The land contained within Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park has long played an important and respected role in the recreational and open space environment of Woodstock. Many residents and visitors to Woodstock enjoy hiking, cross-country skiing, horse-related activities and a variety of other recreational pursuits encouraged by the system of carriage roads that pass through the forests and fields and alongside the Pogue.

Woodstock supports and is grateful for the conservation and preservation of this property, which is an enormous asset to the community. It is important, however, that the planning and implementation of the Park's programs conform with the Town and Village Plans and that the Park's operations are in harmony with the rhythms and patterns of life that make Woodstock an attractive place to live and work.

The Town should continue to evaluate the impact that increased use of national park lands may have on the community, whether that increase arises through implementation of the Park's plans and programs or simply because the Park becomes better known through publicity and reputation. In this regard, it is also important that residents and officials of the Town participate in the Park's management and planning processes. Of primary concern to the Town and Village are increased traffic congestion and parking demand, the need for additional municipal services, and the increased property burdens of those who live within close proximity to the park.

MUNICIPAL AND STATE FORESTS

Public forest lands within the Town of Woodstock include two municipal forest tracts located off Grassy Lane (23 acres) in northwest Woodstock and Long Hill Road (97 acres) in South Woodstock as well as 797 acres of forest reserve in South Woodstock that is part of the Coolidge State Forest. Although no stewardship or management plan for Woodstock's municipal forests currently exists, such a plan should be developed to ensure the forests' continued health and sustainability.

PRIVATELY CONSERVED LANDS

Of no less importance are the open spaces (fields, forests, and special places) conserved by Woodstock's private landowners. Through their visionary actions over 2,170 individually-held acres within the Town have been permanently conserved through land trust conservation easements.

SCENIC RIDGELINE DISTRICT

Woodstock's Scenic Ridgeline District was established in 1992 in response to the adverse visual impacts of development on the scenic qualities of the Town's prominent ridges and hillsides, which contribute significantly to the Town's aesthetic identity. Conditional use review and approval are now required for any proposed development within 500 feet of the Town's primary ridges, as identified on the Scenic Ridgeline Map located in the Planning and Zoning Office. The Scenic Viewshed Map was completed

in 2005 using computer analysis to identify all viewsheds visible from the town's principal road corridors. Regulations strengthening the Town's ability to restrict inappropriate development within the Scenic Ridgeline District are recommended.

ACTION PROGRAM

Following are the identified problems and issues facing Woodstock and the corresponding goals, objectives and Actions for resolution. Those Actions with an asterisk are of high priority.

Goal 1 - Maintain or improve groundwater and surface water quality for public and aquatic health and related recreational benefits.

***Objective 1.1.** Protect groundwater resources from the adverse impacts of development and maintain or improve the water quality and ecological functions of Woodstock's waterways.*

***Action 1.1.1.** Actively participate in and implement the development of the State's Ottauquechee/Black River Watershed Basin 10 Plan

Action 1.1.2. Ensure that information on all residential and commercial septic systems and water well locations is available in the Town's Planning Office.

Action 1.1.3. Maintain and make available in the Town's Planning Office a list of all state and federally identified brownfield/hazardous waste sites and other potential sources of groundwater contamination, such as old town dumps and abandoned service stations.

Action 1.1.4. Provide town residents with informational materials on the impacts of toxic products that commonly go down the drain or are washed off lawns and gardens and eventually seep into groundwater and drinking water supplies; include more environmentally friendly alternatives to toxics use and guidelines for storage or use of toxic substances in floodplain zones.

Action 1.1.5. Discourage activities, such as development, road construction, heavy livestock grazing, dumping, filling and herbicide and pesticide use in known public groundwater recharge areas and areas adjacent to waterways and wetlands.

***Action 1.1.6.** Maintain zoning regulations to require that any development of land, including residential development, located in public identified recharge or source protection area be subject to conditional use approval to help ensure that new landowners are aware that limited activities are allowed.

Action 1.1.7. Expand map of groundwater recharge areas as information from the state's aquifer/groundwater mapping project becomes available and recommend ongoing changes where appropriate.

Action 1.1.8. Consider adoption of a groundwater protection ordinance based on the model ordinance developed by ANR.

Action 1.1.9. Utilize current research findings to update buffer zone protections for Woodstock's river, streams and areas where groundwater comes to the surface in order to maintain water quality and the community's wildlife and plant heritage and diversity.

Action 1.1.10. Continue consultation with the Conservation Commission for evaluation all proposals for development of land adjacent to or including surface waters.

Action 1.1.11. Enforce flood hazard regulations that ban construction in floodways.

Action 1.1.12. Refer riparian landowners and developers to appropriate sources for guidelines for stream bank and buffer zone protection including proper erosion prevention procedures for construction activities adjacent to waterways.

Action 1.1.13. Encourage foresters and loggers to use Acceptable Management Practices for Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont (VT Dept. of

Forests, Parks and Recreation, 2005) as a minimum standard when conducting logging operations adjacent to streams and stream headwaters.

Action 1.1.14. Work with the Windsor County Forester and the State Watershed Forester to ensure that local foresters, loggers and others harvesting timber in the Town are aware of the Town's wetland regulations and to further reduce soil disturbance and damage to environmentally sensitive riparian and headwater habitats.

Action 1.1.15. Continue to promote through regulatory and voluntary means the planting of native shrubs and trees in river and stream buffer zone protection areas and in stream bank restoration projects to prevent erosion, silting and to provide food and shelter for wildlife.

***Action 1.1.16.** Integrate into the zoning regulations where appropriate the specific Best Management Practices (BMPs) developed by the Natural Resource Conservation Service for buffer strips, diversion of surface water runoff, and the storage and spreading of manure, fertilizers and pesticides.

Action 1.1.17. Encourage the use of farming and gardening methods to eliminate fertilizer, pesticide and herbicide run-off in waterway and wetland areas.

***Action 1.1.18.** Discourage the practice of snow dumping along streams.

Action 1.1.19. Train and educate town road crews using the procedures contained in the Vermont Better Back roads Manual (1995) to reduce the amount of sedimentation and contaminants added to waterways while maintaining dirt and gravel back roads.

***Action 1.1.20.** Retain zoning regulations which prohibit the construction of in-stream ponds.

Action 1.1.21. Support and participate in regional efforts to establish monitoring and reporting of surface water quality.

Objective 1.2. *Protect the long-term ability of Woodstock's wetland communities to perform critical hydrological functions and maintain the Town's heritage of wildlife and plant diversity.*

***Action 1.2.1.** Work with the Town's Conservation and Planning Commissions to establish guidelines for buffer zone protection of Class II and Class III wetlands based on plant, invertebrate and wildlife requirements.

Action 1.2.2. Work with foresters and loggers to minimize the impacts of timber harvesting on the hydrological functions and ecological integrity of vernal pools and wetland communities.

Action 1.2.3. Provide informational materials to landowners explaining the functions of vernal pools and wetlands and the integral importance of each in maintaining the Town's hydrological balance and ecological fabric, including critical habitat for plant, animal and rare species.

***Action 1.2.4.** Continue to update Woodstock's Wetlands Inventory Map and database as new information becomes available.

Goal 2. - Preserve the character of Woodstock's community and natural environment which is threatened by incremental development and subdivision.

Objective 2.1. *Strengthen Woodstock's ability to thoroughly review and anticipate the impact of development proposals.*

Action 2.1.1. Utilize education materials and workshops specifically designed to improve the ability of Vermont towns to review development proposals.

Action 2.1.2. Analyze the 2011 TRORC build out planning scenario to help town officials and the public visualize and plan for future growth and development in Woodstock.

***Action 2.1.3.** Consider the impact of exterior lighting in all development proposals, for conformance with the criteria outlined in the towns zoning regulations and the Outdoor Lighting Manual for Vermont Municipalities

***Action 2.1.4.** Utilize the current G.I.S. data layers to analyze the potential impact of all proposed development on the natural landscape and integrate this information into the permit application file for use by permit applicants, the Planning Commission and Development Review Boards.

Action 2.1.5. Continue a liaison between the Conservation Commission, the Planning Commission and the Development Review Boards.

Objective 2.2. *Use and maintain the Woodstock Natural Communities Inventory assessment and data base.*

Action 2.2.1. Routinely analyze the Natural Communities Inventory for updates to town zoning regulations and associated maps.

Objective 2.3. *Identify significant/exemplary wildlife and plant habitats and develop strategies that protect both common and rare species.*

Action 2.3.1. Utilize the findings of Woodstock's Wetlands Inventory, Assessment and Woodstock Natural Communities Mapping Project as a guide in making jurisdictional determinations.

***Action 2.3.2.** Utilize the Vermont Habitat Block Maps as the basis for identifying blocks of undeveloped open land and contiguous forest, core wildlife habitats, critical habitats supporting rare species and corridors linking both large land tracts and water resources used by wildlife.

Action 2.3.3. Coordinate wildlife corridors via the Linking Lands Alliance recommendation.

Action 2.3.4. Direct landowners to websites that provide information on how to maintain wildlife habitats on their land including early successional forest and native shrub habitats and open fields that support grassland breeding birds.

Action 2.3.5. Establish a municipal conservation fund that would enable Woodstock to take advantage of land conservation opportunities when they arise and provide leverage in seeking grants and/or additional funds for habitat and water quality protection.

***Action 2.3.2.** Utilize the Vermont Habitat Block Maps as the basis for identifying blocks of undeveloped open land and contiguous forest, core wildlife habitats, critical habitats supporting rare species and corridors linking both large land tracts and water resources used by wildlife.

Goal 3 - Woodstock's forests should be protected.

Objective 3.1. *Involve the community in supporting good forest management practices and stewardship.*

***Action 3.1.1.** Encourage foresters and landowners to follow recommendations in "Acceptable Management Practices for Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont" published the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.

Action 3.1.2. Work with the State Watershed Forester to promote water quality and logger education programs that address soil disturbance, erosion and compaction problems arising from improper harvesting practices.

Action 3.1.3. Direct landowners to websites that provide educational materials to landowners wishing to enhance the natural ecological integrity of their woodlands by adopting forest stewardship techniques that encourage the establishment of mature

forests with a median canopy age of 150 years.

***Action 3.1.4.** Develop a stewardship plan for Woodstock's municipal forests.

Objective 3.2. *Maintain and preserve large forest tracts as sustainable biological and economic resources.*

Action 3.2.1. Minimize forest fragmentation by utilizing cluster housing, Planning concepts, and use of forest conservation easements.

Action 3.2.2. Encourage dedicated forest conservation easements to retain larger parcels..

Goal 4 - Limit the spread of invasive plants into Woodstock's natural areas, working forests, and agricultural fields

Objective 4.1. *Control invasive plant species to minimize ecological and economic impacts to our native species and habitats, working forests and agricultural fields.*

***Action 4.1.1.** Conduct workshops and provide informational materials to help landowners identify and control invasive plants on their properties.

***Action 4.1.2.** Work with the Billings Park Commission, regional specialists, and other civic groups to control invasive plants on public lands.

***Action 4.1.3.** Encourage town and state road maintenance workers and utility, construction and logging crews to clean mowers, backhoes and other equipment before moving on to new sites.

Goal 5 - Protect open spaces and scenic vistas.

Objective 5.1. *Identify, map and prioritize Town open spaces and significant scenic vistas.*

Action 5.1.1. Work with town officials, boards, land trusts, state, regional and federal agencies to establish and implement open space protection goals through conservation easements, zoning regulations and other land protection mechanisms.

Action 5.1.2. Update and maintain the Scenic Ridgeline overlay map

Action 5.1.3. Create viewshed map.

Goal 6 - Preserve the Village and hamlet's public/private open spaces.

Objective 6.1. *Maintain the "sense of place" and scenic value that's created by the Town's open spaces, including those within the Village and outlying hamlets.*

Action 6.1.1. Adopt a scenic policy statement that characterizes those values commonly or traditionally associated with Woodstock's village and hamlets.

***Action 6.1.2.** Encourage the establishment of a riverside park within the Village as proposed in the East End Study and relocation of the Village snow dump.

Action 6.1.3. Develop an open space plan for the Town and the Village that includes existing parks and open spaces and provides: trails, pedestrian/bike paths and scenic overlooks along prominent streams and highway corridors, improved sidewalks to and through neighborhoods, and public easements along river corridors for new parks and greenbelts.

***Action 6.1.4.** Develop long-term management plans for the maintenance of public open spaces and parks.

Action 6.1.5. Encourage the National Park Service to maintain open space consistent with the goals of the Town and Village Plans.

Action 6.1.6. Establish a new street tree planting program along scenic roads and encourage Action of the Route 4 Corridor Street Tree Master Plan.

Action 6.1.7. Continue to sponsor civic and educational activities such as Green-Up Day and encourage participation by all citizens and school children.

Action 6.1.8. Amend zoning regulations to require Design and Site Plan Review

for any development that may obstruct open views and vistas of the Ottawaquechee River.

Goal 7 - Insure Compatibility of Alternative Energy Devices In Scenic Ridgeline District

Objective 7.1. Maintain the character of the Scenic Ridgeline District

***Action 7.1.1.** Complete energy assessment report to assure appropriate energy savings have been achieved before placement of devices

Action 7.1.2. Choose devices that would mesh best with proposed location.

Action 7.1.3. Place alternative energy devices in least visible area of property.

Action 7.1.4. Insure that alternative energy devices are complimentary within the District.

RECREATION & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT



WOODSTOCK RECREATION CENTER

The Woodstock Recreation Center (commonly called the Rec Center) offers quality recreational activities and programs for all members of the Woodstock Community, serving Woodstock's youths, adults and senior citizens. The Center buildings and land are owned by Woodstock Associates, a non-profit established under terms of the Faulkner will, which administers distributions from the Faulkner Trust, a major source of funds for the Center, along with user fees and the Town of Woodstock. The Center operates in four locations: the Recreation Center Building, the Center outdoor area, the Little Theater, and Vail Field. It also organizes activities in other areas. All activities are open to residents in all area towns and most have a fee schedule.

Woodstock Recreation Center Main Building

The main building is located on River Street in the Village. It includes offices, a summer concession area, and The Spectrum Teen Center, which provides a wide range of activities for Woodstock teenagers. Beginning in January 2007, extensive renovations to the fitness center, dance studio, conference room and lower level bathrooms were undertaken.

The Center Outdoor Area

The outdoor area includes two swimming pools, a lighted regulation basketball court, a storage garage, two parking areas and a picnic area. Summer only swimming lessons are offered to all children, beginning with infants. In addition, the Woodstock Swim Team offers an organized program for summer competition against other area swim teams. The pools are open to all ages for recreational swimming at scheduled times. An organized Adult Men's basketball league has been offered during the summer months.

Little Theater

The Little Theater sits adjacent to the Rec Center Building and is in regular use. It has a large floor space, a stage, dressing rooms and houses the Rainbow Play School downstairs. On a regular basis, the

theater is used for a wide range of activities, from Aikido to dog obedience classes, to teen dances. The building suffered extensive damage during Tropical Storm Irene, but repairs and renovations have been completed.

Vail Field

Vail Field is located on South Street in the Village and used for the majority of athletics offered through the Rec Center. Organized programs for baseball, soccer, field hockey and lacrosse take place on the multi-purpose fields and baseball diamond. The field space can be arranged appropriately for different age groups and activities. In addition to the fields, there are two lighted tennis courts, a basketball area and a new playground structure for all ages, including a sandbox, swings, slides and more. The Summer Day Camp program for children ages 5 to 11 uses all these areas, as well as the covered pavilion. The nearby Woodstock Elementary School uses the fields and facilities extensively.

Other Activities

Woodstock Recreation Center holds a major fund-raiser in the fall each year. The Apples and Crafts Fair is held Columbus Day weekend. More than 100 craftspeople and specialty food producers participate in this annual event. Attendees are locals and visitors alike. The Center also sponsors the annual July 4th barbecue at Woodstock Union High School, setting up tents for the food, fun and music, culminated by fireworks for the community and the Spectrum Teen Center and John Langhans Green Mile Road Race/Walk/Fun Run, a 7.1 mile event also on Independence Day weekend. This particular event was held for the 37th year in 2013.

UNION ARENA COMMUNITY CENTER

Union Arena is located on the grounds of the Woodstock Union High School. In 2002, an independent non-profit, called Union Arena, Inc. was formalized as a 501 © 3 organization and began the process of designing and funding the arena. Construction was started in the summer of 2003 and the building opened in November of that year. Upon completion, the building was donated to Woodstock Union High School, which signed a contract with Union Arena to operate and manage the facility.

The Union Arena-Woodstock Union High School contract outlines certain reserved uses for the school, including having it ready to function as a field house by the first day of spring sports practice in late March, priority scheduling and other terms and conditions. Woodstock Union High School is not charged for athletic and academic programs conducted during the normal operating school year. An independent Board of Directors, representing the community, oversees the operations of Union Arena.

Union Arena offers five months of winter ice for adult and youth ice hockey, figure skating, curling and public skating. Summer ice skating programs and a curling league are also offered. Spring and fall sports of the Woodstock Union High School utilize the Arena when the ice is out and when inclement weather in spring and fall months forces these sports indoors. Senior, pre-school and handicapped exercise programs are held in the facility in all seasons.

The arena also houses cultural activities: theater festivals, school graduations, art shows, crafts fairs, antique shows, concerts, pet and agricultural shows and other large community gatherings.

WOODSTOCK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The public has the use of the following facilities at the Woodstock Elementary School: the gymnasium for varied activities such as aerobics, basketball, ballet, volleyball and square dancing. Other rooms in the school used for community activities include the cafeteria, music room and the art room. The parking area in the back of the school is used for public parking on weekends and evenings, and the facility is designated as a community shelter in the event of a Village or Town emergency.

The new and exciting playground was installed in the summer of 2013. It consists of innovative apparatuses, play areas, slides, and other activities. An accessible outdoor stage has been incorporated into the design. Except for school hours, use of the playground is unsupervised. Further enhancements

to the entire school grounds are underway and should be complete in 2014.

WOODSTOCK UNION HIGH SCHOOL and MIDDLE SCHOOL

Woodstock Union High School and Middle School is located in West Woodstock just off of Route 4, on Amsden Way. It has two gymnasiums and an auditorium that seats 450 people. The school also has two cafeterias which are, on occasion, used by the public.

Sports competitions that the public may attend include soccer, football, field hockey, basketball, baseball, softball and lacrosse. Hockey events are held in the Union Arena, adjacent to the high school. Alpine Ski competitions are held at the Suicide Six ski area in South Pomfret, Nordic events on the High School grounds and at the Ski Touring Center of the Woodstock Resort, and tennis matches at the Health and Fitness Center also of Woodstock Resort.

Other school activities open to the public include student band concerts, choral concerts, plays, and musicals in the YOH Theater and art exhibits. The high school is used for school board meetings, other meetings, classes and activities for the general public.

WOODSTOCK RESORT

The private facilities of the Woodstock Resort Corporation include the Woodstock Inn and Spa, the Health and Fitness Center, the Country Club, Suicide Six Ski Area, and the Ski Touring Center.

The Health and Fitness Center offers a range of indoor and outdoor sports and fitness facilities. Two indoor tennis courts are available year round, six clay courts and four hard courts are open from spring until mid-autumn. The facility also features a large weight training and exercise room, an indoor pool for training and exercise, a hot tub, sauna and a spa. There are racquetball and squash courts and outdoor courts for paddle tennis in the winter. Classes and individual instruction in tennis, aerobics, fitness training and rehabilitation are available.

The Country Club facilities include an 18-hole par 70 Robert Trent Jones designed golf course, a pro shop, driving range and practice area. From May through October, the club bar and lounge is open. In winter, the Country Club becomes the Ski Touring Center, featuring 75 kilometers of groomed ski and snowshoe trails, including the Mt. Tom trails, groomed by the STC.

Both the Health and Fitness Center and the Country Club are used by the high school for their golf and tennis teams, and the high school cross country ski team uses the Ski Touring Center trails. Other junior programs for golf and tennis are sponsored at the facilities.

The Suicide Six ski area in South Pomfret has eighteen downhill trails, with snowmaking covering 50 acres. Suicide Six is the home of the Woodstock Ski Runners, who organize programs for skiers of all ages and abilities, and sponsor an annual sale of ski equipment at reduced prices. Throughout the ski season, Suicide Six is a center for local skiing and many special events take place there.

AREA PARKS AND FORESTS

There are several parks and forests within Woodstock, or a short drive from Woodstock, where hiking, camping, fishing, boating and swimming can be enjoyed. Facilities include Silver Lake State Park in Barnard; Quechee Gorge State Park in Quechee; the Coolidge State Forest in Plymouth; and a recreation area at the Army Corps of Engineers Hartland Dam. In addition, the area encompassing Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park offers extensive opportunities for walking, hiking, horseback riding and un-groomed cross-country skiing or snowshoeing on maintained carriage road trails.

TOWN FORESTS/PARK

Woodstock owns four parcels of land that are designated as Municipal Forests through V.S.A. Title 10, Chapter 83, 2653. The Select Board may request planning and management help on the Municipal Forests from the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.

The Billings Parks on Mt. Tom and Mt. Peg are managed by the Billings Park Commission. Billings Park on Mt. Tom, a gift to the Town, is well known and well used by many residents and visitors who walk the trails up from Faulkner Park for the spectacular views of the Village and surrounding countryside. This trail is only partially handicap accessible. In addition to the hiking and cross-country ski trails, this 130 acre lot is a dramatic backdrop to the Village of Woodstock.

Billings Park on Mt. Peg, also a gift to the Town, forms a similar steep wooded contrast to the southeast edge of the Village. Its 62 acres provide trails used by hikers and skiers. It is not a handicap accessible trail at this time.

The Billings Lot is a 22 acre woodlot near the Vondell Reservoir managed for periodic timber harvests. There are no signs and it is not easily identified. Size, access, and steep slopes limit recreation of all types.

The Long Hill Block near South Woodstock, consisting of 100 acres, was originally a source of wood for the poor farm. The forest lay dormant for many years and then was rediscovered about twenty-five years ago. It is located alongside Long Hill Road and consists mostly of good hardwoods on mildly sloping land. A parking area would be necessary for public access.

COOLIDGE STATE FOREST

The state of Vermont owns nearly 800 acres in four lots off the Long Hill Road and Curtis Hollow roads in the southwestern part of the Town. While the three smaller lots accessed by the Long Hill Road are managed mostly for wildlife habitat and timber, the Curtis Hollow Block has deeper soils suitable for more uses. A small, federally funded parking lot used primarily by snowmobilers is at the base of a good unplowed road that extends in to the middle of this forest.

The land here ranges from 1000 to 2300 feet in elevation, and supports a nice stand of hardwoods, as well as mixed forest canopies, vernal pools, and unique amphibian habitats. The boundary is near the top of Old Baldy, the nearly bare highest point in Town. It currently sees little public use.

VILLAGE PARKS

The Green is governed by the Village Trustees and enjoys maximum public use. Teagle Landing is centered in the Village at the Kedron Bridge on Central Street. It functions as a vest pocket park and provides a rest and eating area. Tribou Park is a civil war commemorative park at the junction of Central and Pleasant Street. It is a resting spot with benches. The Village owns 3.2 acres in the East End adjacent to the former Woodstock Railroad terminus, now being developed as a public park. Finally, Faulkner Park is located at the base of Mount Tom, adjacent to the Mount Tom Town Forest. It is the starting point to the Mount Tom Trail. The park is open, without facilities other than benches for a short, paved walking path.

WATER RESOURCES

Kedron Brook, Barnard Brook, and the Ottauquechee River are three major waterways running through the Town and Village of Woodstock. They are used by the public for fishing, swimming and canoeing, however there are a limited number of clear public access points along any waterway at this time.

EQUINE SPORTS

Woodstock attracts many people interested in equine recreation because of its scenery, facilities, and network of unpaved roads and trails. The Green Mountain Horse Association, in South Woodstock, has extensive facilities and conducts many equestrian events and activities for members and the public. There are also a number of private stables where riding horses are kept and trained, and are available for riding.

SPECIAL PLACES / SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

The Appalachian Trail runs through the northwest corner of Woodstock, between Bridgewater and Pomfret. Information on the Trail is available through the Green Mountain Club. The Town has been discussing developing a spur trail into the Village in order that hikers might more easily and directly access services when through hiking.

In 2011, a “Walk Woodstock” trail map was published noting 30 miles of trails and paths, all within two miles of the Village Green. The map is available at the Village Welcome Center and on the town website: www.townofwoodstock.org

There are a growing number of road and mountain bicycling enthusiasts in the Town and Village, as well as commercial cycling tour operations which ride in and through the area. It is anticipated that even greater numbers of cyclists will share our roads and trails in the years ahead as demand and participation has been increasing locally, regionally and nationally in the sport for a number of years. The Killington Stage Race, a professional event, runs through Town on a weekend in the early spring each year, and is growing into a major cycling event.

For the recreational cyclist, safer and more accessible cycling trails and paths will be needed. There is keen interest in connecting the central Village to West Woodstock and the WUHSMS campus, and in connecting Woodstock with Bridgewater and Quechee along the Ottauquechee River corridor.

Running events have long been an important activity for Woodstock residents and visitors alike. The Covered Bridges Half Marathon, The Road to the Pogue, The Langhan’s Road Race, Zack’s Place Turkey Day Trot, among other events, have all taken advantage of the great road and trail running opportunities in the Town and Village, while raising considerable money for area charities. These events are important contributors to the appeal and overall quality of life enjoyed in Woodstock.

THE ARTS AND CULTURE

PENTANGLE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

Pentangle Council on the Arts was established in 1974 by a group Woodstock and area citizens to strengthen arts education in the schools, build community and enhance the quality of life for all. Pentangle has evolved into a vital not-for-profit presenting live entertainment, movies, arts programs and residencies in the schools and acting as an arts advocacy organization.

Pentangle directly serves seven schools in the Windsor Supervisory Union School District and an additional 25 schools and home schooled families with its live art programs and residencies. It brings the world to Woodstock by presenting high quality, professional touring artists of music, theater and dance. Pentangle has always played a key role as a collaborator and partner to present community events like the 4th of July, Wassail Weekend, parades, school productions, and free Summer Brown Bag Concerts.

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY / WOODSTOCK HISTORY CENTER

The Dana House is owned by the Woodstock Historical Society. This is an historic house, centrally located in the Village, with a fine collection of period furnishings from 1800 to 1860. In addition, there are collections of maps, portraits, silver, costumes and toys. The barn of Dana House contains a rare

collection of farm, household and artisan tools as well as many other artifacts from the last century. The facilities include an indoor auditorium and an outdoor lawn, and a perennial garden.

The Dana House is open May-October, but administrative offices, research library, and photography/document archive are open year around or by appointment. Programs include monthly lectures, history camps for children, historical re-enactments and local history publications. The Society celebrated its 70th Anniversary in 2013.

MARSH-BILLINGS-ROCKEFELLER NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Vermont's only national park is located just north of the village at the intersection of Route 12 and River Road. The park was gifted by the Rockefellers in 1993, and consists of the Billings mansion and other buildings and 550 acres of land, mostly forested. Guided tours to the mansion are available. Access is free to the many carriage roads and trails on the property. The park offers educational programs in art, agriculture, forestry, history and natural history.

BILLINGS FARM AND MUSEUM

The Billings Farm and Museum is constituted from two separate elements: Billings Farm, a modern working dairy farm which has remained in the Billings family since it was founded in 1869 and a museum of exhibits of late 19th Century Vermont farm life from the perspective of the hill farm family. The museum occupies barns which were originally part of the working farm, and are now rented by the museum. There is an auditorium/theater within the museum building. The 1890 Farm Manager's House, is available for use as an education resource for the community. Portions of the museum are open year round.

The Museum is operated as a project of The Woodstock Foundation, a private non-profit charitable and educational foundation also located on the property.

KING FARM

The Vermont Land Trust, a statewide land conservation organization, owns the 156 acre King Farm located in West Woodstock. The property was left to Trust by Francisca King Thomas in 1987 with the stipulation that the property be perpetually conserved for agricultural and forestry activities or related educational programs by the Vermont Land Trust. No new construction is permitted unless it is necessary or incidental to the property's intended uses. The King Farm house currently is used as an office by the Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Commission and as a field office for the Trust. The land and outbuildings are currently used for haying and a community garden. The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Sites. The King Farm abuts the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park. A system of trails on the Farm links to trails in the Park

NORMAN WILLIAMS PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Norman Williams Public Library is housed in an historic building, built in 1883, located on the Green. Meeting rooms for 40 people are available to the community free of charge. Diverse and varied programs are available within the building, including story hour for preschoolers, academic school year programs, seasonal activities conducted jointly with Pentangle Council on the Arts, and adult programs which are often sponsored in partnership with other community groups. It is a hub for free WIFI in the Village.

GREEN MOUNTAIN PERKINS ACADEMY

The Academy was originally established in 1848 as a school in South Woodstock. An historical association was formed in 1956 to restore the interior of the building and to add additional material directly relating to the Academy and to the life and times of the community. Collections include early sheet music, original records of local organizations and genealogical information. It is opened for limited hours in the summer. There is no admission fee.

MEETING HALLS

There are a number of halls in the Town that are available to the public for a nominal fee. These include the Masonic Hall, the Woodstock Town Hall, the Windsor Superior Court House, the Woodstock History Center, the Thompson Senior Center; school auditoriums and gymnasiums and the Little Theater. The village and hamlet churches, Prosper Community Center and the Jewish Community Center in West Woodstock also have a number of halls and rooms available to the public, some involving a charge. The South Woodstock Firehouse is also available to residents.

THE THOMPSON SENIOR CENTER

The Thompson Senior Center, located in West Woodstock, across from the High School, is open weekdays, serving the senior population of Woodstock, Pomfret, Bridgewater and Barnard. Services are many and varied: weekday meals, Meals-On-Wheels, transportation, exercise and educational programs, health clinics, support groups, daily check-in calls, commodities food program, senior advocate services, assistance with tax preparation, health care information and government issues all pertinent to seniors. Meals served are reasonably priced while many other services are free of charge.

PERFORMANCE ARTS VENUES

The High School Auditorium seats 400 and is used by the community when not booked for a high school event. There is a fee for the use of the auditorium; police and janitorial services are mandatory. The high school itself has a variety of events including band & choral concerts which are open to the public. The *Yoh Theater Players* give a variety of performances which are open to the public and are well attended.

The Town Hall Theater functions as a theater and an updated, digital movie theater, operated by Pentangle. There is an orchestra pit and a backstage that will accommodate most productions. The theater seats 389. Used by professional groups scheduled by Pentangle, it is available to amateur groups in town as well, and for Town and Village meetings.

ACTION PROGRAM

The following are the goals, objectives and actions for resolution. Those indicated by an asterisk are of high importance.

Goal 1 – Diverse, well used and well supported recreational facilities and programs throughout the community and throughout the year for interested residents and visitors.

Objective 1.1. Provide safe and adequate playing fields, walking, hiking, and running trails, and safe roads for cycling. Encourage the creation of exercise programs for all ages and abilities, as well as other healthy living alternatives for residents who seek them.

Action 1.1.1. Enable any student, regardless of financial ability, to participate in sporting activities.

Action 1.1.2. Encourage equitable participation in all sports, at all age levels, and at all venues.

Goal 2 – Maintain a high level of community support for the Recreation Center.

Objective 2.1. Assist in keeping all Recreational facilities in good condition.

Action 2.1.1. Continue public financial assistance.

Objective 2.2. Encourage the Recreation Center to provide adequate and attractive facilities and programs for student-aged residents after school and during weekends.

Action 2.2.1. Help fund and maintain the teen center.

Action 2.2.2. Secure funding for additional youth programs.

Goal 3 – Provide more opportunity for the enjoyment of the natural environment.

***Objective 3.1.** Provide scenic pathways, additional paved sidewalks for walking, and specified bicycle paths or lanes wherever possible and practical.*

Action 3.1.1. Build a riverside walkway along the Ottawaquechee River.

***Action 3.1.2.** Create and maintain a bicycle path between the High School/Middle School campus and the Village.

***Action 3.1.3.** Create a bicycle path or lane north on Route 12 from the iron bridge

***Objective 3.2.** Provide for improved pedestrian access, handicap access, and safe use by all on existing or new Village sidewalks.*

***Action 3.2.1.** Maintain, preserve and extend existing Village sidewalks as needed.

***Action 3.2.2.** Work toward full ADA compliance throughout the Village.

Action 3.2.3. Implement suggestions from the Safe Route to Schools study of 2010 regarding pedestrian safety, roadway crossings and improved walking routes in the Village.

***Objective 3.3.** Allow for more public use of natural areas including the Ottawaquechee River and all Town forests.*

***Action 3.3.1.** Identify one or more locations for safe and secure public access to the Ottawaquechee River for recreational activities.

***Action 3.3.2.** Evaluate the need for public parking areas or turnouts at the entrances to town forests, particularly the Long Hill Block Forest Reserve, enabling greater public access to each. Restrict the recreational use of all Town forests to foot traffic only.

Action 3.3.3. Encourage high school agriculture and forestry classes to utilize and study existing Town forests.

Goal 4 – The realization and dedication of a new public park along the Ottawaquechee in the East End of the Village.

***Objective 4.1.** Relocate the Village snow dump from the traditional East End to a new, permanent location, allowing further work and final plans for a riverside park for this Village-owned parcel, to continue.*

***Action 4.1.1.** Close the snow dump in the East End and complete the park.

TRANSPORTATION

HIGHWAYS

To a large extent, Woodstock's development has and continues to be affected by the quality of transportation networks. Good rail and car access in the past has made Woodstock attractive to tourists and retirees. By the same token, until fairly recently the lower quality back roads kept people near the commerce centers, the hamlets. The idea that life moves slowly in the country appealed to many residents or visitors who came partly because of the back roads.

Woodstock's major transportation concern relates to the present and future of U.S. Route 4 which is Woodstock's main street. U.S. Route 4 is a Federal and State highway serving as a major east-west access across the State. As it passes through Woodstock, U.S. Route 4 is narrow, unable to be widened, and not suited to serving steadily growing traffic demands. While traffic congestion is the most obvious result of this dilemma, U.S. Route 4 traffic also contributes to vibration damage to many of Woodstock's historic structures, encourages the tendency for "strip" development along its entire length, and detracts from the community's sense of place.

In January of 2001, the Vermont Agency of Transportation issued the "East-West Highway Study," a study of the Route 4 corridor as mandated by legislative act No.154 passed in 2000. The sixty page study essentially affirms the status-quo in that it does not recommend an alternative highway system. "Solutions rest... in wise land use planning, regulatory decision making and judicious investments in the major highways and rail infrastructure already existing in the corridor..."

Woodstock opposes the construction of two additional lanes onto Route 4, resulting in a 4-lane highway. Woodstock recommends the construction of road improvements to foster the safe flow of traffic as a short term solution, and the construction of a new, limited access highway as the long term solution to moving traffic between Rutland and White River Junction.

Specific improvements advocated by Woodstock on U.S. Route 4 roadway are as follows:

1. Selective shoulder and lane widening which should improve level of service.
2. Study methods to reduce delays for side-road traffic and to improve safety.
3. Construction of turn-outs with advance signage to warn drivers which should reduce platoon delays.
4. Construction of passing lanes.
5. Installation of signs indicating no passing to further reduce platoon delays.
6. Reconstruction of U.S. Route 4 within the Village of Woodstock, with reference to the "Route 4 Corridor Street Tree Master Plan".

With the above specific recommendations in mind, the historic pattern of roadway layout should be maintained. The more intensive commercial operations on Route 4 east and west of the Village have also resulted in a degradation of scenic values. Extensive curb cuts, parking lots and service/delivery areas have created an unattractive and dangerous zone of commercialized uses. Proposed revisions of these areas could be integrated into larger plans to improve Route 4 and Route 12. Establishment of defined circulation points to and from commercial uses with curbs and medians would greatly improve appearance and traffic circulation. Tree-lined sidewalks and bike paths would allow for safe pedestrian traffic and reduce the automobile-dominated character. Many of these improvements can take place within the legal right-of-way and without any taking of property.

VILLAGE

A 2000 study of the East End, the East End Master Plan, notes traffic as a detriment to successful development of this end of the Village. In particular the plan recommends that the current private

road corridors, Maxham Meadow Way and the Sewer Plant Road, be converted to an official village street. The street would both provide better access to the existing and potential businesses. To maintain Village streets and sidewalks during the winter months, a snow dump is necessary.

LOCAL ROADS

TOWN HIGHWAY CLASSIFICATIONS:

The State uses four classification formulas to distribute financial aid to towns for road repair and maintenance. Classifications are jointly determined by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (The Board) and the Town Select Board. (The Select Board). The highest authority rests with VAOT or VTRANS and the agency is governed by State Statute. Key References:

- The “Orange Book” a Handbook for Local Officials (2011-2013 revised)
[http://www.aot.state.vt.us/OPS/documents/AOT-OPS OrangeBook.pdf](http://www.aot.state.vt.us/OPS/documents/AOT-OPS%20OrangeBook.pdf)
- Vermont Statute: 19 V.S.A. §302...§311
- General Assembly: Act 63, 1973 (Act 63.pdf)
- General Assembly: Act 178, May, 2006 (ACT178.pdf) “unidentified corridors”

Class 1 Town Highways

Class 1 roads are those town highways which form the extension of a state highway route and which carry a state highway route number. The agency shall determine which highways are to be Class 1 highways

Class 2 Town Highways

Class 2 roads are those town highways selected as the most important highways in each town. As far as practicable they shall be selected with the purposes of securing trunk lines of improved highways from town to town and to places which by their nature have more than normal amount of traffic. The Select Board, with the approval of the agency, shall determine which highways are to be Class 2 highways.

Class 3 Town Highways

(A) Class 3 Town Highways are all traveled town highways other than Class 1 or 2 Highways. The Select Board, after conference with a representative of the agency shall determine which highways are Class 3 Town Highways.

(B) The minimum standards of Class 3 Highways are a highway negotiable under normal conditions all seasons of the year by a standard manufactured car. This would include but not be limited to sufficient surface and base, adequate drainage, and sufficient width capable to provide winter maintenance, except that based on safety considerations for the traveling public and municipal employees, the Select Board shall, by rules adopted under 24 V.S.A. Chapter 59, and after following the process for providing notice and hearing in section 709 of this title, have authority to determine whether a Class 3 Highway, or section of highway, should be plowed and made negotiable during the winter. However, a property owner aggrieved by a decision of the Select Board may appeal to the transportation board pursuant to subdivision 5(d)(8) of this title.

C) A highway not meeting these standards may be reclassified as a Provisional Class 3 Highway if within five years of the determination, it will meet all Class 3 Highway standards.

Class 4 Town Highways

Class 4 roads are all town highways that are not Class 1, 2, or 3 Town Highways or unidentified corridors. The Select Board shall determine which highways are Class 4 Town Highways.

Trails

Trails shall not be considered highways and the town shall not be responsible for any maintenance including culverts and bridges.

Unidentified Corridors

- (A) After July 1, 2015, an unidentified corridor shall be discontinued, and the right-of-way shall belong to the owner of the adjoining land.
- (B) On or by July 1, 2015 and by meeting certain conditions, an unidentified corridor may be reclassified as a Class 1, 2, 3 or 4 highway or as a trail.

While Woodstock recognizes the need to be able to reach homesites within the town, there is some question about the nature of back roads related to the following points:

- 1. Wider, smoother roads tend to generate more and faster traffic.
- 2. Wider, smoother roads can be an inducement for suburbanization of the countryside.
- 3. Road improvements can alter the nature of previously semi-pristine wild areas.
- 4. By making life in the country more attractive to more people, road improvements stimulate piecemeal development which generates a relatively high household service burden on the town.

Woodstock's remaining road system adequately serves current and near future needs and the existing five-year highway maintenance and improvement program addresses most of the identified concerns.

Bridges: Routine maintenance on all town owned bridges as recommended by VTrans. VTrans does a bi-annual inspection of all town owned bridges and provides a report to the Select Board. Replace bridge on No. Bridgewater Road.

Culverts: Replace large culverts with very large culverts that will pass water in a 50 year storm event to comply with State of Vermont ANR regulations regarding A.O.P. Aquatic Organism Protection. These culverts must have a natural gravel bottom. The usual method of construction is a concrete box culvert. This is very expensive, would probably be able to do one every three or four years.

Road Surface: Consider only limited paving of gravel roads. Maintain current gravel road surfaces.

Paved Roads: Maintain paved surfaces by repaving as needed.

Planning: Participate in Two Rivers TAC program and regional Transportation meetings. The Town Highway Plan is current, complete and adequately addresses present and foreseeable needs.

As future municipal highway plans are adopted by the governing body, they will become a part of this plan and will be used to help form any applicable capital budget.

The increased use of "hard-pak" for the travel surface of non-paved roads has greatly contributed to improved travel conditions and reduced erosion with a surface which survives best between routine grading operations.

Gravel roads may also be improved in areas that are wet or susceptible to erosion with the appropriate filter fabrics and other geotextiles. These treatments reside under the gravel road surface and strengthen the road's durability and traveling surface while minimizing damage from storm water and vehicle traffic.

Class IV roads are a transportation and recreation resource that affords our residents access to conservation and agricultural lands. Because of the infrequency and type of use, Class IV roadways are relatively benign to the surrounding flora and fauna. Road enhancements that could generate additional development and traffic would significantly impact these lands.

While the Town owns the right-of-way, it has no legal obligation to maintain Class IV road surfaces, culverts, or bridges. The Town should resist "throwing-up" roads where the public use is forever abandoned. Woodstock should preserve Class IV roadways in their current state and discourage private or publicly funded improvements that exceed basic road maintenance activities and/or alter the character of the existing roadway. The Town needs to identify Class IV roads in relation to the current "Ancient Roads" legislation.

Specific recommendations for providing safe routes for recreational activities such as bicycling, jogging and horseback riding are contained in other elements in this Plan (see Recreation & Cultural Development).

SIDEWALK & PEDESTRIAN CONCERNS

Woodstock should provide continuous safe sidewalk access to allow safe passage to schools, village and commercial facilities. Areas of particular need that do not have through sidewalks include: the north end of High Street, the north end of Lincoln Street, Bond Street, Route 4 East, and the south side of Route 4 from the Village to College Hill.

BICYCLIST CONCERNS

Woodstock recognizes the need to develop continuous safe bicycle routes throughout the Town for use by both students and recreationalists. This is particularly challenging due to high volume traffic and the narrow shoulder width on US Route 4, which is the primary east/west corridor through the Town and Village. Although routes along VT 106 and VT 12 are also desirable, highest priority should be given to the route with the likelihood of greatest use, which would run from the Village to the Middle-High School in West Woodstock

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Woodstock does not currently offer public transportation, but such could reduce parking demand and peak automobile traffic.

Public bus service is no longer available. Regional bus options need to be explored. A review of existing public transportation facilities reveals that although no regular taxi company exists in Woodstock, such service is available from the White River Junction or West Lebanon area. Woodstock should consider what parking facilities might be required by those taking a bus.

The Senior Citizens Center offers limited van service to participants for travel from home to the center as well as for trips to shopping and banking facilities. Woodstock and surrounding towns contribute through taxes to this service which is also federally supported.

Air travel services are available from the nearby airport in West Lebanon, New Hampshire and no commercial airport or heliport need exist in Woodstock. For emergency services, at least two sites have been designated as landing areas for helicopter or other medical evacuation aviation services, the Woodstock Union High School/Middle School fields in West Woodstock and the Green Mountain Horse Association grounds in South Woodstock. Other sites may need to be designated in the future.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Transportation planning is a collaborative process between town officials and planners, regional planners, state/federal transportation agencies and private land owners and developers. The purpose of transportation planning is to maintain consistent, coordinated and proactive responses toward preserving the existing transportation system while addressing future infrastructure and service needs.

The Town should continue providing educational opportunities to the volunteers serving on Planning and Conservation Commissions. Basic classes on traffic operations and management, as well as transportation topics in development review, should be held on an as needed basis.

Good transportation planning results in the efficient and timely construction of local and state transportation projects. Town officials should be persistent in pursuing grant funds and advocate for the completion of all state or federally sponsored transportation projects. Woodstock should actively maintain a transportation priorities list and be able to communicate those priorities to elected officials, town citizens, and transportation agencies.

SCENIC ROADWAYS

Woodstock has many local and state roadways highly valued based on their scenic character. Motorists traveling along US Route 4 are able to traverse a landscape of green hills bordered by rural development and the scenic Ottauquechee River. Similar landscapes also exist along VT Route 12 with the Gulf Stream and VT Route 106 with Kedron Brook. In smaller scale and with a greater diversity of landscapes, we see similar scenic resources on our local village and town roads where we travel in the company of maple trees, stone walls, and beautiful residential homes.

Very often the fabric of our landscapes and definition of community are defined by this traveling experience. Scenic roads also accomplish the task of slowing traffic speeds and encouraging bicycling and walking. For this reason, scenic roads are often safer and support a greater diversity of multimodal transportation activity.

It is important to preserve the scenic resources of our roadways. When opportunities develop, it will be a priority to enhance a road's scenic character. Transportation or adjacent land projects that would prove to degrade roadways identified as having scenic resources will be discouraged.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT

This is a process to provide reasonable access to adjacent land uses while maintaining a safe and efficient flow of traffic. An access can be a residential or commercial driveway or it can be another public highway.

A single well-designed access to a public highway presents few concerns for the traveling public. But if access has been poorly designed and/or their frequency increases, the road's *health* declines.

Especially on high traffic roadways, Woodstock needs to support adjacent businesses and homes so everyone maintains safe and efficient access. Simultaneously, the Town will continue to maintain our

existing highways for the benefit of the traveling public.

TOWN ROADS AND TRAILS AFFECTING CONSERVATION AREAS

Town roads and legal trails are the primary means of access to land in conservation areas. Principal users of these roads or trails are local residents, seasonal camp owners, hikers, snowmobilers and loggers. Some of these roads accommodate relatively few vehicles. The Select Board retains jurisdiction over local roads. Roads are classified by the Town. Class 3 highways include the typical back road. Class 4 roads are not regularly maintained and are only improved to the extent required by the necessity of the Town. Legal trails are not highways and the Town is not required to maintain them.

Future land use planning and development needs to be compatible with and complement the long-term use goals and policies of this Plan. Public investment decisions that have the potential effect of altering the stated land use goals of this Plan are to be discouraged. In considering whether to reclassify or improve a Class 4 road or legal trail, or to lay out or accept a new highway in conservation areas, due consideration should be given as to the extent of development likely to result from the action and whether such action supports the goals of the Plan for the area affected. Upgrading roads and trails could stimulate new development in an area intended primarily for conservation. Over time, the cumulative impact of new development will erode the fundamental land use goals for the area.

ANCIENT ROADS OR UNIDENTIFIED CORRIDORS

Ancient roads are the common name for legally established town highways (predominantly Class 4 highways) that, due to numerous factors and the passage of time, have become largely impassable and, in many cases, unobservable. Oftentimes, these roads do not show up on town highway maps, but have not been formally discontinued by the town either. Subsequent research by landowners and towns has resulted in discoveries of old roads, rights-of-way, or trails that, heretofore, were thought to be non-existent. These situations, in some cases, have frustrated land use decisions. Furthermore, they have resulted in lawsuits necessary to affirm legal interests in property.

In 2006, Act 178 was passed by the Legislature to address the ancient roads issue. The new law requires towns to begin to include Class 4 highways and legal trails on official highway maps by 2015. Such maps have to be filed with the town and the Vermont Agency of Transportation. The new law provided that a town had until 2009 to add unobservable and unmapped roads to its official maps. Once added, the road remains as a Class 4 unless the town chooses to discontinue it, like other roads. Corridors not added to town maps by this deadline were automatically discontinued, rights-of-way would no longer be considered valid, and full rights returned to current property owners. The Village and Town of Woodstock, due to the thorough and diligent work of an appointed Ancient Roads Committee, is in full compliance with the intent and provisions of Act 178.

ACTION PROGRAM

The actual implementation of nearly all of the recommendations or suggestions should be preceded by a review by a certified traffic engineer or consultant.

Following are the identified goals, objectives and action steps for resolution. Those Actions with an asterisk are of high priority.

Goal 1 - Minimize through traffic on U.S. Route 4 in Town and Village

***Objective 1.1.** Prepare and periodically review a traffic flow plan for the Village of Woodstock that includes volume, speed and type of vehicle.*

Action 1.1.1. Provide additional parking spots and lots.

Action 1.1.2. Review congestion problems in the Village and recommend solutions.

Objective 1.2. *Improve movement of tour buses in Village.*

Action 1.2.1. Analyze the Traffic Ordinances for the Village of Woodstock, including bus loading zones.

Action 1.2.2. Continue to designate bus loading and unloading zones.

Action 1.2.3. Maintain parking areas for buses.

Action 1.2.4. Continue to restrict buses from side streets of the Village.

Objective 1.3. *Enhance vehicular traffic flow along U.S. Route 4 in Town.*

Action 1.3.1. Work with State to implement improvements that make Route 4 a safer and less congested highway.

Goal 2 - Minimize vibration damage to existing buildings and foundations.

Objective 2.1. *Reduce heavy truck traffic on roads in Village.*

Action 2.1.1. Petition the State of Vermont to provide an alternate route for heavy trucks.

Objective 2.2. *Improve roadway base of U.S. Route 4 to allow maintenance of smoother highway surface.*

Action 2.2.1. Support the repaving of U.S. Route 4 to allow maintenance of smoother highway surface.

Action 2.2.2. Protect the Green's historic fence and landscaping.

Objective 2.3. *Control vehicular speeds on U.S. Route 4 in Village.*

Action 2.3.1. Enforce speed limits.

Goal 3 - Encourage the development of dependable mass transportation systems to minimize automobile dependence and use.

Objective 3.1. *Reduce the dependence and use of the private automobile.*

***Action 3.1.1.** Support tourism/citizen-based bus service serving the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, Woodstock Village and other local points of interest.

Action 3.1.2. Support the establishment of connections to a regional public transportation system.

Action 3.1.3. Support the continued service by Amtrak in Vermont and specifically to White River Junction and Rutland.

***Action 3.1.4.** Support the establishment of Advanced Transit or commuter service from Woodstock Village locations in the Upper Valley.

***Action 3.1.5.** Increase support to provide additional elderly and disabled transportation services for Woodstock's seniors. Work with the Senior Center and regional transportation providers to leverage local resources with state and federal grants.

Goal 4 - Provide greater safety and reduce hazards and accidents.

Objective 4.1. Improve safe travel on Woodstock's highways.

Action 4.1.1. Continue to coordinate planning efforts to improve U.S. Route 4 with the Vermont Agency of Transportation, regional planning commissions, area municipalities, and other entities

Action 4.1.2. Support programs to identify and improve segments of U.S. Route 4 noted as high accident areas.

Action 4.1.3. Work with the State to improve sight distance at Town Road 50 and U.S. Route 4 in West Woodstock.

Action 4.1.4. Work with the State to improve the Taftsville portion of U.S. Route 4.

Action 4.1.5. Encourage and support on-going efforts to enforce speed limits on U.S. Route 4, U.S. Route 106 and U.S. Route 12.

Action 4.1.6. Create a limited speed zone on U.S. Route 4 in the proximity of Woodstock Union High School.

Objective 4.2. Reduce pedestrian conflicts with motor vehicles.

***Action 4.2.1.** Provide parking areas for Vail Field participants and spectators.

***Action 4.2.2.** Create bicycle and pedestrian paths between the high school and the Village per the Safe Routes to School program.

Action 4.2.3. Create pedestrian pathways in Village from College Hill Street to St. James Church, northwest end of Lincoln Street and Route 4 East.

Action 4.2.4. Provide a sidewalk along Route 4 in West Woodstock.

Action 4.2.5. Continue sidewalk along Route 4 East to Gallery Place.

Goal 5 - Enhance transportation planning.

Objective 5.1. Preserve and enhance the Town's investment in transportation planning. Educate elected and appointed officials.

Action 5.1.1. Provide adequate training.

Action 5.1.2. Host VLCT and Regional Commission courses covering contemporary transportation topics with a focus on transportation and land development issues.

Objective 5.2. Facilitate communication of transportation priorities with town officials and staff, and Regional Commission.

Action 5.2.1. Establish transportation project and planning priorities.

Action 5.2.2. Maintain a listing of transportation project priorities.

Action 5.2.3. Incorporate Town Plan guidance in transportation investment and planning decisions.

Action 5.2.4. Maintain a transportation capital program.

Objective 5.3.1. Develop a Transportation Planning process.

Action 5.3.1. Conduct citizen-based survey on transportation.

Action 5.3.2. Develop and adopt a Transportation Plan.

Goal 6 - Preserve scenic roadways. Include the consideration of scenic resources in all public and

private investment decisions.

Objective 6. Identify scenic roads. Support Scenic Byway program.

Action 6.1.1. Create a map within the transportation plan that highlights scenic roads.

Action 6.1.2. Consider scenic resource impacts in all road and development projects.

Action 6.1.3. Emphasize a review of scenic resource impacts on River Road, Pomfret Road, US Route 4, VT Route 12 and VT Route 106.

Goal 7 - Uncontrolled access compromises the safety and efficiency of our public highways. Promote access management to preserve the safety and mobility for the traveling public.

Objective 7.1. Improve access management standards along our state-controlled highways.

***Action 7.1.1.** Ensure the Town works closely with the Vermont Agency of Transportation in their access permit process.

Action 7.1.2. Require all state highways to adhere to the highest level of access management standards.

Action 7.1.3. Undertake, in cooperation with the Vermont Agency of Transportation, access management studies for Routes 4, 12 and 106 and adopt policies and implementation strategies to ensure that the functional classifications of these highways are not unduly compromised.

Objective 7.2. Continue to implement access management standards along our local highways.

Action 7.2.1. Improve coordination of the local access permit process between Select Board and Development Review Boards.

***Action 7.2.2.** Support the development of zoning and subdivision regulations that promote access management.

Action 7.2.3. Access design standards will be based on actual travel speeds and not the posted speed limits.

Goal 8 - Build a safe continuous bicycle routes throughout Woodstock

Objective 8.1. Provide a pleasant and safe transportation and recreational alternative

Action 8.1.1. Support widening the shoulders of US Route 4.

Action 8.1.2. Establish a continuous bike route from Woodstock to Bridgewater.

Action 8.1.3. Support widening the shoulders of US Route 12 just north of the Village.

PLAN COMPATIBILITY WITH:

STATE AGENCY PLANNING, NEIGHBORING TOWNS AND REGIONAL PLANS

STATE AGENCY PLANNING

Vermont planning laws provide that state agencies which have programs or take actions that affect land use shall evaluate how their work relates to planning at the regional and local levels. State agencies are to undertake land use planning that is compatible with adopted regional and town plans. Furthermore, Vermont law (24 V.S.A. Section 4350) provides a process under which plans are to be periodically reviewed to ensure compatibility with local and regional planning.

The most important land use development potentially impacting Woodstock's citizens is the development of plans for the upgrading of Route 4 or the location of an alternative east-west route across this area of Vermont. Accordingly, it is in the interest of Woodstock to continue its participation with the Agency of Transportation and regional commission on Route 4 planning. This will ensure that Woodstock's goals and policies are understood and, to the extent practicable, incorporated into state and regional planning.

The Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Region includes Woodstock. There are thirty-one municipalities which comprise the service area of the Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Commission (TRORC). Established in the early 1970s, the Commission is a political subdivision of the State and provides technical services to local government and state agencies, including matters affecting land use. In addition, the Commission has a regional planning program and has an adopted Regional Plan (June 27, 2012).

The current Regional Plan consists of land use planning principles and policies which are compatible with this Plan. Municipal plans may be submitted to the Regional Commission for review and approval to ensure compatibility with the Regional Plan. As part of this legal process, earlier versions of the Woodstock Village and Town plans were submitted and found to be compatible with the Regional Plan. Following adoption of this Plan, it is the intent of the Town and Village to submit it to the Regional Commission for approval.

In approving a plan, the Commission affirms that it is consistent with the goals of the Vermont Municipal Planning and Development Act;

1. compatible with the Regional Plan;
2. compatible with other approved plans of neighboring towns; and
3. contains those elements of a plan as required by law.

LOCAL PLANNING

Because of inter-town relationships, planning within adjacent municipalities needs to be recognized and coordinated with planning in Woodstock. This effort includes how neighboring land use development and conservation planning policies and activities affect Woodstock. Where plans are incompatible, it is important to identify them and to seek ways to mitigate conflicts. Woodstock is bounded by six towns: Bridgewater, Hartford, Hartland, Pomfret, Reading and West Windsor.

PLAN COMPATIBILITY

The Town of Hartford is the largest community abutting Woodstock and is a major transportation hub to the Region. Hartford has had a local planning program since the 1960's. This includes an adopted municipal plan, zoning regulations and subdivision regulations. The most current plan was adopted in May 29, 2012. This plan provides for growth centers within or surrounding its five villages as well as areas adjacent to Interstate highway interchange areas. Outlying areas provide for mixed uses and residential development at varying densities. At the Woodstock-Hartford Town Line, the Ottawaquechee River provides a buffer between the Taftsville hamlet area and Hartford's low-density development. The Hartford Town Plan provides several areas for commercial use along Route 4. Increased traffic on Route 4 coupled with development adjacent to the roadway, will create congestion and interrupt through traffic on this heavily used transportation corridor. It is in the interest of Woodstock to coordinate its transportation planning with neighboring towns to ensure that this valuable public investment is not unnecessarily endangered.

The Town of Hartland municipal plan (adopted August 20, 2012) provides for future development in several different land use areas. A land use goal is to balance new growth with a healthy environment. Commercial growth is to occur in village areas in the present pattern of settlement. Rural land is to be used predominately for agriculture, forestry and compatible uses. Industrial uses are to be located within

or adjacent to existing commercial and industrial areas. The Town does not have a zoning regulation in effect and is dependant on Vermont's Act 250 process to regulate land use.

The Hartland Plan provides for a small commercial area at the intersections of Routes 4 and 12 east of Taftsville. A variety of light commercial and industrial uses are presently located here. Additional development is enabled provided that access to Route 4 is controlled and attention is given to scenic resources, including the Ottauquechee River. In the late 1980's, a 60,000 square foot sub-regional shopping complex was proposed to be built on Route 4 at this site, requiring an Act 250 permit from the State. The project was eventually denied because it was not in conformance with the Regional Plan, the basic premise being that large scale retail commercial growth should occur within existing villages or adjoining areas and not in outlying low density areas. Future land use developments in this area immediate to Woodstock should be evaluated to ensure that such activities maintain the integrity of Route 4 as a primary travel corridor and continues to support the basic land use goals of the Regional Plan.

Reading, Pomfret, West Windsor and Bridgewater are also adjacent to Woodstock. These towns are relatively small in population and have experienced slower growth rates than Hartford and Hartland. All four have plans approved by the regional commission, with the exception of Bridgewater, all have land use regulations, including zoning bylaws. Planning in these towns extends back to the early 1970's. Land use goals for these communities are to preserve rural character, protect open space, retain agricultural land and encourage residential development in areas contiguous to existing settlements and hamlets. These communities are predominately bedroom towns to the greater Upper Valley. Major land use changes are discouraged, including areas in close proximity to Woodstock. Similar to the plans of Hartford and Hartland, all have been approved by the TRORC as compatible with the regional plan and other local plans.

A main concern of Woodstock is the safety of traffic on Route 4. In the spring of 2013, four fatalities occurred between Hartford and Woodstock. Additional commercial development on either end of Route 4 could be detrimental to traffic flow and associated level of service. Woodstock encourages abutting communities to abide by the infill development recommendations found within the Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Plan. Infill development promotes additional development in existing established centers such as hamlets and villages.

An area where abutting towns should work with one another is the establishment of green zone corridors which in turn encourages a Linking Lands habitat. The Linking Lands Alliance has mapped potential corridors between abutting towns whereby wildlife may migrate without being obstructed by human development. This would be a multi-town effort to assure compatible linkage. An area of particular importance is the four corner boundary of Woodstock, Reading,

Plymouth and Bridgewater. This area is mostly undeveloped and would be amenable to the larger animals such as moose, bear and bobcat.

LAND USE

Woodstock's character is formed by its historic beauty, both that which was created by the geological forces thousands of years ago and the more recent architecture of the nineteenth century. These two factors created Woodstock's predominant economy, tourism and second homes. The community is recognized the world over for its beauty and pleasant experience. The village is a walkable size with a compact yet vibrant downtown. Viewed from anywhere within the village one can see the natural beauty that surrounds the village. The intent of the community is to maintain this balance of the natural countryside juxtaposed to the developed area of the village. Development and future growth are to take place in established growth centers, as it is here that the necessary infrastructure exists.

General Development Pattern

Woodstock for the most part is a good example of the concentric circle of planning. The core, the village center, has lot sizes at the highest density (1/8th of an acre). There are even a few grandfathered lots smaller than this. The further one travels from the core, the lower the density. The forested area of the town (located southwest of the village) represents the lowest density with a minimum parcel size of 28 acres. Not only does land size change as one gets further away from the core but also the use of the land changes as one moves further away. The most intense use, retail, is located at the village center. A gradual transition takes place as one goes from central retail to adjacent service to rural agriculture and finally to woodland forestry at the edges.

This transition applies to parcel distribution as well. The lots are the smallest at the village core with parcels becoming increasingly larger as the land use changes. A look at the tax map of the town shows this gradual proportional land change. The tight central commercial lots change to small residential lots that grow larger and larger as one approaches the much larger forested parcels on the periphery. Small hamlets within the town follow a similar pattern on a much smaller scale.

The Future Pattern of Settlement

First in importance in formulation of the proposed land use pattern is consideration of the existing settlement pattern. Woodstock has already been settled into clusters of residences and other activities in the form of villages and hamlets surrounded by less dense settlement, rural in character, or large spaces in natural vegetation. This existing settlement pattern has demonstrated itself to be of sociological, psychological, and aesthetic benefit to the region, while at the same time working within a system of neighboring centers that are efficient and economical for the conduct of business enterprise and for the provision of social and community facilities and services. This pattern must be protected and enhanced and is supported by state planning law.

In Support of Regional Land Use Goals

Regional land use goals are important to Woodstock and represent the foundation of the planning and development program for the region. These goals recognize and accept the following as in the public interest:

1. maintain and improve the accessibility and economic viability of regional growth areas;
2. encourage full use of regional growth areas;
3. provide for intensive development only in regional growth areas where adequate public services and facilities are available;
4. encourage local and State infrastructure investments in regional growth areas;
5. protect the character of rural areas and their natural resources by avoiding sprawling development, and incompatible uses.
6. protect the natural environment by preservation and wise use of natural resources.
7. maintain and enhance local comprehensive planning and regulation on issues of local concern;
8. maintain investments in the transportation network by assuring that development will not degrade the level of service or functionality and,
9. maintain relationship with Conservation and Resource areas identified at the regional and State levels

Conservation

The Forest Reserve area allows for limited residential development while supporting a forest ecosystem. It also permits compatible uses, agricultural and forestry. This area of the Town contains steep slopes and shallow soils, interspersed with streams and wetlands. These attributes make it very difficult to

place a septic system or to build a foundation, which limits the potential for development. There are many large lot land holdings which tend to be larger the further one gets from the core. Many of these properties are enrolled in the state's current use program, the intent of which is to preserve large lot forest and agricultural land.

In order to achieve the purpose of this land use area, the density of the Forest Reserve Area should be no greater than 28 acres. Uses in this area should be limited primarily to residential and occupations that can be conducted within a home such as a day care facility or bed and breakfast. Home occupations and home enterprises are encouraged. Development in this area must be of a type and scale that is consistent with the purpose of this land use area. Retail development of any scale is not appropriate for this land use area.

Woodstock is fortunate to have a wealth of information about our natural environment. In 2008, a town-wide Natural Communities Identification, Assessment and Mapping Project was completed. The study inventoried Woodstock's natural community resources and recommended conservation priorities that would help safeguard the unique natural biodiversity of our town and region. The report identified 29 clusters of natural communities in Woodstock of special local, local/state, or state biological significance. Local zoning regulation and proposed changes in land use should reflect the importance of these biologically significant areas in supporting a healthy and resilient natural environment.

Residential

Woodstock has five distinct residential areas, all of which vary based on density in relation to village centers and community infrastructure.

Residential Five-Acre Area

The Residential Five-Acre Area makes up a majority of the low density land area in Woodstock. The primary purpose of this land use area is to provide a location for low-density residential development while perpetuating the open, natural landscape that is so essential to Woodstock's rural character. Most of the development in this land use area lies directly along town roads, with much of it within three hundred feet of these roads. With many of the homes being built close to the road, the back of the lots remain undeveloped. When combined with neighboring lots, the undeveloped portions contribute to larger areas of undeveloped land creating the desired outcome for wildlife habitat and healthy forests. These larger lots carry a twofold benefit, homes for the residents and when viewed in total, a healthy ecosystem.

Minimum density for this land use area should be no less than five acres. Uses in this area should be limited primarily to residential and occupations that can be conducted within a home such as a day care facility or bed and breakfast. Home occupations and home enterprises are encouraged.

Development in this area must be of a type and scale that is consistent with the purpose of this land use area. Retail development of any scale is not appropriate for this land use area.

Residential Three-Acre Area

The Residential Three-Acre Area makes up a very small portion of the low density land area in Woodstock. The primary purpose of this land use area is to provide a location for mid-to-low-density residential development while perpetuating the open, natural landscape that is so essential to Woodstock's rural character. The Residential Three-Acre designation was removed from Town Zoning Regulations in 1990. It was reinstated in 2010, as a middle ground between one and five acre areas. The development

in this land use area lies directly along town roads, with much of it within three hundred feet of these roads. With many of the homes being built close to the road, the back of the lots remain undeveloped. When combined with neighboring lots, the undeveloped portions contribute to larger areas of undeveloped land creating the desired outcome for wildlife habitat and healthy forests. These larger lots carry a twofold benefit, homes for the residents and when viewed in total, a healthy ecosystem.

Minimum density for this land use area should be no less than three acres. Uses in this area should be limited primarily to residential and occupations that can be conducted within a home such as a daycare facility or bed and breakfast. Home occupations and home enterprises are encouraged. Development in this area must be of a type and scale that is consistent with the purpose of this land use area. Retail development of any scale is not appropriate for this land use area.

Residential One-Acre Area

The purpose of this land use area is to provide for higher-density residential development that is close to community services and infrastructure. The majority of the development within this land use area is located adjacent to denser village centers or hamlets, or along major roads such as U.S. Route 4.

Minimum density for this land use area should be no less than one acre. Uses in this area should be limited primarily to residential and occupations that can be conducted within a home such as a day care facility or bed and breakfast. Home occupations and home enterprises are encouraged. Development in this area must be of a type and scale that is consistent with the purpose of this land use area. Retail development of any scale is not appropriate for this land use area.

Residential Low, Medium and High Density Areas

The purpose of these land use area is to provide for increasingly higher-density residential development based on proximity to village centers and hamlet areas. As was indicated above, the Town of Woodstock utilizes the concentric circle of planning, where density increases as development reaches the core areas of high density. The majority of the development within these land use areas is located adjacent to denser village centers or hamlets.

Minimum density for these land uses is 20,000 square feet (Residential Low), 8,000 square feet (Residential Medium) and 5,000 square feet (Residential High) respectively. Uses in this area should be limited primarily to residential and occupations that can be conducted within a home such as a day care facility or bed and breakfast. Home occupations and home enterprises are encouraged. Development in this area must be of a type and scale that is consistent with the purpose of this land use area. Public facilities are acceptable in these areas, provided that they fit well with the character of the area. Retail development of any scale is not appropriate for this land use area.

Residential/Office

The purpose of this land use area is to recognize the need for mixed-use transitions between areas that are primarily commercial in nature and areas that are primarily residential in nature. The majority of the development within these land use areas is located adjacent to denser village centers or hamlets.

Minimum density for this land use area should be no less than one acre. Uses in this land use area are intended to be mixed in nature, including residences, offices, public facilities and home occupations/enterprises. Retail development is not appropriate for this land use area.

Woodstock Village Area

The purpose of the Woodstock Village area is to encourage a broad mix of higher density residential, commercial and civic development within a cohesive core of the community. Uses within this area include retail, offices, inns & bed and breakfasts as well as other appropriate commercial uses. Density of development in this land use is intended to be condensed, with some lots as small as an 1/8th of an acre as is appropriate given the lot's relationship to the character of the surrounding area.

Because of the unique character of Woodstock's Village, sections of this area are subject to strict design review standards, which are implemented through Woodstock's Village Zoning Regulations. These Design Review Regulations shall be designed to allow for growth while preserving the integrity and character of the community. Design shall be compatible with Woodstock's historic, architectural and tourist resources through architectural and site review. Areas within the Woodstock Village Land Use area that require design review include the Village and the East End. The regulations' goals for the Village seek to preserve and enhance its established character.

Commercial / Industrial

Additional areas of commercial and business potential at a smaller scale are located within the hamlet areas of the town. Taftsville has a country store and post office. There are a number of office sites along the Route 4 corridor. South Woodstock also has a country store and post office. In addition, the hamlet has a historic inn and a tack shop located next to the Green Mountain Horse Association property. West Woodstock, historically had a country store and post office. Today, a 2500 square foot store serves more than just the hamlet. Additionally, the hamlet has office uses at one end and an inn at the other end. This section of Route 4 is sprinkled with various commercial uses that tend to serve more than just the hamlet. Within areas designated as hamlets, small-scale retail development is appropriate.

Over the years the zoning regulations have been rewritten to recognize the various areas of economic activity. These range from acknowledgment of the unique commercial functions such as single lot zoning uses including the country stores and the inns to light commercial uses that require a square foot maximum. Office uses were a major demand a few years ago, but recently the need has peaked. The Town is investigating the potential for small apartments in the Business Service /Light Industrial zones. This may open housing opportunities for young people just beginning their work cycles. In areas designated as Commercial/Office, retail development is generally not appropriate.

The municipality does not envision expansion of commercial uses outside of the existing areas already zoned for those uses. The Village in particular has numerous opportunities for infill development whereby lots are either vacant or underutilized. Housing opportunities are far too expensive in the region to promote industrial/factory type uses. The Town is very supportive of high technology type businesses and feels current infrastructure, adequate building space, and zoning are in place to accomplish this. The Town welcomes input from individuals offering economic activities that may not fit the current zoning regulations. There are a number successful past examples of this practice.

Hamlet Commercial Area

The purpose of this land use area is to provide high density mixed use development. The majority of the development within this land use area is located adjacent to denser village centers or hamlets, or along major roads such as U.S. Route 4.

Minimum density for this land use area should be no less than 20,000 square feet. Uses in this land use

area are intended to be mixed in nature (with residences being the dominant use), including residences, offices, general stores, public facilities and home occupations/enterprises. Retail development is not appropriate for this land use area.

Commercial / Light Industrial Area

The purpose of this land use area is to provide for concentrated commercial and light industrial development that is compatible with the surrounding area. The majority of the development within

this land use area is located primarily in village centers or hamlets, or along major roads such as U.S. Route 4.

Minimum density for this land use area should be no less than one acre. Uses in this area are diverse and include a broad range of commercial, retail and services, in addition to residential and public facilities.

Light Commercial / Light Industrial Area

The purpose of this land use area is to provide locations for appropriate light commercial/industrial development outside of the village center or hamlet areas. The majority of the development within this land use area is located outside, but adjacent to village centers or hamlets, or along major roads such as U.S. Route 4.

Minimum density for this land use area should be no less than one acre. Uses in this area are diverse and include a broad range of commercial, retail and services, in addition to residential and public facilities. Retail development (including restaurants) should be limited to a minimum square footage in order to ensure that this type of development does not negatively impact the vitality of the village center areas.

Business Service / Light Industrial Area

The purpose of this land use area is to provide locations for light commercial/industrial development that is not appropriate in concentrated village and hamlet areas. The majority of the development within this land use area is located outside, but adjacent to village centers or hamlets, or along major roads such as U.S. Route 4.

Minimum density for this land use area should be no less than one acre. Beyond residential and other uses commonly allowed in residential areas, uses in this area are focused primarily on non-retail and light industrial businesses, many of which utilize more space for storage, manufacturing and general operation than would be appropriate in the Village Centers. Retail development is not appropriate for this land use area.

Inn

The purpose of this land use area is to provide specific locations where Inns are appropriate based on their consistency with the surrounding area. The majority of the development within this land use area is located within village centers or hamlets, or along major roads such as U.S. Route 4.

Minimum density for this land use area should be no less than three acres. Beyond residential and other uses commonly allowed in residential areas, uses in this area are focused primarily on inns. Retail development is not appropriate for this land use area.

SPECIAL FEATURES OVERLAY MAPS

(Larger scaled and more detailed maps are available at the Planning & Zoning Office.)

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

The purpose of the conservation district is to protect against the unsuitable development of lands with natural limitations such as: 1) shallow soils, 2) steep slopes, 3) floodway, 4) agricultural soils, 5) wetlands and 6) aquifers. Because they are fragile resources and impose limitation on development, no community facilities will be provided to these areas. (See pages 63-84)

FLOOD HAZARD DISTRICT

The purpose of the flood hazard district is to prevent increase in flooding caused by the development of lands in flood hazard areas and to minimize losses due to floods. Within the floodway, land filling and structure will not be permitted; within the 100 year floodplain, land filling and structure will be permitted pursuant to federal and state guidelines. (See page 66)

DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT

The purpose of the Design Review District is to protect the natural beauty and the architectural, cultural and historic character of the Town for both residents and visitors. In order to protect these characteristics, it is necessary to insure that structures are properly related to their sites, to surrounding sites and structures and that proper attention is given to exterior appearances of buildings as permitted by Section 4407 (6) of the Act. (See pages 52 & 53)

SCENIC RIDGELINE DISTRICT

The purpose of the Scenic Ridgeline District is to protect the rural and pastoral character of Woodstock by preserving and conserving Woodstock's ridges and hillsides from unregulated land development. (See page 114)