



# Waitsfield Town Plan

Adopted October 22, 2012

**Adopted by the Waitsfield Selectboard on October 22, 2010.**

Approved by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission on November 13, 2012.

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# 1 | Introduction

The Town of Waitsfield has a rich history and heritage grounded in the Vermont doctrine of freedom and unity. Our agrarian past has left a legacy that is prominent in our landscape and continues to influence the character of our community. While we are indebted to our past, the town's recent history has been one of transition.

The changes that have affected the town mirror those influencing the state as a whole. Our resource-based economy, founded on agriculture and forestry, is now built on recreation and an enviable quality of life. Thus, Waitsfield has been transformed from a quiet farming town to a resort destination, bedroom community and, increasingly, a center for innovation and commerce. This transformation has not been without costs to tranquility, the landscape, and the insular nature of the community. Waitsfield has managed, however, to retain many of the best elements of its past and merge them with a modern economy driven by tourism, technology, accessibility, and respect for our natural and social heritage.

As we look to the future, we can conclude that change will become more rapid and that the consequences of town decisions will become more profound. To best confront the future, the town should look to its past, to the path provided by our forebears. In this way, we can arrive at the following principles that are found throughout this plan:

- ◆ Open debate, accessible institutions and democracy are the bases of our local government;
- ◆ Economic and cultural opportunities for local citizens enrich the entire community;
- ◆ Access to quality education, a livable wage and safe and affordable housing are critical elements of a civil society;
- ◆ All current and future residents of the town share the same rights and responsibilities, regardless of status or background;
- ◆ As our economy becomes more globalized, focusing on sustainable development and the careful stewardship of local resources will become increasingly important;
- ◆ The town's heritage, as defined by the historic settlement pattern of concentrated villages

surrounded by an open countryside and forested mountains, is among its greatest resources; and

- ◆ Individual rights and responsibility to the community should be balanced, as provided by local, state and federal law.

## 1.A AUTHORITY, HISTORY & PURPOSE

**Authority.** Authority to adopt and implement the town plan is provided by the Vermont Planning and Development Act (hereafter referred to as The Act), 24 VSA, Chapter 117.

**History.** Waitsfield's first plan was the original town charter of 1782, which established a subdivision plan for the town and prescribed how private property would be developed. The modern era for town planning began when the town adopted its first town plan in the early-1970s. In 1980, the town began to coordinate its planning program with other Mad River Valley towns through the Valley Growth Study, which resulted in a major revision to the town plan in 1983, and a subsequent update of that plan in 1988.

In 1993, the Planning Commission undertook a comprehensive re-write of the plan. The result was a plan with a much broader scope and level of detail than the prior plan. It served the community well, and was re-adopted with minor amendment in 1998. In 2005, the Planning Commission completed a significant update of the 1993 plan, and incorporated the outcome of the many planning and community outreach efforts that occurred during the previous decade.

**Purpose.** The town plan is the principal policy statement for the Town of Waitsfield. It articulates the aspirations of the community, and provides a framework for achieving those aspirations. It is intended to guide how the town addresses such diverse community issues as land development, the provision of municipal services and facilities, environmental protection, economic development and transportation.

In developing this plan, an attempt was made to look beyond the typical five-year time frame of many municipal plans. The Planning Commission tried to consider the factors that will affect the town's growth well into the future, and to define how we as a community should work to influence those factors. In addition

to guiding local officials and citizens in making decisions regarding our future, the town plan is intended to be relied upon as the basis for making decisions in a number of specific settings. Such uses of the plan include the following:

- ◆ Provide the framework for planning the future of the town.
- ◆ Guide local decision-making in local regulatory reviews. While the Town Plan is not a regulatory document, it does provide a basis for determining compliance with plan policies in specific regulatory settings.
- ◆ Serve as the basis for local decision-making during the Act 250 review process, most importantly guiding the Planning Commission and Selectboard in making determinations of compliance with the town plan.
- ◆ Provide a foundation for updating and revising land use regulations.
- ◆ Assist in the ongoing update and implementation of the capital budget.
- ◆ Assist with the formulation of local policies and programs.
- ◆ Serve as the primary resource document for private parties desiring to learn of the town and its goals and policies.
- ◆ Establish a basis for the town's interactions with neighboring towns and with other levels of government.

**Format.** This plan contains a short town history; 10 chapters addressing a range of topics, including all plan elements required by the Act; and an implementation section (chapter 13) that includes a prioritized list of policy implementation tasks. A list of relevant planning studies and other reference materials is provided as Appendix A. A series of maps is presented in Appendix B, and Appendix C contains the results of the 2009 public opinion survey.

Each chapter presents background information and analysis, which provides a basis for plan goals, policies and tasks. The narrative included in these chapters is not intended to serve as specific policy statements. Such policy statements are located at the end of each chapter as goals and policies. For the purpose of the Waitsfield Town Plan:

- ◆ Goals express broad, long-range community aspirations relative to one or more categories of topics. They should be considered aspirational statements for the community.
- ◆ Policies are statements of the town's intent, or position, with regard to specific issues or topics. In certain settings, such as during Act 250 proceedings and local zoning and subdivision reviews, policy statements shall serve as the basis for determining a project's conformance with the plan. While other sections of the plan, including goal statements, provide useful context for understanding policies, the policies alone serve as the final statement regarding the town's position.
- ◆ Implementation tasks are specific actions to be taken by an identified entity to support one or more policies and achieve the community's long term goals. Where feasible, the municipal entity responsible for carrying out the implementation task is identified. Where a partnership with a private entity is desirable, such partnership is noted as being encouraged. Tasks are designed to assist the town to achieve its long-term goals. Failure to implement a specific task, however, does not alter or negate a specific plan policy.

## 1.B PARTICIPATION & COORDINATION

**Participation.** Waitsfield residents have a rich tradition of democracy and participation in town government. Spirited debate, and occasional discord, is a predictable part of resolving important community issues. This plan builds upon that history of public discourse and supplements it with a focused public outreach effort designed to solicit greater community input regarding key issues facing the town's future. In advance of revising the plan, the Planning Commission distributed a survey to town residents and property owners in October 2009 that covered the wide range of topics addressed in this plan. A report summarizing the survey results is included as an appendix to this plan.

Before holding formal public hearings on this plan, the Planning Commission advertised that a preliminary draft was available and solicited the advice of town residents and landowners, interest groups and affected parties. Local non-governmental organizations, especially those that have been identified as playing a potential role in partnership with the town

to implement specific tasks, were also invited to review the draft and provide comments on the preliminary draft.

As is usually the case, there is room for additional public involvement at all levels of the planning process. The use of surveys and questionnaires, public forums and greater coordination between interest groups and the town has ensured the past participation of town residents in local decision-making. The ongoing coordination with local citizen groups, businesses and regional agencies will ensure that such involvement continues to shape town policies.

**Regional Coordination.** The Town of Waitsfield has been meeting regularly with the neighboring towns of Fayston and Warren to discuss issues of mutual concern for more than 25 years. This relationship was formalized by the creation of the Mad River Valley Planning District (MRVPD) in 1985. The MRVPD is a unique entity that has undertaken a number of planning initiatives designed to address issues of shared concern among the towns of Waitsfield, Warren and Fayston.

In addition to the wealth of information available through these planning efforts, this cooperative relationship allows Waitsfield to coordinate its local planning program with those of neighboring towns through the MRVPD's staff and Steering Committee, thereby ensuring plan compatibility with Fayston and Warren. This coordination has resulted in, for example, the recognition of Irasville as the Mad River Valley's commercial "downtown" in Fayston's, Warren's and Moretown's town plans.

Some formal relationships between the towns exist in order to address specific community needs such as the Washington West Supervisory Union and the Mad River Resource Management Alliance. In addition, several non-governmental organizations, such as the Friends of the Mad River, focus their efforts on the larger watershed, which includes all Mad River Valley towns. The Waitsfield-Fayston Fire Department and the Joslin Library are resources shared by Waitsfield and Fayston.

The policies set forth in this plan were crafted to ensure compatibility with the plans of neighboring towns, as required by state statute. Compatibility with neighboring towns is particularly important with regard to land use, where incompatible policies could result in conflicting development activities and land uses along town boundaries. Waitsfield's land

use plan calls for agriculture, forestry, low- to moderate-density residential development and very limited non-residential uses along the boundaries of Moretown, Northfield, Warren, Fayston, and Duxbury. These uses and densities are similar to those allowed in adjacent towns along the boundary.

Finally, the town continues to play an active role with the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission. Through that involvement, potential conflicts with neighboring towns outside of the Mad River watershed can be addressed. More importantly, the town has considered the policies of the Central Vermont Regional Plan, and has subsequently drafted a town plan that is compatible and consistent with the regional plan.

**State Planning Goals.** Under the Act, Vermont towns are encouraged to plan in accordance with the state's planning goals and include specified elements within their plans. While this plan was developed foremost to meet the needs and reflect the desires of the Town of Waitsfield, careful attention was also made to ensure that all specified elements have been included, and that the goals, policies and tasks set forth in subsequent chapters are consistent with state planning goals.

**Acknowledgments.** This plan was formed largely in response to the active participation of Waitsfield residents and landowners over the years. That participation takes many forms, such as serving on local boards, attending hearings and meetings, returning completed surveys, and of course voting, and is the foundation of local planning. A special thanks to those Waitsfield citizens who continue to help shape our community's future.

The town history in Chapter 2 was first drafted by Rick Thompson in 1993. Historic photographs were made available by Jack Smith and the Waitsfield Historical Society. Aerial photographs were taken by Alex McClean through a project funded by the Mad River Conservation Partnership. Other photos were provided by David Garten, Sandy Macys, Dennis Curran and Beverly Kehoe.

Finally, this plan, and several of the planning studies and documents it references, was funded in part by Vermont Municipal Planning Grants awarded by the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs.



## 1.C GOALS

- 1.C-1 The widespread involvement of Waitsfield citizens and landowners at all levels of the local planning and decision-making process.

## 1.D POLICIES

- 1.D-1 Provide opportunities for citizen input at every stage of the planning and decision-making process, and ensure that decision making occurs in an open, public environment.
- 1.D-2 Adopt a town plan which is consistent with state planning goals. This plan has been determined to be consistent with those goals.
- 1.D-3 Recognize that statutory hearings are a minimum level of public involvement and strive to exceed that level in all instances where public interest is evident. Public forums, direct mailings, broadcasts on Mad River Television and notices placed in local newspapers will be used to inform the public of governmental activities on a regular basis.
- 1.D-4 Review the town plan and related planning documents on a regular basis, and modify them as appropriate to address changing circumstances.
- 1.D-5 Continue to participate in the Mad River Valley Planning District to support regional cooperation and communication on matters of area-wide concern.
- 1.D-6 Continue active participation in the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to coordinate local planning activities with those of neighboring towns and the regions, and continue to support regional organizations which most efficiently provide services and facilities to local residents and those of surrounding towns (e.g., Waterbury-Mad River Valley Solid Waste Alliance, Mad River Valley Recreation District, Waitsfield-Fayston Volunteer Fire Department, etc.).
- 1.D-7 Provide neighboring towns with an opportunity to comment on local matters of concern through notification of pending decisions which may affect them.

## 2 | Historic Development

### 2.A GEOLOGICAL HISTORY

Two of Vermont's highest peaks lay six to ten miles west, their rounded foothills forming the town's western border. Above the hills to the east, the land flattened into a broad, mile-wide plateau that spanned the length of the township beneath the low ridges of the Northfield Mountain Range. Originally, Waitsfield included lands east of those mountains, but geographical proximity later resulted in their annexation to Northfield in 1822 and 1846. Today, Waitsfield encompasses about 15,540 acres.

The summits surrounding Waitsfield belong to the Green Mountains, a backbone of double mountain ranges that longitudinally bisect Vermont. In turn, these grey ledge summits represent the northern extension of a much longer continental cordillera stretching in eastern America from Alabama all the way north through Vermont into Canada. These Appalachian Mountains are 500- to 900-million years old. Their worn, grandfatherly knobs are thought to be the weathered cores of an ancient mountain range, which may have towered to Himalayan heights. They would have been raised from continental crusts that were buckling under the tremendous stresses of proto-continental collisions in the long, convoluted, geologic history of earth.

Perhaps the most dramatic chapter of Waitsfield's natural history was written by the great continental ice sheets that covered all of New England 10,000 to 15,000 years ago. A mile thick glacier of ice flowing from the general direction of Camel's Hump gouged the Mad River Valley clean of all vegetation and soil. The islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard give testimony to the great piles of glacial debris scraped from New England and deposited at sea. Once climates warmed, the glaciers melted northward in retreat, redepositing the sands, silts, clays and stones that became the parent material of the Mad River Valley's soils. At one time, a large meltwater lake flooded the Mad River Valley. Some glacial features can be seen throughout town. Kame terraces and a huge glacial erratic (a boulder whose rock is not native to its resting location) can be seen just west of the elementary school. Gravel pits and clay banks along the brooks are remnants of this deposition. Channel scars from old lake bed currents and meltwater courses can be seen throughout the valley meadows.

### 2.B PRE-COLONIAL HISTORY

Little evidence of Native American activity has been discovered in Waitsfield though it is known that Algonquians, roaming on the western fringe of their tribal territory, periodically lived or passed through the area. Fine campsites would have been found along the Mad River, but the river's periodic flooding may have destroyed, buried or carried away any evidence of use. A recent archaeological study of the town-owned Munn property, however, turned up a chert projectile point and a quartz biface knife, both of which date from the Middle to Late Archaic period (ca. 5500—900 B.C.).

Archaeologists believe other sites may be found within Waitsfield in the future; a map of the Mad River Valley showing areas of high archaeological sensitivity was prepared by the state archaeologist in 1988. An initial assessment of the Mad River Valley's archaeological potential, *Archaeology in Vermont's Mad River Valley from Paleo-Indian Times to the Present*, was completed for the Mad River Valley Planning District in 1990.

### 2.C FORMATION OF THE TOWN

On February 25, 1782, Col. Benjamin Wait, the Honorable Roger Enos and about 70 others were granted a charter by the Governor, Council and General Assembly of the State of Vermont for the township of Waitsfield. At the time, Vermont had not been accepted into the United States of America. Vermont was a self-declared republic with its own constitution, currency and self-government.

First surveyed by William Strong in 1788, Waitsfield included approximately 23,000 acres of hills and valley covered in virgin woods. The valley was oriented and drained to the north by a flood-prone, 'mad' river and was surrounded by 2,000- to 4,000-foot mountains. The river ran in a narrow floodplain near the western town line closely guarded by steep hills.

### 2.D EARLY SETTLEMENT

**General Wait.** In 1789, less than a year after Strong's survey, General Benjamin Wait led a small group of settlers, mostly family members or friends from his home in Windsor, Vermont, into the area. General Wait may have built the town's first log house upon a



hillock north of the village, which now holds the cemetery bearing his grave. He soon constructed the first frame house in Waitsfield on a small terrace about half a mile west of that log cabin site. Three sons and a half-brother built upon lots nearby. By 1791, Vermont had finally been accepted into the Union, and the first federal survey of the 14th state showed 13 families and 61 people living in Waitsfield.

General Wait was 53 years old when he moved from the Connecticut River westward over the mountains. He had recently resigned his rank of brigadier general for the Third Brigade of Vermont Militia, the culmination of a military career that had started in the French and Indian War and carried on through the War for Independence. He had been a renowned and successful resident of Windsor, having served as a representative to Vermont's constitutional conventions. He continued to be a civic leader in Waitsfield, being elected Selectman and representing his new town in the State Legislature. He died in 1822, at the age of 86.

His home was moved off the terrace sometime near 1830 to its present location next to the village cemetery. A second story was added about that time. The Wait house is among those structures that comprise the Waitsfield Village Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Other Early Settlers.** With southern New Englanders hungry for land, settlement of all corners of Waitsfield soon followed General Wait's arrival. By 1795, the poll tax list showed 50 voters. By charter, homesteaders had to clear and cultivate a minimum of five acres. A house at least 18 feet square had to be built upon a lot. Sam and John Barnard built north along the river near the Moretown line. Samuel Pike and his sons from Brookfield, Massachusetts (General

Wait's birthplace) built homes on the hillsides below Scrag Mountain in the east. Francis Dana was located on lots 143 and 144 in the far southwestern corner of town, high on the western hill which parallels the Mad River upstream to Warren. Moses Chase was established at the base of Bald Mountain in the northeast.

At first, town life centered around the Wait family lots. General Wait's home was used for town meetings until 1798. The first church services were held in his barn. What little commerce was available was here as well. Slightly northeast, at the foot of nearby ledges, Samuel Chandler of Worcester, Massachusetts, and Henry Mower of Woodstock, Vermont, had the first store in town. Edmund Rice, a cabinet maker, town clerk, merchant and surveyor, lived close by. The Carpenter tannery and a potash works were within the vicinity as well. North along the old county road, another store was established in 1815 by Hebard, Baldwin and Woodward. This building held the first Post Office for Waitsfield in 1818.

**The Common.** The frequent flooding of the Mad River may have kept the first settlers away from the floor of the valley. Instead, many built their homes on the high plateau east of the river. The first real village center was established up on the Common in the early 1800s. It remained as the town's political and social center for 40 years. In 1798, a donated piece of land on the Common was cleared and the cemetery that is there today laid to its western side. A meetinghouse for the town was built in 1807 in front of the cemetery. Roderick Richardson Sr. had a store on the Common by 1806. Potash works, tanneries and a blacksmith shop were there as well. Palmer Hill, a small knoll east of the Common at the foot of Old Scrag, was densely settled with the growing Bartlett, Quimby, Wheeler, Grandy and Palmer families.

**Peak Population.** The population of Waitsfield peaked during first half of the 1800s. In 1840, there were 1,048 people in town, a number that has been surpassed only in recent times. Starting in the mid-1800s, many citizens left Waitsfield for more promising lands out in the Midwest, attracted by the Erie Canal and the reports of fertile lands in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Minnesota. Two of Benjamin Wait's sons left, while a third, Ezra fathered the first child in town, Catherine Cutler Wait, born October 21, 1790.

## 2.E INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

To help build a successful community, the proprietors of Waitsfield voted a tax of two pence an acre. One half of this money was to be used building roads and bridges. The rest was used to attract business and industry. As the clearing of land is the most prevalent occupation of any woodland frontier, potash works were quickly established to wash the ash and char of the bonfires with lye. The residue used in the making of soap was then traded into southern New England for tools, clothes and seed. Lumber mills were also important to frontier communities. They not only gave land owners a commodity (logs) to barter for other goods, they also milled the board feet of lumber that became the comfortable frame homes, meeting-houses, churches and businesses: the infrastructure every new town needs to attract emigrants.

**Water Powered Mills.** Six brook-sized streams fed the Mad River from the slopes of the surrounding mountains. Three fed from the west and three from the east, spaced at fairly equal margins from the southern town line to the north. With flooding such trouble on the Mad River, these small streams became important sources of power for early mill works. General Wait may have had the first sawmill in town just east of the present High Bridge on Clay Brook, a shallow stream, which flows off Scrag Mountain and empties into the Mad River just north of the village.

In 1793, as a result of the tax subsidy, John Heaton Jr. built the first grist and saw mills on Mill Brook in Irasville. Until then, grains were milled in an old hollowed out birch stump near the covered bridge, or taken many miles south through the Kingston Mountains (Granville Woods), where the nearest grist mill was found in Hancock. Turned over to successive owners, Heaton's Mills became known as Green's Mills, then Richardson's. It occupied a site just upstream from the present location of the Baird lumber mill today.

**Irasville.** Helped by the presence of these mills, the hamlet of Irasville grew into some prominence. Named for Ira Richardson, who had a 'commodious' homestead along the flats, Irasville became the center for the Methodist Church when in 1835. First Elder Rufus Barrett donated land for a Methodist cemetery and oversaw the construction of a barn which became the Methodist meetinghouse. In 1870, the Methodists built the large white church in Waitsfield Village. Their old barn still stands in Irasville. It is occupied today by The Store.

**Waitsfield Village.** During the first three decades of the 19th century, more and more farms were established among the hills, and the demand for services grew. The village of Waitsfield slowly took form. Roderick Richardson had a house there by 1817. In 1831, he built a store next door. The building was damaged by fire in 1845 and the present two-story brick structure was built. It is now the Masonic Hall. In 1851, Richardson also moved a building from Irasville to the corner diagonally across from the Masonic Hall. This large building became a hotel. Its ground floor was used for 50 years as a hall for town meetings.

A few hundred yards north of the Richardson buildings, a Union Meeting Hall was built in 1836. At the turn of the century, the Odd Fellows Association purchased this red brick building and a second story was added. Dan Richardson built a brick house next door in the 1840s.

There was a blacksmith's shop across the river by 1838 and a Congregational parsonage by 1840. George Kidder lived in a house next door to the parsonage. Today it is a half-brick, half wooden building. The wooden part is the oldest, having been used by Kidder as a store and a post office as he was made postmaster in 1822. Across the road from Kidder's, at the foot of Mill Hill, Roderick Richardson built a large complex of grist and lumber mills in 1829-30. In order to supply his mills with power, he and his two partners hand dug a canal to the river, passing behind the post office. The slough is visible today. By 1850, Waitsfield village had become the commercial and social center of the town.

## 2.F TRANSPORTATION

Early roads were surveyed and built through taxation. By 1796, a bridge had been built over the Great Eddy of the Mad River carrying a road through what is now the village center. Perhaps from fear of flooding, the village did not become established until the 1820s and '30s. By 1797, the earliest road in town ran south from the Barnard place near the Moretown line up along the west bank of the river, bending westward onto the terrace to pass General Wait's house, from which it proceeded south, curling past his son's place which would have been near the present village parsonage. From here a fork of the road turned south over a small knoll and out onto the Irasville flats, then pitched down the 'Dugway' and crossed Mill Brook

on a bridge built near Green's Mills. It then climbed the steep hill towards the Francis Dana place.

As noted, there was a bridge over the Mad River at this time. Another fork of the old county road crossed the river and continued up over Mill Hill southeast, following the general direction of the present East Warren Road until it curved up onto Roxbury Mountain passing what is now the former Folsom/Great Lakes Carbon Farm on Sherman Road. This road over to Roxbury was the first highway that ran into or out of the Mad River Valley.

The old bridge at the Great Eddy was destroyed several times by fire and flood. A covered bridge, which remains today, was built on the site and is the second oldest covered bridge in the state of Vermont. The bridge was restored in the early 1970s. With federal grant funds awarded in 2008, efforts were initiated to rehabilitate the bridge, cantilevered sidewalk, decking, and abutments in 2010. Despite damages and delays caused by Tropical Storm Irene in August 2011, work is expected to be completed in 2013.

A north road was quickly laid out from the Roxbury/Kingston highway, across the eastern plateau to the Common, branching up Palmer Hill along the way. Another headed southerly from the Common, back down into the Mad River Valley towards the Great Eddy bridge. In 1803, a road was extended northeast from the Common, entering Moretown high on the slopes under the knob of Bald Mountain. What are now the main routes through the village were not established until 1837.

Throughout the 1800s, there was frequent talk of rail lines into the Mad River Valley, but finances were never found for the various schemes. Granville Gulf effectively sealed off any major southern exit for the Mad River Valley. Eventually a good highway was established north along the Mad River through Moretown, and goods and supplies soon found transport to the railhead in Middlesex.

## 2.G AGRICULTURE

The history of agriculture and industry in Waitsfield closely follows the patterns for Vermont as a whole. Initially, the pioneer settlers were engaged with the clearing of lands for subsistence farming. Virgin forests were chopped over and burned, their ash sent to the potash works, becoming the first marketable product of the farmers. The clearings were then planted with a variety of grains: wheats, barley, hay, rye and

oats as well as corn and potatoes. Maple sugar was made in the spring. (Maple syrup was too perishable, so the sap was boiled longer to the sugar stage). These products were often used as currency to pay taxes or bills, and directly bartered for other goods.

The number of farms increased from 95 in 1850 to 135 in 1880. Agricultural societies were chartered and exposition fairs were held throughout town to display products and animals. By 1870, it is estimated that Vermont was 70 percent cleared land and only 30 percent forest – a ratio that is the reverse of today.

**Sheep.** Sheep raising was the first dominant agricultural activity. To attract farmers, the town again turned to tax incentives, allowing in 1804 a deduction of one dollar per sheared sheep off any taxpayer's property assessment. The Merino sheep did well with the Vermont climate and stony soil. Sheep were necessary for their wool to make clothes, as cotton goods were only available far away in the bigger towns of southern New England. In lieu of money, wool was often bartered locally for supplies.

The sheep industry remained strong throughout Vermont until the middle of the 19th century when rangelands in Texas began to dominate the supply of wool. During this period, farmers often drove their excess range stock to market in southern New England some 200 miles away.

**Dairying.** With the loss of the sheep industry, farmers in Vermont and the Mad River Valley turned to dairying. As there was no refrigeration at the time, milk products were quickly turned into less perishable butter and cheese. For the next 30 years, Vermonters produced the majority of dairy products for New England. Local farmers increased their dairy herds. To meet container demands, many mills in Waitsfield turned to the manufacture of butter and cheese tubs.

Just before the turn of the 20th century, agriculture changed again. Refrigeration meant milk could be stored in the fluid stage. The new DeLaval cream separators allowed raw milk to be skimmed of cream in large quantities. Until then, most butter and cream were produced on the farm. These new machines allowed for centrally located creameries, which could process the products of many farms at one time. Cream skimming stations were built throughout Waitsfield. By 1893, a creamery was operating in the village. In 1897, several Waitsfield farmers founded a cooperative and built a creamery in the northern part of town, near the present Hartshorn farm.

**Previous Century.** Throughout the 20th, and into the 21st century, farming has been in decline in Waitsfield. Empty cellar holes, crumbling barns, and neglected stone walls and fences can be found among the thick brush and woods that are now growing up in the old pastures and meadows. Of the 135 farms of Waitsfield in 1880, only about a dozen remain active today. Farms are larger in acreage, and may produce as much as the many smaller farms once did a century ago.

Unlike previous decades, few farm operations went out of business in the 1990s and as the decade came to a close several new commercial vegetable farms and organic beef operations had been established. Horses have also become an increasingly common sight throughout the Mad River Valley; one Vermont Department of Agriculture estimate found that the Mad River Valley now has the highest density of horses in the state. It appears that agriculture in Waitsfield is again transforming itself in response to changing economic and social conditions.

## 2.H EDUCATION

From the beginning of the town's settlement, schools were important to residents. All town charters granted by the State of Vermont held a reserve of land to be used for schools. College lands were set aside as well, though as major colleges became established in the state, the lands were often sold off. As early as 1797, Francis Dana, General Wait, and three others formed a committee to divide the town into school districts.

Each district was responsible for building its own school and attracting a teacher. Initially, schools were held in private residences. Over time, one-room schoolhouses were built close to the geographical center of each district. Then, chimneys and stoves were added, allowing winter sessions in the buildings. In 1802, there were 201 pupils in four districts. In 1812, there were 269 in five.

In 1847, the Village District voted to build a new two-story school. Complete with belfry, this building was built next to the village cemetery north of town. Each floor was one room. The upper floor was often used for advanced classes in the 1850s and '60s. These classes eventually disappeared and the building was used exclusively for grammar grades until a two-year high school program was created in 1906. The Old High School still stands today, converted into residential condominiums.

## 2.I MILITARY SERVICE

Military service has long been important to Waitsfield citizens. In fact many of the original settlers had served under General Wait, or taken part in the Revolutionary War. For many of the early decades in town history, local militia were organized and drilled on June training day.

Though the War of 1812 was somewhat unpopular, a part of Waitsfield's "Floodwoods" militia was sent to support Plattsburgh, New York, in battle with the British. They arrived too late to join in the fighting. Ten percent of Waitsfield's men served during the Civil War. Ten sons died in fighting, while ten more died of disease. In the two World Wars of the 20th century, 130 men served and eight died in combat. Twenty-eight served in Korea. Fifty-three served during the Vietnam War, and two Waitsfield men died in Southeast Asia.

## 2.J SKI INDUSTRY

In the second half of the 20th century, a new industry became the focal point of Waitsfield's economy. In 1948, the Mad River Glen Ski Area was opened on the slopes of Stark Mountain southwest of town. Thus began an era of recreational, tourist-oriented development that continues today. Two more ski areas were added southward (Sugarbush on Lincoln Peak and Glen Ellen on Mount Ellen) and their webs of white ski trails economically bind Waitsfield and the other Mad River towns to their success.

Waitsfield is now the commercial center of the Mad River Valley. The old mills, meetinghouses and homes of the village are shops and restaurants. In the late-1960s and early '70s, the Post Office, grocery and hardware store all moved out of the village into new shopping centers upon the Irasville flats.

Thousands of tourists come to town on weekends now to ski at the Mad River and Sugarbush Ski Areas, dine in restaurants and sleep in old farmhouses renovated into country inns. Summer tourism is also important with vacationers coming to hike the Green Mountains, fish the Mad River Valley's streams, bicycle on its roads and trails, canoe the Mad River, play golf, attend an annual arts festival, or simply relax in the country air.

## 2.K RECENT HISTORY

In August 1989, the Town of Waitsfield celebrated its bicentennial. Two hundred years from the date of Benjamin Wait's entry into Waitsfield, a small parade saw descendants of five original town settlers recognized. Families of Jonathan Palmer, Benjamin Wait, Samuel Barnard and others still live within the town. Guest speakers saluted the town's perseverance and established its importance for the future of Vermont. A historical exhibit of town memorabilia attracted more than 600 visitors.

Waitsfield is now in its third century as an organized community. Recent decades have brought a period of continued change, as the population of the town and surrounding Mad River Valley communities continued to grow. Vermont aesthetics and the expanding demographics of Waitsfield have attracted a population estimated at 1,719 in 2010, according to the U.S. Census. A wide variety of businesses and activities are located here. Waitsfield is now home to high-tech computer and energy companies, specialty food stores and bakeries, garden centers, construction companies, craft shops, real estate and financial services, a movie theater and playhouse and award winning maple syrup manufacturers.

During the past 15 years, the Mad River (formerly Fly In) Industrial Park finally began to reach its potential as several small manufacturing and wholesale businesses flourished, bringing the number of jobs in the park to well over 100, although that number was reduced by the departure of Northern Power in 2008. Irasville, Waitsfield's commercial center since the 1970s, also experienced the first significant development in nearly 20 years, including the conversion of the former Valley Inn to senior housing, the establishment of the area's third bank and a variety of other retail, office, manufacturing and residential development.

New houses have been built among the old pastures and woodlots, along with associated private roads to access them. A volunteer ambulance service and a medical center have been organized to serve the public's health. Waitsfield also has one of the most modernized, independent phone companies in the nation; phone service was established locally by 1900. Zoning ordinances have been drafted and district planning coordinated to help assure and control growth.

Land conservation became a household term when the town allocated \$20,000 in 1991 to acquire development rights from a local dairy farm, thereby keeping the former Ed Eurich Farm in agriculture. The conservation of the Eurich Farm was part of the Maple Avenue conservation project, which saw the protection of nearly 1,000 acres in the vicinity of the Common Road. Other notable properties protected were the Donald Joslyn Farm and the newly created, town-owned Scrag Forest which now encompasses more than 600 acres of the Northfield Range and was the result of one purchase and three separate gifts to the town. Additional conservation efforts helped to secure public access to the Mad River (including the Lareau Swimhole, which was developed as a public park in 2002), to protect important forest land and trail access (through a gift to the town of the so-called Wu Ledges Forest and acquisition of conservation and public access easements on adjoining properties), and to support local farmers. In 2010 the town contributed \$20,000 to the preservation of the Hartshorn farm property as agricultural land.

Physiographic, economic, and cultural change has prevailed throughout the history of Waitsfield. Great floods of the Mad River have washed out many of the bridges and roads and buildings of the community, striking violently in 1850, as well as in the notorious flood of 1927 that devastated the whole of Vermont. Again in 1998, the Mad River reminded town residents that despite our modern technologies and declining reliance on the land for our livelihood, the forces of nature still have a profound impact on our lives. Early on the morning of June 25, a torrential rain fell on the Mad River Valley. The resulting 500-year flood covered portions of Route 100 and inundated Waitsfield Village. Despite widespread property damage, no lives were lost. And, in case Waitsfield residents had forgotten, we were again reminded of the Mad River's central role in our community in the flood of May 2011, and a devastating flood from Tropical Storm Irene in August of that same year. However, Waitsfield maintains its commitment to improving its resiliency to flood impacts.

## 3 | Population

### 3.A POPULATION TRENDS

The year 1960 is often cited as a turning point in Vermont history. That year marked the first time in a century that Vermont's population increased between census periods. For the preceding 100 years, the state experienced out-migration as the country expanded westward and people left the countryside for industrial jobs in the cities, resulting in steady population decline. The year 1960 was also the start of Waitsfield's second period of population growth, as shown in Table 3-1. The 2010 Census states that Waitsfield's population is now 1719 people.

Table 3-3 illustrates population growth since 1960 in Waitsfield relative to the Mad River Valley, Washington County, and the state. More recently, the entire Mad River Valley experienced rapid population growth in the 1990s but Waitsfield continued to grow at a slower rate than the other two Valley towns, Fayston and Warren. Since 2000, it appears that this trend has continued, although the rate of growth Valley-wide has slowed considerably. The town's lower growth rates are explained largely by the greater availability of land for development in Fayston and Warren, which have fewer acres committed to farming than Waitsfield. The town's growth rate in the '90s was higher than the rates in either Washington County or Vermont, a trend that appears to have continued since 2000.

The town's population growth during the 1990s, as in the 1980s, was due largely to a natural increase (number of births exceeding the number of deaths) in the population. However, due to renewed in-migration, people moving into town also contributed to local population growth in the 1990s. The number of births has decreased over the last several years (see Table 3-2) and the number of deaths has risen in the late 2000s, reflecting the aging population. As a result, in-migration has become a larger component of population growth in Waitsfield during the 2000s and will likely continue to be.

### 3.B POPULATION PROFILE

A statistical profile of Waitsfield's population as documented by the 2010 Census and a comparison to the Mad River Valley, county, and state population is

presented on page 13. This data should be updated when more current information becomes available. Waitsfield's population in 2010, compared with that of the county and state, was:

- ◆ Somewhat older with a higher median age and relatively fewer children.
- ◆ Less "native" to Vermont with relatively more residents having been born out-of-state and in foreign countries.
- ◆ More formally educated with higher percentages of residents having obtained high school and college degrees.
- ◆ Generally wealthier with having higher per capita and median family incomes.
- ◆ Less impoverished with relatively fewer individuals, families, children and elderly below the poverty level.
- ◆ Similarly lacking in ethnic diversity with minorities representing only two percent of the town's population.

**Age Distribution.** The population characteristic that is perhaps most important for planning purposes is the town's age distribution and how this distribution has changed over the past 20 years (see Table 3-8). The most striking aspect has been the growth in the 50-64, and 65+ age groups, and the corresponding decrease in the younger age groups. Waitsfield's population, following nationwide trends, is aging. This trend is attributable to a number of factors, including the natural aging of the baby boom generation, many of whom moved to Waitsfield in the 1970s, started families and stayed.

The aging of the population is evident locally in the recent decline in births and school enrollments, as well as a tight local labor market for seasonal and entry-level jobs. The town's age distribution is also important for anticipating future trends and planning for future needs. Waitsfield, and the rest of the Mad River Valley, is somewhat unique because of the area's recreation resources, which appeal to a demographic that may be choosing where to live based more on lifestyle preferences than employment opportunities. This is especially evident when examined in a regional context.

It is likely that Waitsfield, along with other Mad River Valley towns, will continue to attract aging baby boomers, including a growing number of “empty-nesters” who are more mobile, and seek more leisure time activities, an attractive environment, and a high quality of life. Looking to the future, Waitsfield should anticipate that in-migration will become a more important component of population growth over the next several decades. Current trends also suggest that there will be an ongoing demand for more cultural and recreational facilities and services, and an increasing need for services to support an aging and elderly population over the next 20 years.

### 3.C POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The most recent population projections for Waitsfield and the Mad River Valley were derived from related forecasts prepared for the Central Vermont Region, and represent a “status quo” forecast based on past trends. Based on the most recent projections, Waitsfield is expected to maintain a relatively stable rate of population growth through 2030, with an average annual growth rate of 1.2 percent or an average increase of 25 people per year. The town will continue to grow more slowly than its neighbors. At these rates, the population will exceed 2,000 by the year 2020. Policy changes, infrastructure improvements, zoning density changes, the construction of municipal water and wastewater systems in Irasville and/or Waitsfield Village, or the significant loss or gain of jobs in the region, could alter these projections.

Table 3-1: Waitsfield Historic Population Table

Year	Population	Year	Population	Year	Population
1791	61	1890	815	1990	1,422
1800	473	1900	760	2000	1,659
1810	647	1910	709	2010	1,719
1820	935	1920	682		
1830	958	1930	723		
1840	1048	1940	706		
1850	1,021	1950	661		
1860	1,005	1960	658		
1870	948	1970	837		
1880	938	1980	1,300		

Source: US Census

### 3.D SEASONAL POPULATION

While the number of full-time residents is traditionally used for planning purposes to determine a community’s size, needs, and rates of growth, seasonal and visitor populations can also place significant demands on local facilities and services.

Although Waitsfield’s 159 seasonal housing units represent only 8.3 percent of second homes in the Mad River Valley, the town offers approximately 30 percent of The Valley’s commercial lodging beds. Waitsfield is also a regional commercial center, serving the needs of nearly all of The Valley’s seasonal and year-round residents. It is estimated that the Mad River Valley’s temporary population can reach 13,000 during the peak tourist season.

Past growth projections often assumed that future vacation housing would be located adjacent to recreation attractions, and therefore result in only minor seasonal population increases in Waitsfield. Experience has shown, however, that any growth in population or seasonal visitation in the Mad River Valley affects town infrastructure, services, and facilities. The larger effective population, the year-round population plus the total visitors who could be expected to be in town for a sustained (as opposed to peak) period, is a critical factor in determining the town’s capacity for future growth, and the impact of future regional development on Waitsfield.

Table 3-2: Waitsfield Vital Statistics

Year	Births	Deaths	Year	Births	Deaths
1989	29	13	2001	16	8
1990	22	5	2002	26	4
1991	19	6	2003	24	13
1992	26	11	2004	22	7
1993	21	10	2005	19	11
1994	29	8	2006	15	9
1995	21	9	2007	10	17
1996	19	9	2008	15	15
1997	24	8	2009	19	14
1998	26	9	2010	13	13
1999	17	2	2011	17	14
2000	26	8			

Source: Vermont Department of Health and Waitsfield Town Annual Reports

**Table 3-3: Comparison of Population and Average Annual Growth Rates**

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Waitsfield	661	658	837	1,300	1,422	1,659	1,719	0.0%	2.4%	4.5%	0.9%	1.6%	0.4%
Mad River Valley	1,331	1,285	1,717	2,913	3,440	4,481	4,777	-0.4%	2.9%	5.4%	1.7%	2.7%	0.6%
Washington County	42,870	42,860	47,659	52,393	54,928	58,039	59,534	0.0%	1.1%	1.0%	0.5%	0.6%	0.3%
Vermont	377,747	389,881	444,731	511,466	562,758	608,827	625,741	0.3%	1.3%	1.4%	1.0%	0.8%	0.3%

Source: US Census

**Table 3-4: Comparison of Households and Average Annual Growth Rates**

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Waitsfield	179	264	521	574	734	776	4.0%	7.0%	1.0%	2.5%	0.6%
Mad River Valley	352	530	1,147	1,413	1,960	2,141	4.2%	8.0%	2.1%	3.3%	0.9%
Washington County	12,318	14,133	18,626	20,948	23,659	25,027	1.4%	2.8%	1.2%	1.2%	0.6%
Vermont	110,754	132,041	178,394	210,650	240,634	256,442	1.8%	3.1%	1.7%	1.3%	0.6%

Source: US Census

**Table 3-5: Average Household Size**

	1990	2000	2010
Waitsfield	2.29	2.27	2.21
Mad River Valley	2.39	2.29	2.23
Washington County	2.50	2.36	2.28
Vermont	2.57	2.44	2.34

Source: US Census

**Table 3-7: Median Age**

	1990	2000	2010
Waitsfield	34.0	40.3	45.9
Washington County	35.3	38.5	42.3
Vermont	34.4	37.7	41.5

Source: US Census

**Table 3-6: Waitsfield Households by Type**

	1990	2000	2010
<b>Non-Family Households</b>			
Single-Person	129 22%	187 25%	242 31%
Multi-Person	50 9%	62 8%	50 6%
<b>Family Households</b>			
Married Couples with Children	158 28%	155 21%	158 20%
Married Couples without Children	179 31%	250 34%	255 33%
Female Single-Parent	33 6%	46 6%	32 4%
Male Single-Parent	13 2%	15 2%	18 2%
Other Family	12 2%	19 3%	23 3%

Source: US Census

**Table 3-8: Age Profile of Waitsfield Residents**

	<5	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 29	30 to 34	35 to 39	40 to 44	45 to 49	50 to 54	55 to 59	60 to 64	65 to 69	70 to 74	75 to 79	80 to 84	85+
1990	110	106	91	67	60	131	152	174	122	91	86	45	52	43	53	16	14	9
	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	9%	11%	12%	9%	6%	6%	3%	4%	3%	4%	1%	1%	1%
2000	87	107	98	88	83	97	119	139	180	156	130	86	43	64	49	37	40	12
	5%	7%	6%	5%	5%	6%	7%	9%	11%	10%	8%	5%	3%	4%	3%	2%	2%	1%
2010	92	104	105	100	65	73	80	117	109	164	158	153	134	108	56	53	24	10
	5%	6%	6%	6%	4%	4%	5%	7%	6%	10%	9%	9%	8%	6%	3%	3%	1%	1%

Source: US Census



### 3.E GOALS

- 3.E-1 Accommodate a sustainable level of population growth in a manner that fosters a diverse population that includes people and families from a range of income and age groups, and that does not overburden community facilities, services or the town's natural and cultural resources.

### 3.F POLICIES

- 3.F-1 Anticipate and plan for a year-round population growth rate of 0.5 to 1.5 percent per year (approximately 20 to 30 new residents each year) over the next 20 years.
- 3.F-2 Coordinate with neighboring Mad River Valley communities to accommodate a reasonable effective (full-time + seasonal residents) population, and peak populations, in a manner that benefits local residents and businesses and does not overburden town services and facilities.
- 3.F-3 Encourage, through land use and housing goals and policies, a socially and economically diverse population that includes families with children, young adults who grew up in the community, senior citizens and those new to town.

### 3.G TASKS

- 3.G-1 Monitor population and housing estimates, and annual permit data to identify correlation between housing development and population growth on an ongoing basis. [Planning Commission]
- 3.G-2 Consider appropriate mechanisms, including regulatory tools, to manage the rate of development in the event that population growth exceeds an average annual rate of 1.5 percent on a sustained basis (3 consecutive years). [Planning Commission]
- 3.G-3 Periodically review and update birth rates and enrollment projections. [Planning Commission, School Board]
- 3.G-4 Exercise party status in the Act 250 development review process and other state regulatory proceedings, as appropriate, to ensure that the town's growth needs and limitations are properly addressed relative to this plan. [Selectboard, Planning Commission]

## 4 | Housing

### 4.A OVERVIEW

Housing is one of life's necessities, yet safe, affordable housing and the American dream of home ownership are increasingly beyond the reach of many Vermonters, including many local residents. Waitsfield has long recognized the need for a variety of housing alternatives to support a socially diverse and economically viable community.

The 1991 report, *A Future for Affordable Housing in the Mad River Valley*, documented a variety of housing issues, including the need for more affordable, elderly and employee-assisted housing. It also included several recommended policies and strategies to address local needs. Since that time, some of the report's recommendations have been implemented by the town and neighboring communities.

The report has been revisited periodically. The most recent update in June 2006, *Mad River Valley Housing Study*, documented successes but also the fact that, despite all efforts, housing remained unaffordable for many Valley residents and employees of Valley businesses.

### 4.B CURRENT HOUSING SITUATION

In 2001, the Mad River Valley was beginning to see the effects of escalating house values, which continued to rise through 2006. One of the primary factors driving this sharp increase in prices was the fact that housing development was not keeping pace with population growth and the rate of household formation. Housing prices had also been pushed upward by the in-migration of new year-round and vacation home buyers from outside of The Valley who had the financial resources to outbid would-be buyers dependent on local wages.

Between 1990 and 2000, Waitsfield's year-round population increased by around 24 people per year and the number of households increased by around 16 per year, while the town's housing stock grew by less than eight units per year. Between 2000 and 2010, Waitsfield's year-round population increased by 68 people (around 7 people per year) and the number of households increased by about 4 per year. Following national and statewide trends, the average household size in The Valley has continued to decline

over the years, due to an aging population and changing household composition. Waitsfield continues to have the lowest average household size in The Valley.

The current economic downturn, which began with troubles in the housing market, has halted rapid increases in house values as of the writing of this plan. The sale price of primary homes in Waitsfield declined in 2007 and 2008, along with the number of sales which was 125. The recession has also slowed new construction and made credit more difficult to obtain, particularly for those seeking higher risk mortgages. In 2009-2010, the number of sales of primary homes decreased further with 85 occurring in that two-year span.

However, when the downturn reverses, it is likely that Waitsfield's housing situation will return to conditions similar to those experienced during the early part of this decade, as the underlying causes of limited supply and affordability problems have not been resolved.

**Housing Projections and Targets.** Projections prepared for Waitsfield in 2007 indicated that the town's year-round housing stock would grow at an average annual rate of 1.5 percent between 2010 and 2030 (approximately 17 dwellings per year). The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission expects Waitsfield to plan for the construction of 312 additional year-round homes between 2000 and 2020. Between 2000 and 2008, 116 homes were constructed in town. In order to meet this target, the rate of housing development will need to increase over the next decade (to an average of more than 20 dwellings per year).

Policies promoting Irasville growth center development and regional economic expansion, particularly if supported through new infrastructure, could dramatically alter both the rate and pattern of local housing development. However, it seems unlikely that Waitsfield will be able to meet regional expectations for new year-round homes if the status quo is maintained with respect to availability of wastewater infrastructure and the rate of economic expansion.

## 4.C HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

At the start of the 2000s, the shortage of year-round housing was spurring both the construction of new homes and the conversion of seasonal units to year-round homes. During the 1990s, around 60 percent of the new homes built in Waitsfield were single-family detached units and 40 percent were attached or multi-family units. The census also showed a decrease in the number of seasonal and vacant homes in town.

Single-family detached homes currently comprise more than two-thirds of the town's housing stock, but Waitsfield does have a relatively higher percentage of attached or multi-family units than the surrounding area. Such units have been developed over the years through new construction, including mixed-use development, the adaptive reuse of historic structures such as the old high school, and the conversion of older single-family homes into multi-family units.

Local permit data indicates that most of the housing built in Waitsfield since 2000 has been single-family detached homes. Waitsfield's 2009 grand list included 649 year-round homes, an increase of 67 dwellings from 2004. There were 27 fewer vacation homes on the grant list in 2009 than in 2004, suggesting continued conversion of seasonal units to year-round occupancy.

The number of mobile homes, generally considered a relatively affordable housing alternative, decreased during the 1990s, and in 2000 they accounted for slightly less than five percent of the town's housing stock. This was a relatively high percentage for the Mad River Valley, but is less than that for the county or state. There were 39 mobile homes listed in the 2012 grand list.

## 4.D HOUSING AFFORDABILITY GAP

**Income and Housing Costs.** A tight housing market typically results in escalating housing costs for both buyers and renters. Since the mid-1990s, incomes have not been keeping pace with rising housing costs for many households. During the '90s, median household income in Waitsfield grew by 11 percent after adjusting for inflation. The median sale price of a primary residence increased by approximately 20 percent after adjusting for inflation during the same period. This trend intensified in recent years. Between 2000 and 2006, household income grew by

only six percent and home sale prices rose around 30 percent.

Income levels in Waitsfield have historically been, and continue to be, higher than county and state averages. However, the median reported value of an owner-occupied home in 2000 at \$156,100 was the highest in the Mad River Valley and 40 percent above the state median. In 2010, the median value of owner-occupied homes was \$229,400.

The trend of higher income levels, but even higher housing values continued in the 2000s. According to 2006 data from the Vermont Department of Taxes, the median family adjusted gross income in Waitsfield was 21 percent higher than the state median. The median sale price of a primary residence in Waitsfield in 2006 was 37 percent higher than the median price statewide.

Renters have also experienced challenges in the housing market during the past decade. The 2006 housing study update found that one-bedroom apartments were renting for \$450 to \$800 per month, while two-bedroom apartments and condos were asking \$725 to \$1,000 per month. In addition, the number of units available for rent was limited.

**Affordability.** A common definition of "affordability" assumes that a household should not pay more than 30 percent of its gross income on housing costs. An affordability "gap" analysis for Waitsfield is presented in Figure 4-5. The analysis suggests that home ownership is not a viable option for many households at or below reported incomes and wage levels, even under current subsidized home ownership programs. Rental units, however, remain affordable for all but the town's lowest income residents, which likely include single wage-earner households, single parents, and retired elderly on fixed incomes.

Another common measure of whether wages are keeping up with the costs of housing is the "housing wage," the hourly wage that a working family has to earn so that it does not pay more than 30 percent of its income for shelter. In 2009, a worker would have needed full-time employment at a wage of \$11 to \$13 dollars per hour to afford a one-bedroom apartment, while the Vermont minimum wage was \$8.06 per hour. The housing wage needed to afford for a two-bedroom apartment was nearly double the minimum wage.

Census data confirmed that the percentage of households in town paying more than 30 percent of their gross income on housing has increased during the 1990s. As reported in 2000, 24 percent of local homeowners, and 37 percent of renters, were paying more than 30 percent of their 1999 household income on housing.

#### 4.E SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

While the 1991 report identified the need for more affordable single-family dwellings in the Mad River Valley, some of the included recommendations focused on ensuring that affordable housing was available for residents with special needs, which was defined at that time to include elderly and low-income residents along with seasonal employees of local ski areas. Many of the report's recommendations for accommodating these groups have been implemented.

**Evergreen Place.** In 1999, Mad River Senior Citizens Inc. acquired and renovated the former Valley Inn in Irasville, creating Evergreen Place, a senior citizens center and 22-unit assisted living facility. As of the writing of this plan, there were no vacancies at Evergreen Place.

**Verd-Mont.** The 29-unit Verd-Mont Mobile Home Park, formerly considered at risk for sale or closure, was retained when in 1999 the Central Vermont Community Land Trust purchased and upgraded the park. As of the writing of this plan, there was one vacant lot in the Verd-Mont park and lot rent was \$222 per month.

**Mad River Meadows.** The 24-unit Mad River Meadows, located in Irasville, is the town's only fully subsidized housing project. It has 10 one-bedroom, 8 two-bedroom and 6 three-bedroom units. Two of the units are handicap-accessible and 12 are designated for elderly residents. The privately-owned project operates on a five-year renewal agreement, which is set to expire in 2012. As of the writing of this plan, there are no vacancies in Mad River Meadows.

Seasonal employee housing issues, associated largely with ski area employment, have not affected Waitsfield directly, but may affect the local rental market. Sugarbush and Mad River Glen have both endeavored to provide housing for their seasonal employees.

While independent and assisted living housing is now available locally for elderly residents, there are

no state licensed residential care facilities in town that provide personal care, limited medical care and 24-hour supervision. The nearest facilities of this type are located in Northfield, Montpelier and Waterbury.

#### 4.F HOUSING PRIORITIES

The Mad River Valley 2006 Housing Study outlined a wide range of initiatives that might be considered by towns in The Valley in order to increase the availability of lower cost housing. The recommendations ranged from zoning changes to adoption of various taxes, fees, and other forms of monetary support for affordable housing development. Due to already high property taxes, land costs, and construction costs, these towns have not adopted specific taxes or fees to support affordable housing to date.

Efforts to address affordable housing in The Valley remain ongoing. The Mad River Valley Housing Coalition, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation formed under the auspices of the Planning District, has been actively focused on affordable housing issues in the Mad River Valley. In fall 2009 this group developed *Open a New Door: A Guide to Creating & Renting Accessory Apartments in the Mad River Valley*. This resource guide provides comprehensive information to assist homeowners who may be considering creating an accessory apartment to rent. This group launched a program in February 2012 called the Affordable Land Initiative to help provide very low cost land for affordable housing.

There has been an on-going effort to increase the availability and support for residential development in Irasville and Waitsfield Village but development has been limited by the availability of suitable properties due to the lack of water and wastewater resources in these areas. In 2010 the town began construction of a municipal water system to serve these areas and is continuing to investigate wastewater options. By improving residential options in these central parts of Waitsfield, the town supports development that makes better use of its land resources and is more affordable, and avoids sprawl-type development along its scenic corridors. 48% of respondents to the 2009 town survey by the Planning Commission indicated that they were supportive of municipal wastewater in Irasville and Waitsfield Village but only 14% would support municipal taxes or fees to subsidize affordable housing.

**Table 4-1: Waitsfield Subdivisions & Residential Permits**

Year	New Lots	New Homes	Year	New Lots	New Homes
1990	18	9	2001	13	7
1991	38	11	2002	14	12
1992	n/a	8	2003		
1993	n/a	6	2004		
1994	32	15	2005		
1995	32	15	2006		
1996	2	21	2007	19	11
1997	18	8	2008	8	3
1998	n/a	12	2009	0	7
1999	9	9	2010	3	3
2000	9	22	2011	2	1

Source: Town Annual Reports

**Table 4-2: Waitsfield Housing Characteristics**

	1980	1990	2000	2010
<b>Occupancy</b>				
Owner-Occupied	358 52%	385 46%	523 58%	571 57%
Renter-Occupied	163 24%	189 23%	211 23%	205 20%
Seasonal	102 15%	190 23%	159 18%	186 18%
Vacant	61 9%	67 8%	15 2%	49 5%
<b>Structure Type</b>				
Single-Unit Detached	445 65%	535 64%	594 65%	749 72%
Mobile Home	65 10%	52 6%	44 5%	53 5%
Single-Unit Attached	3 0%	13 2%	36 4%	0 0%
Multi-Unit Attached	171 25%	208 25%	227 25%	236 23%
Other	0 -	23 3%	7 1%	0 0%

Source: US Census (2010 Structure Type from American Community Survey)

**Table 4-3: Comparison of Housing Units and Average Annual Growth Rates**

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Waitsfield	199	226	392	684	831	908	1,011	1.3%	5.7%	5.7%	2.0%	0.9%	1.1%
Mad River Valley	493	542	1,039	2,722	3,567	3,886	4,444	1.0%	6.7%	10.1%	2.7%	0.9%	1.4%
Washington County	12,727	13,994	16,258	22,113	25,328	27,644	29,941	1.0%	1.5%	3.1%	1.4%	0.9%	0.8%
Vermont	121,911	136,307	165,063	223,198	271,214	294,382	322,539	1.1%	1.9%	3.1%	2.0%	0.8%	0.9%

Source: US Census

**Table 4-4: Sales of Primary Residences**

Year	Waitsfield # of Sales	Median Sale Price (2009\$)		
		Waitsfield	County	State
1988	19	\$158,400	\$140,300	\$153,900
1989	24	\$176,600	\$145,000	\$159,600
1990	11	\$192,800	\$139,300	\$153,100
1991	12	\$134,500	\$134,500	\$148,800
1992	15	\$120,800	\$130,100	\$143,400
1993	15	\$146,500	\$130,400	\$140,600
1994	20	\$146,100	\$125,000	\$138,600
1995	16	\$165,200	\$126,000	\$137,500
1996	13	\$163,300	\$120,100	\$135,000
1997	13	\$164,800	\$121,400	\$139,800
1998	26	\$179,100	\$123,300	\$142,800

Year	Waitsfield # of Sales	Median Sale Price (2009\$)		
		Waitsfield	County	State
1999	20	\$214,000	\$125,600	\$139,700
2000	24	\$159,200	\$116,800	\$146,300
2001	22	\$218,700	\$131,500	\$151,600
2002	35	\$194,100	\$139,400	\$158,800
2003	31	\$218,700	\$151,300	\$172,500
2004	33	\$246,600	\$165,300	\$184,400
2005	24	\$241,200	\$177,000	\$200,500
2006	19	\$281,300	\$186,100	\$205,000
2007	12	\$243,400	\$183,700	\$204,100
2008	14	\$217,900	\$183,700	\$198,600
2009	9	\$225,000	\$170,000	\$190,000

Source: Vermont Department of Taxes

**Table 4-5: Housing Affordability**

	1-Person	2-Person	3-Person	4-Person	6-Person	8-Person
<b>HUD 2009 Annual Income Limits</b>						
<b>200% of Median</b>	\$95,000	\$108,600	\$122,100	\$135,800	\$157,500	\$179,300
<b>150% of Median</b>	\$71,250	\$81,450	\$91,580	\$101,850	\$118,130	\$134,480
<b>120% of Median</b>	\$57,000	\$65,160	\$73,260	\$81,480	\$94,500	\$107,580
<b>100% of Median</b>	\$47,500	\$54,300	\$61,050	\$67,900	\$78,750	\$89,650
<b>80% of Median</b>	\$38,000	\$43,450	\$48,850	\$54,300	\$63,000	\$71,700
<b>50% of Median</b>	\$23,750	\$27,150	\$30,550	\$33,950	\$39,400	\$44,800
<b>30% of Median</b>	\$14,250	\$16,300	\$18,300	\$20,350	\$23,600	\$26,850
<b>Affordable Home Purchase Price</b>						
<b>200% of Median</b>	\$308,500	\$348,500	\$392,000	\$436,000	\$505,500	\$575,500
<b>150% of Median</b>	\$230,500	\$261,500	\$294,000	\$327,000	\$379,000	\$431,500
<b>120% of Median</b>	\$184,000	\$209,000	\$235,000	\$261,500	\$303,500	\$345,500
<b>100% of Median</b>	\$153,000	\$174,500	\$196,000	\$218,000	\$253,000	\$288,000
<b>80% of Median</b>	\$122,500	\$139,500	\$157,000	\$174,500	\$202,000	\$230,000
<b>50% of Median</b>	\$75,500	\$87,000	\$98,000	\$109,000	\$126,500	\$144,000
<b>30% of Median</b>	\$44,500	\$52,500	\$58,500	\$65,500	\$76,000	\$86,000

Source: HUD, Vermont Housing Data, Waitsfield 2009 Grand List

	1-Person	2-Person	3-Person	4-Person	6-Person	8-Person
<b>Affordable Monthly Housing Costs (30% of 2009 HUD Income Limits)</b>						
<b>200% of Median</b>	\$2,380	\$2,720	\$3,050	\$3,400	\$3,940	\$4,480
<b>150% of Median</b>	\$1,780	\$2,040	\$2,290	\$2,550	\$2,950	\$3,360
<b>120% of Median</b>	\$1,430	\$1,630	\$1,830	\$2,040	\$2,360	\$2,690
<b>100% of Median</b>	\$1,190	\$1,360	\$1,530	\$1,700	\$1,970	\$2,240
<b>80% of Median</b>	\$950	\$1,090	\$1,220	\$1,360	\$1,580	\$1,790
<b>50% of Median</b>	\$590	\$680	\$760	\$850	\$990	\$1,120
<b>30% of Median</b>	\$360	\$410	\$460	\$510	\$590	\$670
<b>Percentage of Primary Homes in Waitsfield Meeting Affordable Purchase Price</b>						
<b>200% of Median</b>	51%	61%	68%	75%	83%	87%
<b>150% of Median</b>	28%	38%	47%	56%	66%	74%
<b>120% of Median</b>	18%	23%	29%	38%	50%	60%
<b>100% of Median</b>	12%	16%	21%	25%	36%	45%
<b>80% of Median</b>	8%	11%	13%	16%	22%	28%
<b>50% of Median</b>	6%	6%	7%	7%	9%	11%
<b>30% of Median</b>	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%	6%

Another way the town might support more development in its town center is via a Tax Incentive Financing District designation by the State. TIF districts allow local communities to keep property tax revenue created by new development in the district in order to finance infrastructure improvements in the area such as water and wastewater systems.

The town supports efforts to increase the energy efficiency of both new and existing housing in the town. The town should encourage efforts that promote the use of renewable energy sources for housing as outlined in greater detail in the Energy Chapter of this plan.

## 4.G GOAL

- 4.G-1 The availability of safe and affordable housing for all Waitsfield residents.

## 4.H POLICIES

- 4.H-1 Encourage a variety of housing types to meet the needs of a diversity of social and income groups, particularly for Waitsfield residents of low and

moderate income, individuals and families employed by local businesses, and local residents with special needs, including elders. Encourage workforce housing through the support of the Mad River Valley Housing Coalition's Affordable Land Initiative.

- 4.H-2 Plan for and accommodate Waitsfield's fair share of regional housing growth, including affordable housing development. The rate of residential development, however, shall not exceed that which can be supported by existing and planned municipal facilities and services. Without additional infrastructure capacity, a rate of 10 to 15 dwelling units per year is anticipated.
- 4.H-3 Target 50% of anticipated housing growth (total dwelling units) to occur in Irasville and in the Waitsfield Village Residential District upon the development of supporting wastewater infrastructure.
- 4.H-4 Use sewer allocation and phasing policies when a municipal sewer system is developed to ensure that the rate of commercial (non-residential)

development does not significantly exceed the rate of new residential development within the sewer service area(s), and particular consideration shall be given to residential units serving moderate-income residents.

- 4.H-5 Retain the town's existing and new subsidized housing in perpetuity as affordable units. If necessary, ownership and/or long-term management should be transferred to a nonprofit housing corporation to ensure that units remain affordable.
- 4.H-6 Allow siting of manufactured housing in locations similar to those used for conventional single-family dwellings. Manufactured housing will be excluded from zoning districts only upon the same terms and conditions as conventional housing is excluded.
- 4.H-7 Work to assure that new and rehabilitated housing is safe, sanitary, and located conveniently to employment and commercial centers.
- 4.H-8 Encourage upper story residential apartments in both Waitsfield Village districts and in Irasville.
- 4.H-9 Accommodate higher densities of residential development, including multi-family dwellings and infill development, in designated village centers and rural hamlets (clusters) through the town's land use regulations and the development of infrastructure that supports and encourages such development.
- 4.H-10 Allow the conversion of single to multi-family dwellings, including rental units, in designated village districts, given that adequate infrastructure and off-street parking are available, and the character of historic structures is maintained or enhanced.
- 4.H-11 Consider a variety of housing types within planned unit developments. Density bonuses will be provided to encourage the provision of affordable units within these developments.
- 4.H-12 Consider amending zoning regulations to allow accessory dwellings to be as large as the primary dwelling or increase the current 800 square foot

allowance in order to offer more flexibility for accessory dwelling occupancies.

- 4.H-13 Encourage the use of renewable energy sources and energy efficient housing efforts in both existing and new construction.

## 4.I TASKS

- 4.I-1 Implement a revised master plan for Irasville, including the development of a decentralized wastewater system, to accommodate higher densities of residential and mixed-use development, that includes housing, in appropriate locations within Irasville. [Selectboard, Town Administrator, Planning Commission]
- 4.I-2 Inventory development capacity within the Agricultural-Residential District to determine appropriate sites or areas able to support rural hamlets (clusters), while simultaneously strengthening resource protection standards elsewhere in the district. Update zoning regulations as needed. [Planning Commission, Conservation Commission]
- 4.I-3 Review and update current zoning and subdivision regulations as needed to accommodate higher densities of housing, including affordable housing and in-fill development, within designated village districts. Consider the adoption of inclusionary zoning provisions as appropriate. [Planning Commission]
- 4.I-4 Review and update current zoning and subdivision regulations as needed to impose lower densities of housing outside designated village districts and rural hamlets. This review should examine the use of economic incentives and variable, lower density zoning, at a minimum, to deter housing development determined to be excessive or otherwise inappropriate for areas outside designated village districts and rural hamlets. [Planning Commission]
- 4.I-5 Consider amending the Town's zoning regulations to allow up to four units of multi-family housing in a single building, on a single parcel, within Irasville and designated hamlets as a permitted (as opposed to conditional) use. [Planning Commission]

## 5 | Economic Development

### 5.A OVERVIEW

Considering Waitsfield's relatively small size and rural character, the town maintains a surprisingly diverse economic base. While tourism remains a dominant industry in the Mad River Valley, Waitsfield has experienced significant economic diversification in recent decades. This is due in part to Irasville's function as the Mad River Valley's "downtown" for commercial and service businesses, and recent development activity in our only industrial park, Mad River Park. Second homeowners contribute to the local economy, as well.

In addition to data available from various state agencies and the U.S. Census, information concerning the town's economic outlook was obtained from the 2002 study, Integrating Economic and Demographic Analysis in the Irasville Growth Center.

### 5.B LABOR FORCE

The Vermont Department of Labor reported that 1,110 Waitsfield residents were in the labor force in 2008; the labor force excludes retired individuals and others aged 16 or older who are not employed or actively seeking employment. According to the 2000 Census, 73 percent of the local labor force was composed of private wage and salary workers, 12 percent worked for government and 14 percent were self-employed. The percentage of Waitsfield residents who are self-employed is higher than that for the county or state as a whole, and it is likely to grow due to the ability of many internet-focused professionals and small businesses to work from home. According to the 2000 Census, 10.2% of Waitsfield's labor force was employed at home; this rate is nearly double that of the county and state.

### 5.C EMPLOYMENT

The analysis of employment trends that follows is based on employment data provided by the Vermont Department of Labor; however, the department only reports information on jobs covered by unemployment, which excludes the self-employed, many business owners and some farm employees. It is likely that the Vermont Department of Labor numbers underestimate the total number of jobs in town by 25 to 35 percent.

Waitsfield is an employment center in the Mad River Valley and is a "net importer" of jobs, meaning the number of jobs in town exceeds the number of town residents in the labor force. Around half of the current jobs in the Mad River Valley are located in town. During the 1990s, 336 new jobs were created in Waitsfield, accounting for more than 75 percent of new jobs created in the Mad River Valley. During that period, Waitsfield's rate of job growth was significantly higher than that of the county and state. Between 2000 and 2008, the rate of job creation in Waitsfield slowed and only one-third of new jobs in the Mad River Valley were created in town.

**Employers.** During the 1990s, the total number of employers in Waitsfield increased from 176 to 191; this does not include sole proprietors and other exempt employers. Between 2000 and 2008, the number of employers in Waitsfield increased by 16. In 2008, this included 203 private businesses and four public sector employers. The average Waitsfield business employs around six workers. A breakdown of total employers by sector is provided in Table 5-3.

### 5.D WAGES

Wages in Waitsfield and the Mad River Valley have not experienced the same level of growth seen in the county and state as a whole after adjusting for inflation. The Vermont Department of Labor reported that the average job in Waitsfield paid about \$33,000 in 2008, as compared to more than \$39,000 annual in Washington County. A summary of average wages by economic sector in the Mad River Valley is presented in Figure 5-3.

**Livable Wage.** There is growing concern in the state regarding the ability of full-time workers to earn an income sufficient to meet a family's basic needs, commonly referred to as a "livable wage." The Vermont Joint Fiscal Office identified that an annual livable wage for a family of four with two working parents in 2009 was around \$80,000, while for a single person with no children it was around \$35,000. In all cases, the livable wage is higher than the state's minimum wage. Focusing economic development activities on sustaining and creating well-paying jobs is especially critical in Waitsfield to ensure that local residents can meet their basic needs, especially in light of



local housing costs discussed in Chapter 4 and rising health care costs.

## 5.E BUSINESS RECEIPTS

In addition to employment and wages, another useful measure of economic activity may be found in the gross retail sales, restaurant receipts, and commercial accommodation rentals generated by local businesses.

Table 5-7 shows business receipts reported by Mad River Valley and Waitsfield firms for each fiscal year between 2000 and 2008. Gross receipts are for all reported retail sales, including those that are not subject to the Vermont sales tax (e.g., groceries, medicine, etc.). Total retail sales in Waitsfield increased by 23 percent between 2000 and 2008 after adjusting for inflation, which was a greater increase than seen in the county or state as a whole. During this same time period, there was a 13 percent increase in meal receipts, but a 10 percent decrease in room receipts in Waitsfield after adjusting for inflation.

Waitsfield businesses have benefited from year-round population growth in the Mad River Valley over the past decade, as well as from the significant contributions from second homeowners and their tenants. There has been modest growth in tourism but that increase appears to be related to ski area activity more than to summer/fall tourism, as indicated by the higher rate of growth in Fayston and Warren.

## 5.F ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

The 2002 economic study identified several key factors that are most likely to affect the local economic climate over the next two decades, including:

- ◆ Increasing globalization of markets and economies;
- ◆ Rapid advances in technology;
- ◆ Emergence of information based 'new economy' which has fundamentally changed the competitive landscape;
- ◆ Aging of the population; and
- ◆ Increasing demand for high 'quality-of-life'.

These external factors are beyond the control of the town's or Mad River Valley's influence, although through awareness local governments and businesses may adapt to, and benefit from, them. Generally, the Mad River Valley's high quality of life, current demographic profile, presence of advanced communications infrastructure and educated local labor force appear to position The Valley to take advantage of, or at least adapt to, these global factors. The study also identified the Mad River Valley's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats through a series of interviews with its business and community leaders.

Strengths and opportunities included:

- ◆ High quality of life, characterized by strong sense of community, good schools, excellent

emergency service providers, and recreational opportunities.

- ◆ Clean environment, attractive rural landscape and local policies to maintain community character.
- ◆ State-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure, made possible by Waitsfield Telecom.
- ◆ Excellent local labor force.
- ◆ 2001 acquisition of Sugarbush Resort by a group of local investors, and its continuing expansion.

Weakness and threats included:

- ◆ Shortage of affordable housing for low- and middle-income families, which contributes to labor shortage.
- ◆ Lack of infrastructure (wastewater and water systems) in Irasville and Waitsfield Village.
- ◆ Transportation deficiencies, including key intersection problems (Route 17/100) and lack of safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- ◆ Lack of night-life.
- ◆ Time consuming local and state permitting process, and the lack of areas in which high-density, mixed use development can locate and expand.
- ◆ Lack of year-round community facilities for youth.

The list highlights the degree to which Waitsfield's economic well-being is dependent upon, and may be influenced by, issues addressed elsewhere in this plan (e.g., housing, environmental quality, education, etc.). This is an important point since economic development policies and programs must be part of a comprehensive and integrated community planning effort.

Second homeowners are a notable part of Waitsfield's local economy. Non-residents paid nearly \$2.5 million in education taxes in 2011. About 25 percent of the total Grand List value is generated by second homes.

## 5.G AGRICULTURE

Agriculture was the town's primary industry until the middle of the last century and the rise of tourism in the Mad River Valley. While the number of people employed in farming is small, agriculture remains

an important economic activity that maintains the pastoral landscape of the valley and the town's rural character.

According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, there were 33 farms in the 05673 (Waitsfield) zip code. As shown in Figure 5-8, the recent census provides some evidence of the trend towards increasing numbers of small, diversified farms and local food production. Although dairy farming continues as a mainstay of Mad River Valley farming operations, vegetable, cheese, and other farm products have grown in importance in recent years. The success of the summer Waitsfield Farmers Market as well as CSA (Community Supported Agriculture, subscription sales of meat and vegetables by local farms) has increased the available local food options. The Mad River Localvores organization was created by Valley residents to support the use of locally produced food. In 2011, the Mad River Food Hub was started to provide local food producers with storage, processing, and related services.

## 5.H SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Waitsfield's economy is largely reliant on tourism dollars, particularly in connection with active outdoor recreation. The winter season attracts skiing and snowboarding visitors to Sugarbush and Mad River Glen, cross-country skiers to Ole's and Blueberry Lake's cross-country centers, and snowmobilers to the local VAST trails. Spring and summer visitors engage in numerous pursuits, including bicycling, mountain biking, hiking, camping, trail running, canoeing, kayaking, golf, and tennis. Fall visitors stream through the area in significant volumes for "foliage season," which provides a scenic backdrop to nearly all outdoor pursuits. In all seasons, patrons of outdoor activities support Waitsfield retailers, restaurants and lodging businesses, gifts and casual shopping outlets, and support services such as fuel and groceries.

The active outdoor recreation economy contributes \$730 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supports nearly 6.5 million jobs, generates \$88 billion in state and national tax revenue, generates \$289 billion in retail sales and services, and is part of the buying decision in more than 1 in every 12 dollars circulating in the economy. (Source: Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2011). Statewide, tourism brings an estimated \$1.4 billion to the state, supporting 11.5 percent of the workforce. Locally, the portion of the economy based on tourism is not currently measured, but is

arguably higher than the statewide average due to the number of outdoor-recreation related businesses in the area.

While Waitsfield's economy remains strongly linked to tourism, external changes suggest that it may become increasingly important to develop a sustainable local economy that focuses on local markets and resources, and which serves to strengthen the community as a means of responding to global economic uncertainty and climate change.

The concept of sustainability has received growing attention in recent years as communities attempt to strike a balance between often competing, yet mutually dependent, matters of economic, social and environmental concern. Sustainable development is commonly defined simply as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." With regard to the local economy, sustainable economic development may be characterized by activities and industries which:

- ◆ Maximize use of local resources in a manner that does not deplete those resources;
- ◆ Are energy efficient, and emphasize the use of local renewable energy sources;
- ◆ Maintain high standards of environmental health and do not degrade the quality of our water, air and soils or the viability of native wildlife populations;
- ◆ Provide goods and services that are needed locally, and which provide an alternative to goods produced outside of our community or region;
- ◆ Reinforce traditional settlement patterns;
- ◆ Employ local residents and pay a livable wage;
- ◆ Are locally owned and controlled, and reinvest in the community; and
- ◆ Contribute to the vitality of our community, including the social fabric and well being of the entire population.

Economic development that emphasizes sustainability should take precedence over other economic activities that do not exhibit the characteristics listed above. To the extent the town may exercise discretion when working with businesses and local and regional development agencies, local officials should always seek to achieve a high level of sustainability.

## 5.1 MUNICIPAL PROGRAMS

Traditionally, Waitsfield's town government has not aggressively pursued a program of economic development, focusing instead on supporting the local economy through land use policies, infrastructure development and, to a limited extent, tax policy. Past efforts, and opportunities for future economic development activity, may be categorized and summarized as follows.

**General Wait House.** The purchase and restoration of the historic General Wait house provided office and meeting space for Mad River Valley non-profits and service providers, and exhibit space for the Historical Society. It also contains The Valley's only public rest room and provides tourist information.

**Irasville Water/Wastewater.** The town has been actively planning for the development of municipal water and wastewater facilities to address existing health and environmental concerns and to accommodate additional village-scale mixed use development in Irasville and Waitsfield Village. Providing that infrastructure, and allocating available capacity in a manner that supports the sustainable development goals and policies of this plan, will further benefit local businesses and the community at large. The municipal water system is scheduled for completion in 2012 and a plan for a town-sponsored decentralized wastewater loan program is being considered.

**Capital Improvements.** The town maintains an annual capital improvement program to plan for anticipated capital improvement needs. In recent years, the town has reinforced the function of Irasville and Waitsfield Village as town centers through the planned construction of sidewalks, road and intersection improvements, and streetscape improvements. Continued planning for such improvements, including those necessary to implement the land use, housing and community facilities policies of this plan, will directly support the town's economic development goals and policies.

**Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District.** It has become increasingly important for the town to find alternative revenue sources to fund capital improvements. Securing a TIF district for Irasville and possibly Waitsfield Village districts would provide a new revenue stream to fund capital improvements within that district without increasing the tax burden for landowners.

**Table 5-1: Labor Force and Unemployment**

Year	Waitsfield Labor Force		Unemployment Rate		
	Waitsfield	LMA	County	State	
1990	940	6.4%	5.0%	5.3%	4.9%
1991	990	9.1%	6.5%	7.2%	6.6%
1992	1,010	11.9%	8.1%	7.2%	6.4%
1993	990	6.1%	4.8%	5.6%	5.3%
1994	1,030	5.8%	3.1%	4.7%	4.6%
1995	970	6.2%	4.8%	4.9%	4.3%
1996	990	6.1%	4.8%	5.0%	4.4%
1997	1,010	5.0%	3.2%	4.8%	4.0%
1998	1,010	4.0%	3.1%	3.7%	3.1%
1999	1,040	3.8%	3.1%	3.3%	2.9%

Year	Waitsfield Labor Force		Unemployment Rate		
	Waitsfield	LMA	County	State	
2000	1,010	3.0%	2.8%	2.6%	2.7%
2001	1,030	3.9%	2.7%	3.3%	3.3%
2002	1,080	3.7%	2.6%	4.3%	4.0%
2003	1,110	4.5%	2.5%	4.6%	4.5%
2004	1,130	3.5%	2.5%	3.8%	3.7%
2005	1,150	3.5%	2.4%	3.5%	3.5%
2006	1,180	4.2%	2.4%	3.9%	3.7%
2007	1,120	4.5%	2.4%	4.1%	4.0%
2008	1,110	4.5%	3.7%	4.8%	4.8%
2009	1,160	8.1%	5.2%	6.6%	6.9%
2010	1,200	7.3%	4.7%	6.0%	6.2%

Source: VT Department of Labor (LMA - Waitsfield-Warren LMA)

**Table 5-2: Establishments, Employees and Average Wages**

Year	# of Establishments				Year	# of Employees				Year	Average Wages (2008\$)			
	Waitsfield	LMA	County	State		Waitsfield	LMA	County	State		Waitsfield	LMA	County	State
1978	123	237	1,676	14,619	717	1,440	20,960	177,766		\$29,800	\$26,400	\$32,100	\$33,000	
1980	131	251	1,781	15,496	702	1,496	21,674	189,024		\$29,500	\$25,700	\$29,000	\$30,600	
1982	174	310	2,000	17,263	942	1,854	22,873	192,660		\$29,600	\$25,700	\$29,000	\$30,200	
1984	169	304	1,932	17,028	967	1,942	23,707	205,045		\$29,800	\$26,300	\$30,600	\$31,500	
1986	194	329	2,204	20,098	1,016	2,022	25,083	224,142		\$30,900	\$27,600	\$31,300	\$32,800	
1988	174	307	2,177	19,813	1,019	2,131	27,603	245,376		\$31,500	\$28,900	\$32,500	\$33,600	
1990	171	320	2,257	20,871	932	2,097	27,202	245,872		\$29,800	\$28,600	\$32,700	\$33,500	
1991	179	319	2,305	21,087	954	2,021	26,366	239,825		\$29,100	\$27,500	\$32,200	\$33,400	
1992	180	315	2,329	21,393	918	1,946	26,310	242,347		\$27,200	\$26,400	\$33,200	\$34,000	
1993	180	311	2,347	21,525	938	2,043	27,213	248,394		\$27,500	\$26,500	\$32,800	\$33,500	
1994	168	309	2,332	21,407	1,014	2,406	28,184	255,088		\$27,400	\$26,700	\$32,700	\$33,000	
1995	178	321	2,339	21,617	1,113	2,450	28,493	262,324		\$27,400	\$29,100	\$32,800	\$33,000	
1996	183	327	2,350	21,835	1,135	2,278	28,674	266,365		\$27,500	\$26,900	\$32,300	\$33,300	
1997	182	330	2,378	22,253	1,158	2,288	28,979	270,187		\$28,500	\$27,100	\$32,900	\$33,900	
1998	185	346	2,405	22,302	1,198	2,455	29,544	275,933		\$29,000	\$27,100	\$33,400	\$34,800	
1999	188	356	2,442	23,229	1,224	2,484	31,171	288,202		\$30,600	\$28,700	\$34,300	\$35,300	
2000	189	360	2,478	23,806	1,268	2,536	32,079	296,468		\$32,200	\$29,100	\$35,000	\$35,800	
2001	191	363	2,487	24,151	1,321	2,579	32,416	298,168		\$32,700	\$30,000	\$35,900	\$36,400	
2002	194	362	2,437	23,776	1,334	2,695	32,138	295,443		\$33,000	\$29,400	\$36,200	\$36,800	
2003	210	391	2,481	23,972	1,292	2,735	31,927	294,288		\$33,100	\$30,200	\$37,000	\$37,200	
2004	205	387	2,526	24,333	1,366	2,835	32,294	298,491		\$32,700	\$30,600	\$37,600	\$37,600	
2005	211	391	2,541	24,533	1,403	2,975	32,643	300,941		\$33,600	\$31,300	\$37,700	\$37,300	
2006	210	386	2,546	24,567	1,354	2,918	32,549	302,979		\$32,800	\$31,100	\$37,600	\$37,600	
2007	209	382	2,543	24,777	1,349	2,847	32,579	303,438		\$33,200	\$31,300	\$38,400	\$38,000	
2008	206	370	2,583	25,037	1,367	2,825	32,812	302,574		\$32,800	\$30,600	\$39,500	\$38,300	
2009	214	378	2,549	24,700	1,287	2,744	31,880	292,370						
2010	209	369	2,493	24,159	1,242	2,859	31,750	293,088						

Source: Vermont Department of Labor (LMA = Waitsfield-Warren Labor Market Area)

**Table 5-3: Waitsfield Establishments, Employees and Average Wages by Sector**

Year	# of Establishments			Year	# of Employees			Year	Average Wages (2008\$)		
	1988	1998	2008		1988	1998	2008		1988	1998	2008
Agriculture & Forestry	1	0	4		[p]	0	14		[p]	-	\$24,300
Construction	23	17	30		214	93	147		\$37,300	\$33,400	\$40,500
Manufacturing	9	13	12		[p]	143	132		[p]	\$27,100	\$24,200
Wholesale Trade	9	5	8		[p]	[p]	21		[p]	[p]	\$56,300
Retail Trade	38	39	37		236	240	333		\$25,200	\$23,700	\$29,000
Transportation & Warehousing	2	3	0		[p]	[p]	0		[p]	[p]	-
Information	6	11	10		50	130	93		\$60,600	\$63,900	\$63,500
Finance and Insurance	5	8	10		40	36	24		\$59,500	\$43,700	\$52,600
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	9	11	15		17	31	82		\$45,700	\$18,400	\$23,600
Professional & Business Services	26	30	37		71	68	112		\$37,700	\$35,700	\$54,000
Education & Health Services	8	10	12		30	55	80		\$16,400	\$27,600	\$34,400
Leisure & Hospitality	23	21	18		158	231	197		\$17,100	\$14,500	\$13,700
Other Services	14	13	10		52	90	53		\$20,500	\$17,100	\$16,400
Government	4	4	4		34	48	71		\$28,400	\$29,700	\$37,900

Source: Vermont Department of Labor

**Table 5-4: Waitsfield Households by Type of Income**

	1990		2000		2010	
Wage or Salary	481	85%	582	78%	595	75%
Self Employment	152	27%	178	24%	154	19%
Interest, Dividends, or Rental	276	49%	378	51%	239	30%
Social Security	97	17%	180	24%	182	23%
Supplemental Security			10	1%	0	0%
Public Assistance	14	2%	24	3%	18	2%
Retirement	41	7%	101	14%	119	15%

Source: US Census (2010 from American Community Survey)

**Table 5-5: Waitsfield Residents by Place of Work**

	1990		2000		2010	
Waitsfield	443	55%	455	47%		
Warren	58	7%	92	9%		
Fauston	42	5%	56	6%		
Moretown	36	4%	36	4%		
Waterbury	44	5%	59	6%		
Montpelier	37	5%	48	5%		
Elsewhere in Washington County	69	8%	56	6%		
Chittenden County	33	4%	121	12%		
Elsewhere in Vermont	26	3%	26	3%		
Outside Vermont	24	3%	28	3%		

Source: US Census

**Table 5-6: Waitsfield Workers by Place of Residence**

	1990		2000		2010	
Waitsfield	443	41%	455	31%		
Warren	180	17%	229	16%		
Fauston	164	15%	190	13%		
Moretown	77	7%	68	5%		
Waterbury	48	4%	46	3%		
Montpelier	22	2%	67	5%		
Barre City	12	1%	79	5%		
Elsewhere in Washington County	68	6%	190	13%		
Chittenden County	19	2%	67	5%		
Elsewhere in Vermont	38	4%	79	5%		

Source: US Census



Figure 5-7: Business Receipts (2008 \$, expressed in millions)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>Gross</b>									
Waittsfield	124.2	102.6	114.1	146.2	158.8	184.9	183.1	173.3	153.0
Mad River Valley	151.0	131.0	140.3	172.2	190.0	212.1	205.8	202.3	184.6
Waittsfield % of MRV	82%	78%	81%	85%	84%	87%	89%	86%	83%
<b>Retail</b>									
Waittsfield	25.8	26.7	27.2	30.6	39.3	40.7	41.2	48.6	47.0
Mad River Valley	46.0	46.4	44.9	48.1	62.6	59.0	55.7	66.7	65.3
Waittsfield % of MRV	56%	58%	61%	64%	63%	69%	74%	73%	72%
<b>Rooms</b>									
Waittsfield	2.5	1.9	1.9	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.2
Mad River Valley					9.0	8.5	8.0	9.1	9.9
Waittsfield % of MRV					21%	24%	25%	24%	22%
<b>Meals</b>									
Waittsfield	5.1	5.2	5.4	6.1	6.3	6.1	5.8	5.8	5.8
Mad River Valley	11.4			11.6	11.4	11.2			11.8
Waittsfield % of MRV	45%			53%	55%	54%			49%
<b>Alcohol</b>									
Waittsfield	1.5	1.3	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.5
Mad River Valley									
Waittsfield % of MRV									

Source: Vermont Department of Taxes

Figure 5-8: Agricultural Statistics

	1997	2002	2007
Number of Farms	33	35	33
Farms (1 to 49 acres)	16	16	15
Farms (50 to 999 acres)	16	19	18
Farms (1,000+ acres)	1	0	0
Full Owner	13	16	23
Part Owner	17	15	10
Tenant	3	4	0
Farming as Principal Occupation	17	22	16
Operator Living on Farm	19	25	25
Farms with Cropland Harvested	15	17	16
Cropland Harvested (1 to 49 acres)	8	8	12
Cropland Harvested (50+ acres)	7	9	4
Farms with Woodland	20	21	19
Cattle & Calf Inventory	12	10	9
Beef Cow Inventory	7	6	6
Milk Cow Inventory	4	6	3
Hogs & Pigs Inventory	2		1
Sheep & Lambs Inventory	2		8
Hens & Pullets Inventory	5		6
Horses & Ponies Inventory	11	16	9
Corn Silage	3		2
Hay & Alfalfa	13		16
Vegetables	3		1
Berries	1		2
Maple Trees Tapped	9	7	11

Source: Agricultural Census (05673 zip code)

**Community Services.** Due to its central location, past land use, and development policies, Irasville and Waitsfield Village serve as a service and commercial center for the Mad River Valley.

**Tax Stabilization.** The town has maintained a tax stabilization program for working farms since the early 1980s. This program, which reduces the property tax on commercial agricultural activities, not only supports farmers, but also helps to maintain the town's rural landscape. The town also has the authority to enter into stabilization agreements with other types of local businesses, although the ability of municipalities to exempt property owners from the property tax is limited to the municipal portion of the tax bill unless the town makes up any loss to the state property tax.

**Community Development Grants.** Waitsfield has sponsored two successful community development grant applications to maintain or provide housing to low and moderate-income households and the elderly, respectively. Proceeds from the loan payments may be used for eligible community development activities, including business assistance (subject to program requirements). Additional opportunities for community development grants could not only increase support for the Mad River Valley's housing shortage, but could also increase the revenue stream available for community development activities.

**Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce.** The Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce, located in Waitsfield, serves the greater Mad River Valley business community. It is a membership organization working to encourage and represent responsible business activity; retain existing businesses and attract new businesses while preserving the rural character of the area; and promote the Mad River Valley as a year-round destination vacation area in harmony with the environment and the unspoiled rural resources of the community.

**Mad River Valley Planning District.** The MRVPD was formed in 1985 by the towns of Fayston, Waitsfield, and Warren to carry out a program of planning for the future of the Mad River Valley. The program is directed toward the physical, social, economic, fiscal, environmental, cultural, and aesthetic well-being of the member towns and is outlined in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding among the three towns, the Sugarbush Resort, and the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce.

**State & Regional Programs.** Waitsfield is a participating member of the Community Capital of Central Vermont revolving loan fund, which provides financial and technical assistance to local businesses that employ persons of low- and moderate-income. The town also provides annual support to the Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation, which assists with business recruitment, financing and marketing.

**Growth Center Designation.** Waitsfield Village and Irasville have been designated as growth centers (albeit with different land use policies) in past and current town planning documents. In addition, the Mad River Park has also been designated as a growth center in this plan. Waitsfield Village received state "village center" designation in 2007, which makes owners of included properties eligible for tax credits for the rehabilitation of historic buildings and increases the town's ability to secure funding for projects benefiting the village from some state programs.

These town and state designations could be strengthened with further state designation of the Waitsfield Village and Irasville areas as a growth center. The growth center program provides access to a variety of benefits and incentives to encourage smart growth development patterns, including eligibility for a tax increment financing district and Act 250 benefits for new development.

**Permit Processes.** In recent years, the town has taken specific steps to improve the efficiency of local regulatory processes. The position of Zoning Administrator has been made full time, and the Zoning Administrator now provides staff support to the Planning Commission and Development Review Board. This provides better service to applicants and ensures better coordination between the boards. In addition, the town streamlined the review process in 2002 when new zoning was adopted. The need for overlapping and redundant review by different bodies once required by the town regulations was eliminated in 2006 with the consolidation of the permit review responsibilities of the Zoning Board of Adjustment and the Planning Commission into a new Development Review Board. The Zoning Board of Adjustment was eliminated and all permit review is done by the Development Review Board.

**Rural Resource Protection.** Waitsfield, together with other Mad River Valley communities, has been a statewide leader on matters related to rural resource

protection and environmental conservation. Such programs serve to maintain the town's environmental well-being, scenic beauty, and high quality of life, all of which enhance the Mad River Valley's business climate and desirability as a resort destination.

## 5.J GOAL

- 5.J-1 A diverse, sustainable local economy that seeks to retain existing, and attract new, responsible businesses and employment opportunities that pay a livable wage.

## 5.K POLICIES

- 5.K-1 Support the creation and expansion of businesses and industries, in appropriate locations, which pay a livable wage to local employees and incorporate sustainable business practices. Such assistance may include tax stabilization, grant procurement and/or revolving loan assistance.

- 5.K-2 Support small business development within The Valley through the local provision of available federal and state assistance programs in partnership with existing local and regional organizations, particularly the Mad River Chamber of Commerce.

- 5.K-3 Support sustainable economic development through a future land use plan which supports the following land use policies:

- 5.K-3.a With the exception of home-based businesses, agriculture, forestry, commercial outdoor recreation, well managed resource extraction (e.g., gravel, water, wood) and appropriate small scale commercial uses in Waitsfield Village, commercial and industrial development shall be located within the Irasville Village and Industrial Zoning Districts.

- 5.K-3.b The function of Irasville as a compact, mixed-use commercial center will be supported through local land use regulations and the development of infrastructure, including municipal water, community or municipal wastewater, and pedestrian, bicycle and other non-motorized transportation facilities.

- 5.K-3.c Waitsfield Village will continue to serve as a commercial, cultural and civic center of the town, with an emphasis on businesses that are compatible with the Village's scale and residential character.

- 5.K-3.d New and expanded industrial uses are encouraged in the Mad River Industrial Park (Industrial District) and designated portions of Irasville, provided such uses are planned to maximize the efficient use of the limited land available and meet performance standards to avoid or mitigate the impact of industrial processes on the surrounding area.

- 5.K-3.e The Limited Business district will continue to serve the same purpose as the Agriculture-Residential District, in addition to providing limited opportunities for low-impact, low density commercial uses associated with tourism, agriculture and forestry.

- 5.K-3.f The Adaptive Redevelopment Overlay District will provide opportunity for the reuse of former lodging properties as part of a Planned Unit Development (PUD).

- 5.K-3.g Farming, forestry, outdoor recreation and low intensity tourist accommodations are encouraged within the Agriculture-Residential District, while forestry and dispersed, traditional outdoor recreation is encouraged in the Forestry District.

- 5.K-4 Encourage the maintenance and expansion of the local tourism industry by supporting efforts to protect the town's historic and natural resources, and expanding recreational and cultural opportunities for residents and visitors.

- 5.K-5 Support strategies to improve the economic viability of agriculture and forestry, including maintaining and expanding economic incentives (e.g., use value appraisal), promoting access to local markets (e.g., continuation of farmers market, use of local farm products in local schools) and maintaining an adequate land base (e.g., through land conservation and land use regulations).

5.K-6	Support the provision and upgrade of telecommunications technologies and infrastructure, provided that new facilities not diminish the town's scenic landscape (e.g., the placement of telecommunications towers that exceed the height of nearby mountaintops and ridge lines is prohibited).		take better advantage of state and federal economic development programs. [Selectboard, Town Administrator, Planning Commission, Chamber of Commerce*]
5.K-7	Encourage the operation of one or more small-business incubators to foster the creation and growth of locally owned business enterprises through available space and shared services and facilities.	5.L-3	Actively support the vitality of a light manufacturing/ small business incubator facility in town, focusing on the Irasville Business Park (former Mad River Canoe) complex or other appropriate site, pursuing partnerships with private business interests and state or federal development agencies. [Selectboard, Town Administrator, Planning Commission]
5.K-8	Continue to participate in and support, to the extent practical, regional economic development and business assistance programs (e.g., Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation, Community Capital of Central Vermont).	5.L-4	Review all town assistance programs, including tax stabilization policies and administration of future revolving loan funds, and develop a funding policy that focuses assistance for sustainable economic development. [Selectboard, Town Administrator, Planning Commission]
5.K-9	Continue to support the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce by providing the use of the General Wait House, at competitive rents, to function as a visitor center, public rest room, community meeting facility and chamber office space.	5.L-5	Review the town's land use regulations to determine whether revisions are needed to carry out the policies set forth above. [Planning Commission]
5.K-10	Support the vitality of a light manufacturing/ small business incubator facility in town, focusing on the Irasville Business Park complex or in a designated portion of Irasville, pursuing partnerships with private business interests and state or federal development agencies.	5.L-6	The town will seek alternative revenue sources, in addition to the property tax, to reduce the local tax burden and support the land use and sustainable development policies of this plan. Specifically, the town supports the establishment of a Tax Increment Financing District encompassing Irasville and Waitsfield Village. [Selectboard, Town Administrator]
5.K-11	Support the continued incorporation of local agricultural products in the school lunch program.		

## 5.L TASKS

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 5.L-1 | Update the master plan for Irasville, including the development of a decentralized wastewater system, to accommodate higher densities of residential and mixed-use development, that includes housing, in appropriate locations within Irasville. [Selectboard, Town Administrator, Planning Commission] |
| 5.L-2 | Explore forming an Economic Development Authority in conjunction with other Mad River Valley towns and the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce to   |

## 6 | Education

### 6.A OVERVIEW

Providing quality public education for children and youth is among the most important functions of government in a democratic society. Waitsfield has long performed this task extremely well, especially with regard to grades K-6, which are educated at the Waitsfield Elementary School in Waitsfield village.

Middle school (grades 7-8) and secondary (grades 9-12) education is provided at Harwood Union School, located on Route 100 in Duxbury. Waitsfield, together with Duxbury, Fayston, Moretown, Warren and Waterbury comprise the Washington West Supervisory Union, which administers Harwood.

The most critical education-related issues facing the town are maintenance of high quality education standards, and school funding and the growing burden on local taxpayers. This burden increased dramatically with the passage of Act 60 in 1997. Funding issues are addressed in greater detail below.

### 6.B ENROLLMENT

**Grades K-6.** Figure 6-1 presents enrollment trends and projections. After peaking at 166 students in 1997/98, the elementary school's K-6 enrollment has declined. In recent years the number of students has averaged around 140 along with approximately 20 children enrolled in the school's pre-K program. Given the number of births over the last several years, K-6 enrollment is anticipated to continue falling and may drop below 120 by the 2012/13 school year.

**Grades 7-12.** The number of students that Waitsfield sends to Harwood has peaked at around 125 students in recent years. Enrollment over the next several years is expected to decline below 120. Within five years, as the students now in elementary school move on to Harwood, Waitsfield will likely be sending around 110 students.

**Future Trends.** The reduction in number of students is consistent with the demographic trends presented in Chapter 3. The percentage of the local population within the 18-34 year-old cohort, prime child bearing years, has declined sharply. Although the number of women having children in their mid- to late-30s is much higher than two decades ago, Waitsfield's

ongoing shift to an older population is not likely to result in enrollment growth in the near future.

This could change, however, should the town experience significant in-migration of families with children. Policies to promote greater diversity in the housing stock, including units affordable for young families, could cause enrollments to climb, although such increases are not likely to be immediate.

### 6.C WAITSFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Waitsfield Elementary School is administered by the Waitsfield School Board, a five-member body elected by town voters. The school's educational performance has been excellent. According to the respondents to the last two community surveys, the elementary school was among the highest rated local services.

The school underwent a major renovation and expansion in 1991, which brought the facility's capacity up to 185 students. That expansion, which increased the building from 13,300 square feet to the existing 22,100 square feet, added three new classrooms, a new library, expanded gymnasium and stage area, an art/music room and additional administrative space.

Despite the expansion of the building, the school continues to suffer a lack of adequate land for recreation fields and associated outdoor facilities. At some future time, it may be possible to expand onto the land adjacent to the existing recreation areas, which was not included when a conservation easement was placed on the farmland surrounding the school. From a facility standpoint, the projected decline in enrollment is good news in that additional space will not be needed to accommodate a growing student body. From a program and budgeting standpoint, however, the projected decline in enrollment is a matter of concern. The formalized pre-K program for three- and four-year-old children has helped the Waitsfield school reduce its per-pupil cost, which is significant in light of the declining enrollment and the state's current education funding formula.

## 6.D HARWOOD UNION HIGH SCHOOL

**Facilities.** Located on Route 100 in Duxbury, Harwood Union High School was opened in 1967. The school was upgraded and expanded in 1996/97, and now has a capacity of between 900 and 1,000 students, depending upon program configuration. In addition to Waitsfield, the high school serves students from Fayston, Duxbury, Moretown, Warren and Waterbury.

While it appears that enrollment levels will not exceed the facility's capacity for some time, it should be recognized that rapid population change in one or more member communities could place a burden on the school system as a whole. Should capacity become a concern in the future, a possible option to address expanding enrollment would be the establishment of a separate middle school (whether new construction, expansion of the Crossett Brook facility, or other options) that would allow Harwood to serve only high school students.

**Programs.** Harwood's academic program includes college preparatory, business and limited vocational courses. The school has invested in technology, including the creation of a technology reserve fund. Expanded program offerings are available through various agreements with other educational facilities.

The high school offers special education services through the Learning Resource Center located within the school complex. The Harwood Community Learning Center in Waterbury, an alternative school for students in grades 10-12 provides academic and work experience for students who would benefit from an alternative to a traditional school setting. Additionally, transportation is provided for Harwood students to attend vocational programs in Barre and, in some cases, Burlington. Harwood does provide some vocational opportunities on site, although these are limited.

## 6.E COST OF EDUCATION

It would be difficult to overstate the level of local concern related to educational funding. Property taxes have been identified in the two most recent community surveys as one of the major challenges facing Waitsfield. While dissatisfaction with taxes is likely as old as taxation itself, the passage of Act 60 in 1997 has resulted in overwhelming concern that the current system of funding education is not sustainable.



Act 60 was enacted in response to a decision by the Vermont Supreme Court, which decreed that all children should have access to substantially equal educational opportunities. Act 60 sought to accomplish this through a statewide property tax, which is used to help fund a block grant based on the number of pupils in a school district. Act 60 also instituted a sharing pool for spending above the block. The funding formula was changed by Act 68 and Act 130.

Under the current system, if a school decides to spend more than the state block grant per pupil, then a proportional amount must be paid into the sharing pool - an amount known as the local share. There are two statewide tax rates, one for residential property and another for non-residential property (which includes vacation homes). Local school budget increases are paid for only by residential property taxpayers.

The impact of statewide education funding on the town may be seen in Table 6-2, which shows annual education costs to Waitsfield property owners since 1996.

## 6.F ADULT EDUCATION

Continuing and Professional Education courses are offered in Waitsfield by the Yestermorrow Design/Build School on topics of architecture, construction, design, woodworking, and planning. There are no public institutions offering continuing adult education in the Mad River Valley. However, there are options which include the local Community College of Vermont's Waterbury campus, the University of Vermont, and several other private colleges in Burlington, Northfield, Middlebury and the Vermont Technical College in Randolph. Opportunities for "distance learning" on-line and through Waterbury's Vermont Interactive Television site are also growing each year.

A variety of adult basic educational programs are available through Central Vermont Adult Basic Education, also located in Waterbury. These include individualized and group educational services to adults in their homes, at the learning center, and in community settings. Basic education programs serve those who wish to improve their reading, writing and math skills for use on the job or in daily life, those who are studying for their high school equivalency degree (GED) or adult diploma, and those who want to

learn English as a second language. Computer training is also available.

The Adult Basic Education Center also offers a family literacy program, an out of school youth program, a teen parenting education program, and a getting ready to work program for welfare recipients who are seeking academic and job skills to improve their occupational outlook.

**Table 6-1: School Enrollment**

	pre-K	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	K-6	7-12	pre-K-12
1994-95	12	21	29	18	18	19	32	27	164	86	262
1995-96	12	19	24	27	19	19	18	28	154	104	270
1996-97	11	24	19	25	26	18	23	20	155	106	272
1997-98	14	21	24	22	29	27	20	23	166	105	285
1998-99	12	19	19	17	20	26	22	16	139	110	261
1999-00	10	23	27	19	16	22	26	23	156	106	272
2000-01	9	19	21	25	17	17	23	24	146	102	257
2001-02	15	21	20	21	24	18	17	23	144	101	260
2002-03	18	15	24	23	21	22	21	18	144	112	274
2003-04	21	20	14	22	25	20	24	22	147	112	280
2004-05	23	14	20	17	20	23	20	25	139	118	280
2005-06	22	26	15	22	18	23	24	19	147	126	295
2006-07	22	15	28	15	22	18	22	24	144	122	288
2007-08	20	19	15	25	13	20	18	22	132	123	275
2008-09	17	22	22	14	26	13	21	17	135	124	276
2009-10	15	19	27	25	14	28	17	24	154	118	287
<b>Projection</b>											
2010-11		16	20	27	25	13	29	17	147	119	
2011-12		12	17	20	27	25	14	29	144	108	
2012-13		7	13	17	20	27	26	14	124	115	
2013-14		12	8	13	17	20	28	26	124	105	
2014-15		16	13	8	13	17	21	28	116	105	

Source: Waitsfield Town Annual Reports and Vermont Department of Education

**Table 6-2: School Costs**

	1996-97	1998-99	2000-01	2002-03	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
PK-6 Spending	\$1,492,200	\$1,557,000	\$1,576,000	\$1,637,100	\$1,799,100	\$1,898,300	\$1,912,300	\$2,055,500	\$2,104,200	\$2,163,300
7-12 Spending	\$1,049,400	\$1,251,300	\$1,244,700	\$1,273,600	\$1,466,100	\$1,455,000	\$1,444,300	\$1,507,400	\$1,542,800	\$1,605,700
Total Spending	\$2,541,700	\$1,682,200	\$2,820,700	\$2,910,800	\$3,265,200	\$3,353,300	\$3,356,600	\$3,562,900	\$3,647,000	\$3,769,000
Education Taxes Paid				\$3,910,500	\$3,768,600	\$3,987,700	\$4,289,200	\$4,136,100	\$4,454,200	\$4,890,900
Taxes Paid in Excess of Spending				\$999,700	\$503,400	\$634,400	\$932,600	\$573,200	\$807,200	\$1,121,900

Source: Waitsfield Town Annual Reports and Vermont Department of Education, adjusted to 2009\$ using the CPI



## 6.G GOAL

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- 6.G-1 The availability of high quality educational facilities and programs to enable all Waitsfield residents, especially children and youth, to become competent, productive and responsible citizens.

## 6.H POLICIES

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- 6.H-1 Continue to provide sufficient and appropriate K-12 school facilities to meet current and anticipated enrollments.
- 6.H-2 Support programs and efforts to strengthen the central role that the Waitsfield Elementary School plays in the community, including providing access to school facilities for community events and activities in a manner that does not interfere with the school's primary function of educating the town's youth.
- 6.H-3 Support activities to engage middle and high school students in community activities.
- 6.H-4 Acquire additional land adjacent to the Waitsfield Elementary School for recreation purposes, should that land become available for purchase.
- 6.H-5 Support local and state efforts to reduce reliance on the local property tax to fund education, and actively promote alternatives to current statewide property appraisal formulas which discriminate against local property owners.
- 6.H-6 Support creativity, innovation and imagination when planning for future educational needs of the town's student population, and encourage efforts to strengthen the important role played by schools in fostering community and a shared purpose among local residents.
- 6.H-7 Improve efficiencies through coordination with neighboring school districts to the extent practical.
- 6.H-8 Encourage Waitsfield businesses to engage our schools in order to enrich the K-12 educational experience for students, demonstrate relevance of the curriculum, and foster an interest in the variety of jobs available locally.

## 6.I TASKS

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- 6.I-1 Continue to monitor enrollment and population trends, and to make regular enrollment projections to ensure that the school system is prepared for significant changes in enrollment trends. [School Board, Planning Commission]
- 6.I-2 Consider appointing high school students as ex-officio (non-voting) members of local boards. [Selectboard]

## 7 | Facilities and Services

### 7.A OVERVIEW

A primary purpose of this plan is to identify services currently available to town residents, evaluate the effectiveness of the town and other providers in delivering those services, anticipate future demands, and assess whether those demands can be met efficiently. Waitsfield residents enjoy a range of services and facilities, including an efficient municipal government, excellent emergency services, access to a variety of social, recreation and health care services, and state-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure.

Despite the wide range of excellent services available, the town faces several challenges regarding specific facilities and services. The lack of municipal water and wastewater hinders efforts to foster a compact settlement pattern, which can result in sprawl and a corresponding loss of the town's rural character. Local government and education are largely dependent on property tax revenues to fund their operations and taxpayers are stressed by a growing tax burden. Continued growth in the community will require an ongoing assessment and upgrade of specific facilities.

### 7.B TOWN GOVERNMENT

**Administration.** Waitsfield is governed by a five-member Selectboard, which is responsible for preparing the town's budget, setting policy, administering town finances and a variety of related duties. A full-time Town Administrator reports to the Selectboard and is responsible for the day-to-day management of town affairs. Town staff also includes a full-time elected Town Clerk and Treasurer and an Assistant Clerk hired by the Town Clerk. A full-time Road Foreman reports to the Selectboard and manages a three-person road department.

Like most small communities, Waitsfield is heavily dependent upon volunteers to fulfill many governmental duties. Several dozen local residents are elected or appointed to serve on boards and committees, and to represent Waitsfield on regional organizations. This dedication and sense of duty helps define our community, and keeps local institutions open and accessible.

**Planning.** Waitsfield has an active land use planning and community development program that dates

back to the late 1960s. Most planning functions are carried out by a volunteer Planning Commission. A Development Review Board is responsible for much of the oversight of the town's land use regulations. Both bodies are assisted by the Planning and Zoning Administrator, who is hired by the Selectboard and reports to the Town Administrator, and is responsible for the day-to-day administration and enforcement of local regulations.

With the formation of the Mad River Valley Planning District in the mid-1980s, the Planning Commission has been able to augment its planning capacity with professional assistance.

**Conservation.** The Conservation Commission is composed of up to nine appointed members, with responsibilities regarding the natural resources of the municipality and lands within the municipality which have historic, educational, cultural, scientific, architectural or archaeological values in which the public has an interest. It may make recommendations regarding acquisition of land and receive appropriations, gifts (to include land or other property) and grants for the purposes of carrying out its responsibilities. It may assist other elements of town and regional government on matters affecting the local environment or the natural resources of the municipality. It may also prepare and distribute relevant information, and encourage through educational activities the public understanding of local natural resources and conservation needs.

Under its responsibilities to administer municipal lands, properties and other rights, the commission is actively engaged in planning for the management of 793 acres of public land located adjacent to Scrag Mountain (Scrag Forest), alongside the Mad River (Wu Ledges Forest) and alongside Brook Road (Woliner Parcel), plus easement monitoring on 10 acres behind the Valley Professional Center (Dowdell/Baked Beads parcel).

**Other Volunteer Positions.** A wide range of other functions are carried out by volunteers appointed or ratified by the Selectboard, including the Fire Warden, Tree Board, Constable, Road Commissioner, Energy Coordinator, Emergency Management Director, Emergency Management Coordinator, Health

Officer, Mad River Recreation District, Mad Bikes of Waitsfield, Dog Warden, and Green Up Coordinator. Other, more ceremonial positions include Fence Viewer, Weigher of Coal, and Inspector of Lumber.

**Fiscal Condition.** In Vermont, the principal mechanism for funding local government is the property tax. While certain types of outside assistance are available (including state highway aid, fees for services, miscellaneous special purpose grant programs), approximately 80 percent of Waitsfield's annual municipal budget is funded through the local property tax. The fact that non-tax revenues consistently make up around 20 percent Waitsfield's budget is largely due to an aggressive effort on the part of town government to identify and secure alternative revenue sources, such as grants, to fund specific projects.

Figure 7-1 shows annual municipal expenditures between 2004 and 2009. The town has maintained a relatively stable budget for the past several years. Approximately one-third of the town budget is dedicated to road maintenance.

Waitsfield's municipal expenditures are generally higher than in neighboring communities, however, due partly to the town's function as the Mad River Valley's commercial center and the high level of service provided by local government. In addition, the town does not benefit from a higher value grand list like Fayston and Warren, nor does it have large non-tax revenue sources such as those provided the town of Moretown in exchange for hosting the WSI landfill. This, coupled with steep tax increases to fund local education, and related pressure to reduce municipal taxes, will limit the town's ability to maintain existing services, much less fund new initiatives, in coming years.

**Capital Budget & Program.** To limit fluctuations in town expenditures, thereby stabilizing tax rates, the town has adopted a capital budget and program on an annual basis for more than 20 years. The capital budget and program is a planning tool to help the town anticipate future capital expenditures and to schedule them so to avoid sharp increases in the tax rate during any one year. When combined with a capital reserve fund, the town can spread capital costs over a number of years, further stabilizing the municipal budget. It is also a mechanism for considering capital expenditures in the context of this plan to ensure that

budget decisions are consistent with the town's planning goals.

With regard to the town's capital reserve funds, which have been used effectively over the years, the town should always consider the appropriate balance between savings and indebtedness when making capital purchases. Interest rates on long-term borrowing remain at historic lows. This, coupled with rapidly appreciating land costs in town, presents an opportunity for the town to take advantage of low interest rates by borrowing for key investments.



## 7.C TOWN PROPERTIES

The town owns several properties used for a variety of civic, recreation, conservation and cultural purposes. The following is a partial list of town properties and a description of relevant considerations related to each.

**Joslin Library/Town Office.** The town office is located on the first floor of the Joslin Library. The building has undergone several renovations in recent years, including exterior repairs and interior improvements in the library. Town office space is occupied by administrative offices, including the Town Clerk's office, meeting space, and the vault housing the town's property records. Space in the building has become increasingly tight. The most pressing problem is limited vault space, which has been near capacity for several years. In addition, storage and work space for staff is limited, and attendance at public meetings of more than 12 to 15 people typically requires attendees to occupy office areas and/or to stand in hallways.

Options to relocate the town office to another location in Waitsfield Village or Irasville were being actively considered in 2012 with the goal of presenting

a plan to townspeople by the end of the year. A Town Office Task Force, appointed in 2010, hired Maclay Architects to evaluate the suitability of various sites in Waitsfield Village and Irasville. Limitations associated with the site and damage caused by the August 2011 flood led to the determination that expansion of the library building would not be an option to accommodate new town office operations. Other options included relocating to an existing building in Waitsfield Village, adjacent to the General Wait House, or constructing a new facility elsewhere in Waitsfield Village or Irasville.

Following more in-depth analysis and public input, the Selectboard accepted the Town Office Task Force's recommendation that the Town purchase an option for the site in Waitsfield Village owned by Wrenn Compere adjacent to the Flemer Field Community Green and occupied by a farmstand, to allow further study as the preferred site for a new town office. The Selectboard also accepted their recommendation to purchase an option on the nearby parcel, also owned by Wrenn Compere, which is adjacent to the Flemer Field Community Green and is occupied by two barns that may have value for other community benefits.

An important consideration in planning for a new town office is the historic (pre-1950s) practice of designing civic structures to reflect the values of the community. A new town office should serve as a community focal point and convey a sense of permanence, pride of place, and respect for tradition, while at the same time incorporating necessary elements of function and efficiency. The offices should also be centrally located to encourage community interaction.

**General Wait House.** The historic General Wait House, the original home of Waitsfield's founder, Benjamin Wait, was purchased in 1995. Funded with the assistance of an enhancement grant from VTrans, a grant from the Vermont Housing Conservation Board, town funds, and private donations raised by the Waitsfield Historical Society, the building accommodates display space for the Historical Society, the Mad River Planning District office, a visitor center operated by the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce, public rest rooms, community meeting space and office space for local service providers.



The main house was restored to serve the aforementioned functions; the attached barns were only stabilized and remain in need of restoration. The Waitsfield Historical Society made much progress in 2010 restoring the Carriage Barn for expanded display space for the Historical Society, and additional space for larger community meetings and functions than can be accommodated within the main house. In addition, the Carriage Barn roof was replaced in 2009. Federal stimulus funds in 2010 helped provide for the weatherization of the main house, including new insulation, installation of an energy efficient boiler, and new storm windows. Any future renovations should provide a worthwhile community service, improve the outward appearance of the building, and enhance the northern gateway to Waitsfield Village. The General Wait House should continue to manage and have a detailed upkeep and maintenance plan in order to properly care for this important community resource.

**Town Garage.** The town's highway department, discussed in Chapter 8, is housed in a garage located off the Tremblay Road, near its intersection with North Road. Built in 1986 after a fire destroyed the previous garage, the garage is located on a 10.8-acre parcel. The current facility is barely adequate to meet current needs, and additional space may be needed in the near future with the addition of municipal water and other services. The current location can accommodate expansion as it becomes necessary.

**Cemeteries.** Waitsfield owns and maintains four cemeteries:

- ◆ Irasville Cemetery, on Route 100 in Irasville;
- ◆ Village/Mill Cemetery, on Bridge Street just east of Waitsfield Village;
- ◆ General Wait Cemetery, behind the fire station in Waitsfield Village; and
- ◆ Common Cemetery adjacent to Waitsfield Common.

The Waitsfield Cemetery Commission is the body responsible for the maintenance and management of the cemeteries. The town is fortunate that, due to decisions of current and past cemetery commissioners, Waitsfield has a perpetual care fund that is among the largest in Vermont. Although the town has a large cemetery endowment fund which provides funds for maintenance of the cemeteries, increased expenses and lack of growth in the fund may require additional funds or support from the town at some point in the future.

Capacity exists in each of the cemeteries, although space is limited in all but the Common Cemetery (which was expanded with the purchase of nearly an acre in the early 1990s). Total remaining capacity, however, is approximately 600 spaces. In light of ongoing development pressure and the limited availability of suitable land, additional space may be required within the next five to ten years to ensure that space will be available to serve future generations. The Cemetery Commission may need to seek expansion of existing cemeteries, consideration of the use of mausoleums, or an additional cemetery location as a last resort in order to provide for future burial needs.

**Other Properties.** In addition to the Waitsfield-Fayston Fire Department, which is discussed below, the town owns several parcels used for conservation, recreation and other community uses. These parcels are described in appropriate sections of this plan.

**Town/Village Green.** The Selectboard accepted the donation by the Flemer family in 2009 of a 7-acre parcel of open common land on the north end of Waitsfield Village. A grant from the Trees for Local Communities Foundation and community partnerships resulted in the development of a fruit orchard in 2010 on the western boundary of the Flemer Field Community Green. There is also a small park adjacent to the Joslin Library, and the two undeveloped commons located at the intersections of the Common at Joslin Hill and East Roads. The town-owned pond at Carroll Road and Main Street serves as common land in Irasville. The town should consider ways it or additional lands could serve as a focal point for future pedestrian-oriented, village-style development in Irasville as called for in this plan.

## 7.D PUBLIC SAFETY

**Law Enforcement.** The Vermont State Police and the Washington County Sheriff's Department are responsible for law enforcement in the Mad River Valley. The State Police operate out of the Middlesex Barracks located on Route 2 in Middlesex, and are primarily responsible for all law enforcement matters in our area, particularly major criminal investigations.

Waitsfield has contracted with the Washington County Sheriff's Department for local police coverage for nearly two decades. The goals of this program are to enforce traffic safety and provide emergency response services. The local patrol is widely viewed as a cost-effective way in which to provide police protection without the burden of a local police department.

While it is impossible to draw a correlation between the level of police coverage and crime rates, Figure 7-2 indicates the extent to which the number of crimes in Waitsfield has remained relatively stable in recent years and the predominance of property crimes (e.g., larceny, shoplifting, auto theft, etc.). Waitsfield's crime rate remains lower than state and county averages.

One likely cause of the consistently low crime rate in Waitsfield is the strong sense of community that exists. In many respects, a strong community is the best deterrent to crime. As the town grows it will be critical that it not develop in a way that serves to isolate community members or create barriers to local institutions, that options for civil interaction are provided, a strong sense of place is fostered, and that development is guided to reinforce traditional land use patterns—including attractive, pedestrian-scale villages—and maintain a clean, healthy environment.

**Waitsfield-Fayston Fire Department.** Fire protection services are currently provided by the Waitsfield-Fayston Volunteer Fire Department. The department covers both Waitsfield and Fayston and maintains a mutual assistance agreement with other nearby fire departments. Fayston funds 40 percent of the annual operating and capital costs of the department. This 60/40 split was determined by the approximate percentage of responses within each town. In addition to the funding agreement, many Fayston residents serve as volunteers. As both towns grow, the breakdown of calls should be monitored to ensure that funding remains fairly allocated.

Presently, the department is staffed by 26 active volunteers and responds to around 80 incidents in a typical year. Over the past decade, the department has seen its average number of calls per year increase by 70 percent, while the number of personnel has not changed significantly. Volunteers are reimbursed a nominal fee for time spent on emergency responses; however, the bulk of time spent on administration, training and maintenance is voluntary.

While the number of volunteers is adequate to maintain the excellent level of service presently provided, the number of volunteers should be monitored and additional fire fighters actively recruited. In particular, it is important for the department to include volunteers that are in town and available to respond to emergencies during normal workday hours.

Fires actually represent only a minor component of fire department calls and the department most frequently responds to motor vehicle accidents. Many calls are also related to malfunctioning heating systems that are resolved before a fire starts. In addition to emergency response, the department has emphasized fire prevention and education. The past performance of the fire department has been exceptional, and there is no reason to believe that performance will change in the coming years.

Major equipment, which is maintained in the fire station located adjacent to the General Wait House in Waitsfield Village, includes a 2003 1,000-gallon International pumper, a 1987 Ford pumper, a 1982 GMC tanker, and a 2000 Chevrolet van. A 1943 Ford Model A pumper is also maintained, which symbolizes the department's years of dedicated service to the community. Annual contributions to a reserve fund are made toward future equipment replacement.

**Ambulance & Rescue Services.** The Mad River Valley Ambulance Service is organized as a non-profit corporation and provides 24-hour service to residents and visitors of the Mad River Valley.

The service operates from a facility in Waitsfield Village, which was purchased in 2001. In addition to providing four garage bays, space is available for equipment storage, administrative offices, and meeting and training facilities. The facility has an emergency generator, base station radio and 25-pair phone cable so that it can operate as an emergency operations center during a disaster. Rescue equipment currently in use includes three fully equipped

ambulances, a rescue/extraction vehicle (not used for transport) that carries heavy equipment, a "mass-accident" trailer, off-road rescue equipment, a dispatch radio and field radios, as well as a substantial amount of emergency medical equipment.

The service has grown considerably over the years to meet the needs of the growing community. Since its inception in 1971, the annual number of calls has increased by 81 percent. The service currently has a roster of 60 volunteers Valley-wide. The average first responder response time is 7 minutes, while the ambulance response time is less than 17 minutes. One reason for such a fast response time is the local dispatch service, which notifies volunteers in scattered locations around the Mad River Valley of a call. Since the late 1990s, E-911 emergency response service has been available in The Valley.

**Emergency Shelter.** In the case of an emergency, the designated community shelter for the Town of Waitsfield is the Waitsfield Elementary School. A review of the town's emergency procedures is currently underway.

## 7.E SOLID WASTE

The management and disposal of solid waste is a growing challenge due largely to materialism, excessive packaging and the prevalence of disposable consumer goods. This is exacerbated by the high cost of disposal, from both a financial and environmental standpoint. Efforts to reduce the amount of waste before it enters the waste stream and recycle the broadest range of waste in a cost-effective manner will become increasingly important as population increases.

Waitsfield is a member of the Mad River Resource Management Alliance. The alliance is a six-town district formed through an inter-local agreement in 1994. Other member towns are Duxbury, Fayston, Moretown, Warren and Waterbury. Northfield and Roxbury were added to the MRRMA in 2010. The alliance is responsible for the preparation and adoption of a Solid Waste Implementation Plan, which is required under the state's solid waste law. That plan is regularly updated and submitted to the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources for review and approval.

A representative and alternate from each town serves on the alliance board, which meets bimonthly to set policy, determine programs and oversee the activities

of a part-time administrator. A per capita assessment is charged to cover administrative and program costs (\$2.00 in 2012). Additional funding is provided by Waste Systems International Inc. (WSI), which operates a landfill in Moretown. WSI funds the alliance's education programs and a portion of the hazardous waste drop-off events.

Free disposal of appliances, tires, and collected roadside trash is also provided in association with annual alliance-sponsored events such as Green Up Day, Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days, and tire collections. The alliance works with the Association of Vermont Recyclers, and is a member of the Northeast Resource Recovery Association, which helps market some recyclable commodities.

Hauling, recycling and landfill services are provided under agreement with WSI. Trash collection services also are provided by other private haulers. As the "host district" for the WSI landfill, local residents can bring their recyclables to the Moretown facility at no charge. A regional transfer facility, located in Waitsfield's Limited Business District and operated by Casella Waste Management, provides area residents with a convenient solid waste disposal site as well as a place to recycle materials.

## 7.F SEWAGE DISPOSAL & WATER SUPPLY

**Municipal Wastewater Treatment.** Currently, all of the town's sewage disposal needs are addressed by individual on-site systems. Lacking a central wastewater collection and treatment facility, town officials have studied the feasibility of developing such a facility to serve the high density portions of town, especially Irasville and Waitsfield Village.

In 1999, the town secured funding from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources' revolving fund to study the feasibility of developing a municipal wastewater disposal facility to serve Irasville and, possibly, Waitsfield Village. As a result of preliminary analysis, the town purchased a 12.2 acre parcel (the Munn site) located south of Irasville for \$126,000 in November, 2000 as a potential wastewater treatment site.

In 2008, a two-phase plan to provide a sewer system in Irasville and pipe the waste to Munn field for treatment was developed. The total two-phase system was estimated to cost approximately \$12 million. With grants and users funding the bulk of the project, a bond vote was held in March 2008 to finance

the balance of the Phase I cost of \$5.7 million project but was defeated. The Selectboard deferred reconsideration of a municipal wastewater system while proceeding with the municipal water system, which was approved in November 2008 after being narrowly defeated in two prior votes.

In 2011, a plan for a town-sponsored loan program to finance privately-owned, shared, decentralized wastewater systems was developed as an alternative to a municipally-owned system. The same year, a wastewater study entitled "Assessment of Decentralized Wastewater Options: A Survey of Needs, Capacity, and Solutions for Historic Waitsfield Village and Irasville, Vermont" was completed. The townspeople voted at the 2012 Town Meeting to approve allowing the town to bond up to \$250,000 to develop this program. Currently, the town has a loan balance on funds borrowed from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources to cover engineering and other wastewater development costs which will be paid off over the coming years.

Should a municipal system become a practical reality, it will be important that the allocation of available capacity be coordinated with other policies of this plan so that the system reinforces—rather than undermines—land use, housing and economic development goals of the town. Most importantly, service areas should correspond with designated growth center boundaries, and allocation policies should foster the type and rate of development desired by the community.

**On-Site Disposal.** Shared wastewater options are being explored to serve designated growth areas in Irasville and Waitsfield Village as well as future designated residential hamlets; however, many properties in Waitsfield will continue to be served by on-site in ground disposal. In 2002 the Vermont Legislature amended the state's on-site septic rules to require all new development, regardless of lot size, to meet state septic system standards. This effectively eliminated the "10 acre loophole," which exempted lots greater than 10 acres from any design standards.

The new standards also allow for a number of alternative septic system designs which allow for the placement of septic systems on land that could not have met the previous standards. As a result of the rule changes, on-site disposal systems may now be located on hundreds of acres in Waitsfield previously unsuitable for on-site systems.

**Water Supply.** In 2008, Waitsfield voters approved the bonds for construction of a municipal water system to serve Irasville and Waitsfield village. That project began construction in 2010. The \$7.6 million project will be paid for by \$4.5 million in federal grants, connection fees, and a \$3.014 million loan.

As designed, the municipal water system will begin at the “Reed Road” wellhead and follow the town’s rights-of-way along Long Road, down Bushnell Road to a new storage tank constructed on the town-owned former LeClair gravel pit site. From the tank, the transmission main follows a right-of-way to Tremblay Road, where it meets Route 100 and continues on to Waitsfield Village and Irasville. Hydrants will provide fire protection along the route.

Outside the planned service territory for the new municipal water system, development will continue to rely on private wells.

## 7.G COMMUNITY SERVICES

**Joslin Memorial Library.** The Joslin Memorial Library, located in Waitsfield Village, is administered by a Board of Trustees. A private organization, Friends of the Joslin Library, provides support on a regular basis. A part time librarian maintains library hours Monday through Saturday. Library staff is supplemented by a dedicated group of volunteers who perform a variety of tasks. Without these volunteers, the high level of service library patrons have grown accustomed to would suffer.

The library houses over 9,700 books, supplemented by an interlibrary loan program with other libraries in the state. The library offers children’s programs including a pre-school story hour, a Saturday reading program for school-aged children in addition to a summer program. The library also provides internet access, a large collection of audio book tapes, home book delivery for elderly and disabled residents and, also with support of a foundation grant, a newly expanded adult program.

In addition to private fund-raising and income from various endowments, a large portion of the Library’s operating costs are provided by the towns of Fayston and Waitsfield. Waitsfield also leases the bottom floor of the library for town offices, which provides much-needed income to the library.

Because the town has outgrown existing office space, it is likely that an alternate location for a larger facility will be considered in the coming years. Should a relocation occur, the library would be able to expand to provide additional storage and reading space. It would also provide limited handicapped accessibility, which is severely restricted today. When efforts to study town office space needs are initiated, a corresponding analysis of library space options should also occur.

**Local Health Services.** The Mad River Valley Health Center, Inc. (MRVHC) in Waitsfield is a non-profit community-owned facility leasing space to a variety of healthcare providers. The mission of the MRVHC is to provide a quality facility to ensure the availability of local health care to residents of the Mad River Valley, neighboring towns and visitors. The health center is governed by a community Board of Directors composed of individuals representing the towns of Warren, Waitsfield, Fayston, Moretown and Duxbury. Healthcare providers at the health center include the Mad River Family Practice (owned by Central Vermont Medical Center), a physical therapist, an alternative healthcare practice and mental health providers. In 1996, the Family Practice received Rural Health Center designation, further enhancing the services available to Medicaid and Medicare patients.

MRVHC was incorporated in 1980 when a group of concerned citizens and businesses raised the funds to purchase the health center building and the medical practice from Dr. John Saia to secure accessible, family health care for the Mad River Valley towns. Over its 30+ year history, the practice at the MRVHC has served an estimated 70-80% of the population of the Mad River Valley at one time or another. The new building, completed in 2005, provides increased medical office space to more efficiently serve the needs of the current medical practice. A second floor provides additional space for complementary health services, as well as space to hold health and wellness workshops.

Other health care services available to local residents include:

- ◆ **Ambulance.** The Mad River Valley Ambulance Service provides 24-hour emergency response throughout the Mad River Valley.
- ◆ **Dentist.** Valley Dental Associates provides full service general dentistry.

- ◆ **Hospitals.** Hospitals serving Mad River Valley residents are Central Vermont Medical Center in Berlin, Gifford Memorial in Randolph, Fletcher Allen Health Care/University of Vermont in Burlington and the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire. Emergency after-hour service is available from a physician on call or at a hospital emergency department.
- ◆ **Pharmacy.** The Drug Store has been a community pharmacy with full prescription drug services and an on-site pharmacist. It was purchased in July 2012 by Kinney Drugs.
- ◆ **Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice.** Home health care services which include therapy (physical, speech, occupational) and), counseling, and consoling the elderly; homemaker service (meals, shopping, housekeeping); Hospice consoling and counseling the terminally ill and their families; and child birthing classes.
- ◆ **Vermont Department of Health.** Well Child Clinic (preschool immunization), WIC Programs (prenatal and preschool nutritional programs).
- ◆ **Washington County Mental Health.** 24-hour emergency service, out-patient clinic, substance abuse programs, job placement, day and hospital-based programs, day hospital and resident programs.

**Day Care.** Day care facilities are regulated by the Vermont Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services. Day care providers operating out of private homes who care for not more than six pre-school children from two or more families, in addition to not more than four school age children for four or less hours each day, must be registered with the state. Presently only two home child care operators are registered in the town—a reduction from past years, when as many as five home child care services were registered in Waitsfield.

Larger facilities, and those not operating out of the care provider's home, are licensed by the state. A licensed facility is allowed to provide care to larger numbers of children, and is subject to more stringent regulation and periodic inspection. Currently six licensed facilities operate in Waitsfield, including the after school program which uses the elementary school.

Other than the use of the elementary school, the town is not involved in providing day care to local residents. No change in this policy is anticipated, although changing demographics resulting in more single-parent homes and families with two working parents have created a growing need for adequate day care. It is not known how adequately these needs are now being served. While there are few actions the town would be likely to take to remedy this, additional facilities could be encouraged through the elimination of any local regulatory barriers to their development and the continuation of the after school program.



**Senior Services.** The Mad River Valley Senior Citizens Inc. is a non-profit corporation which operates to coordinate and provide services for the elderly population of Fayston, Moretown, Warren and Waitsfield. Funding is provided through a combination of local, state, and federal grant funds and donated time and energy of Valley residents.

The most important program provided by the seniors is the operation of the Senior Center and the senior meals program, both of which operate out of Evergreen Place—a shared housing facility for elders located in Irasville.

**Social Services.** Most social services are provided by state government through a variety of programs coordinated through the Agency of Human Services. In addition to state programs, all of which are delivered from offices located elsewhere in Washington County outside the Mad River Valley, several private non-profit organizations provide varying types and

levels of assistance to local residents. Several of these service providers receive annual appropriations from the town. In addition, the following two organizations are located within the Mad River Valley and provide assistance exclusively to Valley residents:

- ◆ Valley Community Fund, a non-profit organization serving residents of the Mad River Valley. Funded entirely through contributions, the Community Fund provides financial assistance to local residents experiencing financial hardship.
- ◆ Mad River Valley Food Shelf, coordinated by the Valley Clergy Council, distributes donated food and groceries to Valley residents in need of such assistance.

The assistance of these, and other, private organizations will likely become increasingly important as the current federal administration reduces support for programs designed to assist the least fortunate members of society.

**Cultural Organizations.** Mad River Valley residents enjoy access to a wide range of homegrown cultural resources and events. While not directly supported by the town on a regular basis, the following organizations provide a variety of performances and exhibits.

- ◆ Vermont Festival of the Arts, which, in cooperation with the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce sponsors an annual arts festival.
- ◆ Valley Players, a theater group operating out of the Odd Fellows Hall in Waitsfield Village.
- ◆ Green Mountain Cultural Center, which sponsors a variety of exhibitions, performances and classes in the restored round barn in Waitsfield.
- ◆ Mad River Chorale, a local chorus group.
- ◆ Phantom Theater, an experimental theater group based in a restored Warren barn.
- ◆ Skinner Barn, which hosts a variety of performances and events in a restored barn on the Common Road.
- ◆ Waitsfield Farmers Market, which not only provides a direct market for local farmers, cooks, artisans and crafts people, but also provides an opportunity for local residents and visitors to congregate and socialize on a regular basis between May and October.

- ◆ Yestermorrow Design/Build School, which has hosted public events and lectures for the local community since 1990.

In addition, several individual artists and businesses support a strong community arts culture. Artists studios, which often include display space, are located throughout town, although several are concentrated in Waitsfield Village. Musicians regularly perform at Mad Mountain Tavern, Purple Moon Pub, and the Big Picture Theater, which also functions as the Mad River Valley's only movie theater.

**Community Center.** Despite the range of recreational, community, and cultural activities available to Mad River Valley residents and visitors, most of which are located in Waitsfield, several residents have lamented the lack of a central community center. Such a center could serve as a gathering place and central recreation facility for The Valley's youth. It could also serve as a multi-generational facility that could serve as a recreational, social and cultural resource for a broad cross section of the community.

While there is clear support for a multi-purpose community center, the depth and breadth of that support is not yet clear. Should such support exist, the creation of a community center in Irasville could serve to strengthen that area's function as a growth center and activity center for the entire Mad River Valley.

## 7.H COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA

Waitsfield is served by both traditional and more modern forms of communication that inform the community and connect residents with each other and the wider world. In fact, Mad River Valley residents have access to telecommunications technologies that are on par with most urban areas and are considerably more advanced than in most rural communities.

Telecommunications services available to Waitsfield residents are now multiplying at an unprecedented rate, due to ongoing technological advances, industry deregulation, and an expanding number of local and national service providers. As discussed in Chapter 5, advanced communications infrastructure is one of the area's greatest economic assets.

Unlike traditional phone and broadcast networks, available for a nominal fee or the cost of purchasing a radio or television, many of the new technologies

and services require a substantial initial capital investment (e.g., for computers, satellite dishes or wiring), and subsequent monthly payments. There is also a learning curve associated with the use and application of new technologies. As a result, there is a growing information or digital divide, which affects mostly lower income households and the elderly on fixed incomes, who also are often less familiar or comfortable with new technologies.

**Newspapers.** The Valley Reporter, a weekly newspaper since 1971, is the town's official newspaper for public warnings, notices, and announcements. Waitsfield also receives limited local coverage in the Times-Argus, central Vermont's daily paper based in Barre. Other state and national papers are available through local outlets.

**Telephone Service.** Waitsfield Telecom, Waitsfield's local, privately owned telephone company, was founded in 1904. In 1994 the company expanded to include GTE's former Central Champlain Valley service area, forming Waitsfield/Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT). The company now has more than 100 employees and more than 20,000 access lines.

WCVT currently provides a variety of telephone services to area businesses and residents for monthly fees. Local consumers have the option of selecting from a variety of long-distance service providers, including the phone company's Green Mountain Long Distance service.

**Wireless Services.** Cellular phones and other personal wireless services are an increasingly common means of communication, and provide access to remote areas not served by phone lines. Because of local topography, cellular phone service remains spotty in the Mad River Valley.

Private service providers are actively pursuing tower sites throughout Vermont to expand wireless coverage. Under the federal 1996 Telecommunications Act, the town cannot exclude personal wireless services or unreasonably discriminate among providers, but can regulate facility siting, environmental impacts, and appearance through local zoning. Radio frequency emissions, including related interference and health considerations, are regulated separately by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), but can be subject to local monitoring requirements to ensure that FCC standards are being met.

**Radio, Television & Cable.** Because of the mountainous terrain, Waitsfield residents without cable or satellite service get limited radio and television reception. Waitsfield Cable, owned and operated by Waitsfield Telecom, has been serving the Mad River Valley since 1980. The company currently offers within its service area, for monthly fees, cable television, digital cable and radio, and pay-per-view options. The basic analog cable package includes four channels that feature local programming: Waitsfield Cable (Channel 11) advertises local events, Sugarbush Resort Television (Channel 12), and Mad River Valley Television ("MRVTV"; Channels 44 & 45), The Valley's designated public access station. MRVTV, on the air since 2000, provides community access to local airwaves and coverage of local government, school and community events. The station is managed by a board of directors, and maintains a studio and production equipment for use by community groups and individuals.

Town residents outside the cable service area have access to other wireless television services for the price of dish installation and a monthly service fee.

**Internet & Web Services.** Information and services, including government and educational services, also are increasingly being provided through web sites, accessed via the internet. Waitsfield Elementary School has access to on-line services and resources through K12net, an extension of Vermont's GOVnet, which supports local and distance learning programs. The Joslin Library also provides public access. The Town of Waitsfield has an official website that provides a wealth of information about town government, local businesses, community groups and more.

Green Mountain Access, founded in 1997 as an affiliate of Waitsfield Telecom, has grown from a local ISP to a statewide company that offers many of the latest internet technologies. Residential internet services currently offered in town include dial-up access, high speed digital service lines (DSLs), roaming access, and web hosting. Local businesses, in addition, may also have access to dedicated (ISDN and T1) lines, frame relay services for higher speed service.

## 7.1 RECREATION

The Mad River Valley offers a rich variety of recreation opportunities to year-round residents, seasonal home owners and visitors. A brief inventory of available facilities includes:

- ◆ Two major downhill ski areas;
- ◆ Two cross country skiing facilities;
- ◆ An 18-hole golf course;
- ◆ More than 60 tennis courts;
- ◆ An airport offering gliding;
- ◆ Several riding stables;
- ◆ Biking and mountain biking;
- ◆ A clean river system suitable for fishing, paddling and swimming (the Mad River has been identified as one of Vermont's premier swimming resources); and
- ◆ Miles of trails, footpaths and old logging roads, including the Mad River Greenway in Waitsfield.

Despite these many opportunities, only limited resources exist for formal or organized recreational pursuits, including youth sports leagues and services.



**Public Facilities.** Public recreation facilities in Waitsfield are limited, although in recent years the town has expanded the number and type of facilities available. Existing facilities include:

- ◆ Ball fields and recreation facilities located at the Waitsfield Elementary School, which are available for public use during non-school hours and the summertime. These facilities are limited, however, and do not presently meet state educational facility standards. There may be an opportunity in the future to acquire adjacent land in the floodplain for expansion.
- ◆ Scrag Forest, consisting of 640 acres acquired by the town (see Chapter 11). The forest offers back country recreation opportunities and access was enhanced in 2011-2012 with the creation of a small parking area and trail access on Bowen Road.
- ◆ The Lareau Swimhole Park, constructed with the assistance of a VTrans enhancement grant in 2003, in addition to two adjacent parcels (former Austin and former Tardy properties) that provide less formal access to the Mad River.
- ◆ 125 acres of conserved woodland known as Wu Ledges, offering trails leading to an outstanding scenic vista from a rock outcropping that overlooks the Mad River and its confluence with the Mill Brook.
- ◆ 7.3 acres at the Flemer Field Community Green off of Route 100 (the old polo fields) and the community orchard project that was planted in 2010.

**Private Not-for-Profit Facilities.** Another facility open to the public is the Couples Club, an eight-acre multi-purpose field located in the floodplain of the Mad River in Irasville which offers two baseball fields, a small pavilion and river access. The property is managed by the Couples Club, a private organization, and is exempted from property taxes by the town on an annual basis. The Valley Little League has entered into a long-term lease with the Couples Club to ensure it will remain available for youth baseball.

The Skatium, an outdoor skating facility is located in Irasville and maintained by a not-for-profit organization. The Skatium has artificial ice and a Zamboni, but is susceptible to weather conditions due to the lack of a cover. The Skatium organization has identified enclosing the facility as a priority, which should be encouraged concurrent with efforts to improve the area's appearance, especially during non-winter months.

**Trails.** The Mad River Path system is an extremely popular path along the Mad River. The greenway is maintained through a partnership between the town, the Mad River Path Association, and landowners. Similar partnerships maintain a village path network. This network could form the core of what could eventually be a single pathway linking Irasville with Warren Village to the south and the Fayston Elementary School to the west, and linking Waitsfield Village with Moretown Village and Harwood High School to the north.

The town would benefit from developing a Town trail system. An assortment of additional easements and license agreements for trails and paths around town have been made, although an extensive, integrated

network has not been completed. Through continued partnerships with the Path Association and landowners, such a network could be developed in the future. In addition to trails, Class 4 Roads which are not maintained for year-round travel also provide recreational access, especially in the Forest Reserve District. The town should also explore expanding the trail network on the Scrag Forest Trail, possibly including the Northfield side of the ridge.

Several miles of winter trails for skiers and snow-machines are maintained by the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) on private land in Waitsfield and surrounding towns. Part of an extensive state-wide network, the local trails are maintained by the local VAST chapter—the Mad River Ridge Runners.

**Recreation Programs & Planning.** Waitsfield presently does not have an active recreation committee or board and does not offer any recreation programs. However, the town, together with Fayston and Warren, formed the Mad River Valley Recreation District in 1993. The purpose of the Recreation District was to support local recreation facilities and programs, and to identify and pursue opportunities to expand existing facilities or create new facilities. The District has provided funds to improve the Couples Club fields in addition to providing support to other private non-profit recreation organizations such as the Skatium.



## 7.J GOALS

- 7.J-1 A full range of community services and facilities that are provided in a cost effective and environmentally sound manner without creating an undue burden on local taxpayers.
- 7.J-2 Facilities and services that reinforce the town's land use, development and natural resource protection goals and policies.

## 7.K POLICIES

- 7.K-1 Plan facilities and services to accommodate anticipated future growth and to avoid unreasonable burdens on the town's taxpayers. To this end:
  - 7.K-1.a The scale, timing and location of development shall be controlled to ensure that the resulting demand for services and facilities does not exceed the municipality's ability to provide them; and
  - 7.K-1.b In the event new or expanded public facilities required to accommodate proposed development are not available or planned, the developer shall fund the proportional cost of the facility(ies) needed to accommodate the new development unless the town determines that the proposed development will provide community benefits which outweigh or offset the cost of the required facility(ies).
- 7.K-2 Coordinate the provision of facilities and services with the land use and development goals and policies outlined in this plan, including the reinforcement of growth centers. To this end:
  - 7.K-2.a Facilities that require regular access by the general public and are compatible with compact, mixed use development, such as municipal offices, post offices, community centers and fire stations, should be located in Waitsfield Village or Irasville;
  - 7.K-2.b Facilities that are both land intensive and require regular access by the general public, such as recreation fields, should be discouraged in remote

Table 7-1: Municipal Budget

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>Expenses</b>						
Administration	\$307,520	\$342,920	\$384,380	\$360,120	\$329,980	\$347,560
Road Department	\$522,340	\$520,290	\$566,700	\$489,960	\$496,220	\$364,985
Fire Department	\$60,720	\$56,090	\$58,390	\$58,820	\$64,600	\$67,892
Police Program	\$33,740	\$37,580	\$28,820	\$28,210	\$37,730	\$32,862
Water and Sewer	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$38,980	\$18,350	\$-
Employee Benefits	\$89,810	\$97,850	\$99,270	\$97,210	\$94,410	\$111,527
Special Articles	\$122,310	\$111,720	\$110,140	\$94,940	\$121,150	\$67,000
Miscellaneous	\$189,220	\$182,070	\$183,710	\$277,930	\$291,110	\$83,961
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,325,660</b>	<b>\$1,348,520</b>	<b>\$1,431,410</b>	<b>\$1,446,170</b>	<b>\$1,453,550</b>	<b>\$1,075,787</b>
<b>Revenues</b>						
Administration	\$81,120	\$84,800	\$68,020	\$82,430	\$54,620	\$76,900
Delinquent Taxes	\$21,530	\$19,720	\$19,190	\$19,040	\$11,710	\$19,000
Road Department	\$75,970	\$76,560	\$144,140	\$225,240	\$77,170	\$57,630
Fire Department	\$23,600	\$21,390	\$20,550	\$20,940	\$28,440	\$27,157
Police Program	\$32,540	\$50,940	\$28,030	\$28,650	\$24,570	\$26,300
Miscellaneous	\$53,700	\$61,660	\$61,730	\$98,620	\$91,750	\$65,700
Taxes	\$1,058,990	\$1,015,030	\$1,085,580	\$1,129,980	\$997,870	\$1,109,998
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$1,347,450</b>	<b>\$1,330,100</b>	<b>\$1,427,240</b>	<b>\$1,604,900</b>	<b>\$1,286,130</b>	<b>\$1,382,685</b>

Source: Waitsfield Town Annual Reports, adjusted to 2009\$ using the CPI

Table 7-3: Emergency Response Statistics

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Fire</b>							
Total Calls	68	76	88	81	87	97	75
Active Firefighters	24	20	23	26	24	24	24
Structure Fire	1	3	2	1	1	3	1
Wild Fire	3	0	1	2	1	0	0
Vehicle Accident	18	22	28	17	10	17	9
Utility Assistance	7	4	3	5	7	7	7
Other	39	47	54	56	34	27	29
Call to Waitsfield	37	40	49	47	53	54	46
Call to Fayston	30	33	38	29	33	42	25
Call to Warren	1	2	1	4	1	0	0
Call to Moretown	0	1	0	1	0	1	4
<b>Rescue</b>							
Total Calls	413	460	418	420	430	444	412
Personnel	60	68	60	57	56	56	57
Call to Waitsfield	141	157	135	153	164	160	
Call to Fayston	113	98	85	82	85	59	
Call to Warren	149	110	159	147	146	141	
Call to Moretown	49	46	41	48	49	52	

Source: Waitsfield Town Annual Reports

Table 7-2: Waitsfield Crimes and Crime Rate

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Part I Crime	41	41	26	26	35	38	44							
Part II Crime	76	61	80	87	82	87	84							
Crime against a Person								2	1	3	5	4	3	6
Crime against Property								69	46	43	57	47	43	43
Other Crime								0	2	0	5	1	4	3
<b>Total Crimes</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Crime Rate</b>														
Town	75.88	66.89	70.01	74.15	70.52	75.35	76.51	41.62	28.50	26.90	39.93	30.99	29.80	30.99
County	139.55	160.90	146.27	148.84	132.24	128.65	110.46	44.54	43.46	38.45	40.80	38.86	36.47	38.88
State	127.37	123.35	118.65	118.66	112.47	108.65	101.78	45.45	47.02	48.47	47.58	48.34	47.99	43.50

Source: Vermont Crime Report. Note: The methodology was changed data since 2004 is not directly comparable to pre-2004 data.

	areas of the Agricultural- Residential and Forest Reserve Districts unless designed to serve the immediate neighborhood;	7.K-5	Continue to use the General Wait House primarily for civic, community and cultural purposes, including public rest rooms, community meeting space, cultural activities, celebration of community history and heritage, and public information. To that end, restoration of the attached barns for one or more of these purposes is encouraged.
7.K-2.c	Facilities that do not require regular access by the general public, such as highway maintenance, or are not compatible with compact, mixed use development, such as solid waste transfer facilities, shall be located in appropriate centralized, nonresidential locations, preferably in the Industrial District or Limited Business District.	7.K-6	Maintain town funded emergency services, including fire and police protection, in a manner that continues their current high level of service as the community grows. Explore opportunities to coordinate increased law enforcement services and efforts with other towns in the Mad River Valley.
7.K-3	<b>Provide services and facilities in an efficient and cost effective manner while ensuring a high level of service. To this end:</b>	7.K-7	Develop municipal water and wastewater systems to serve the town center areas of Irasville and Waitsfield Village, in order to meet current needs as well as allow for additional growth in residential and commercial properties. Such systems should provide the greatest volume of capacity in the most cost effective manner possible. Support the development of decentralized shared wastewater systems in residential hamlets and commercial development zones in order to facilitate safe and efficient wastewater systems and promote denser development in appropriate areas of town. Once constructed, the system capacity shall:
7.K-3.a	Capital expenditures will be programmed to avoid sharp fluctuations in the property tax rate;	7.K-7.a	Be allocated in accordance with the land use, housing, and economic development policies of this plan; and
7.K-3.b	Alternatives to the property tax to fund local services and facilities (including user fees, state/federal grants and loans, impact fees and negotiated exactions, special taxing districts, private foundations and assistance from non-governmental and/or local option taxes) will be used wherever practical, providing they do not place an additional burden on residents of limited financial means or undermine other policies of this plan;	7.K-7.b	Be managed, together with the operation of the facility, to ensure maximum protection of water quality in the Mad River and its tributaries.
7.K-3.c	Wherever practical, services and facilities to address Valley-wide growth and development will be provided in conjunction with neighboring towns.	7.K-8	Explore opportunities for the town to acquire land for conservation, recreation and community facilities. Priority should be given to parcels which provide multiple values to the community.
7.K-3.d	Statewide efforts to restructure state educational funding to reduce the reliance on the local property tax are strongly supported.	7.K-9	Manage undeveloped and semi-developed town-owned properties, including Scrag Forest, the Lareau Swimhole, and other conservation and recreation parcels for the protection of ecological resources and sustainable use.
7.K-4	<b>Recognize the importance of making the most effective and efficient use of existing services, structures and facilities and utilities before expanding capacity or constructing new buildings or facilities. In the event a new building(s) is required, it shall be designed to reflect the community's historic and architectural heritage, a strong sense of permanence, and to serve as a symbol of civic pride</b>		

- 7.K-10 Support the efforts of the Mad River Path Association to create a network of walking and bicycling paths in the Mad River Valley, including extending the Mad River Greenway to link Waitsfield Village with Moretown Village to the north, and with Warren Village to the south. To this end, the town will assist the Path Association by:
- 7.K-10.a Holding easements on segments of the path right-of-way;
- 7.K-10.b Incorporating path easements into required open space and pedestrian connections as part of local development review processes; and
- 7.K-10.c Incorporating path segments into management plans for town-owned land.
- 7.K-11 Continue to work with the Couples Club and other organizations to ensure recreation fields remain viable and accessible to local residents and youth sports leagues.
- 7.K-12 Continue to encourage the efforts of VAST to provide an integrated network of winter recreation trails in a manner that does not adversely impact neighboring homeowners and the natural environment, and allow VAST trail use of Class 4 roads on a case-by-case basis to avoid conflict with other users of the road and neighboring residential properties.
- 7.K-13 Make changes to the classification, maintenance, or use of Class 4 roads that would result in an increase of automobile use only if existing recreational uses are maintained or replaced or mitigated with comparable recreation opportunities. The upgrade and/or reclassification of Class 4 roads within the Forest Reserve District shall not be permitted to allow year-round vehicular access and land development.
- 7.K-14 Manage town cemeteries, and expand if needed, to ensure that burial opportunities will exist for the foreseeable future, and to ensure that as undeveloped properties become limited, town cemeteries will continue to serve as an important cultural focus of the community.
- 7.K-15 Continue to participate as a member of the Mad River Valley-Waterbury Solid Waste Alliance, including the alliance's efforts to reduce waste generation and provide environmentally sound waste disposal opportunities.
- 7.K-16 Encourage continued operation of the Valley Transfer Station in its present location, and encourage a privately operated bottle redemption center in conjunction with the Transfer Station, or at a separate location in Irasville or Waitsfield Village.
- 7.K-17 Encourage public and private social service providers, including state, regional and local agencies and non-governmental organizations, to continue providing services to local residents. To this end, the town will continue to consider funding such organizations on an annual basis, and will support efforts to improve local delivery of such services through partnerships with local organizations.
- 7.K-18 Support the development and operation of a multi-generational community center within Irasville or Waitsfield Village.
- 7.K-19 Encourage the Mad River Valley Health Center to continue to meet the needs of local residents and to serve as a designated Rural Health Clinic.
- 7.K-20 Integrate the expansion or development of wireless telecommunications facilities (e.g. cellular) requiring towers or similar facilities into the existing built environment, such as affixed to silos, steeples, cupolas, or on towers located within the Industrial or Irasville Village District.
- 7.K-21 Support the expansion of telecommunication service in the community, including broadband Internet access, and efforts to ensure greater public access through the Joslin Memorial Library and local schools, and through greater municipal use of the internet to disseminate information.
- 7.K-22 Continue to work with and provide support, to the extent practical, to community arts and cultural organizations.

- 7.K-23 Support and continue to help fund Mad River Television's (Channels 44 and 45) efforts to broadcast meetings of public interest, and will use this medium to expand local awareness of community events and issues.
- 7.K-24 Encourage the creation of recreation facilities that foster fitness and well-being (e.g., fitness courses) in a manner that is integrated throughout the community.

## 7.L TASKS

- 7.L-1 Continue to work cooperatively with neighboring towns and the region on issues of mutual concern, and explore additional opportunities to share facilities and services with neighboring towns. [Town Administrator, Selectboard, Town Boards and Commissions]
- 7.L-2 Establish a special taxing district, or tax increment financing district, for one or more of the town's growth centers. [Town Administrator, Selectboard, Planning Commission]
- 7.L-3 Implement a decentralized, municipal-sponsored, privately-owned wastewater system framework to serve Irasville and Waitsfield Village. [Town Administrator, Selectboard, Study Committee]
- 7.L-4 Review proposals for development to identify potential impacts on the town's ability to provide adequate services and facilities without an undue burden on local tax payers, and place appropriate conditions on new development regarding the timing of construction and provision for services or facilities. [Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, Development Review Board]
- 7.L-5 Revise the Waitsfield Subdivision Regulations to include updated facility and infrastructure standards, including those related to stormwater runoff, wastewater disposal, impact on community services and facilities, and trails, sidewalks and pathways. [Planning Commission]

- 7.L-6 Prepare an Official Map for the Irasville Village District depicting future public improvements, including roads, sidewalks, paths and park areas, and a town green/common. [Planning Commission]
- 7.L-7 Explore the creation of a municipal stormwater management utility to serve Waitsfield Village and the Irasville Village District in conjunction with the implementation of an Irasville Master Plan. [Planning Commission, Selectboard]
- 7.L-8 Receive Town Office Task Force's recommendations on needs and potential locations for a new space in 2012 and prepare a strategy for meeting those needs within the next 5 years. [Town Administrator, Town Clerk, Selectboard, Study Committee]
- 7.L-9 Evaluate space and facility needs of the Joslin Library in conjunction with the town office study, and prepare a strategy to address any changes to the Library resulting from changes to the town offices. [Selectboard, Library Trustees\*]
- 7.L-10 Explore options for expanding existing town cemeteries or, if expansion is not practical, for the creation of a new cemetery located in close proximity to Irasville, Waitsfield Village or Waitsfield Common. [Cemetery Commission]
- 7.L-11 Develop a plan for renovating the Wait House barns for public and cultural purposes. [Selectboard, Waitsfield Historic Society\*]
- 7.L-12 Develop long range management plans for undeveloped town-owned parcels, including Scrag Forest, Wu Ledges, Lareau Swimhole and adjacent land, and the Brook Road parcel. [Conservation Commission, Selectboard]
- 7.L-13 Explore methods to obtain access to Scrag Forest from the Northfield side of the ridge. [Selectboard, Conservation Commission]
- 7.L-14 Review ongoing financial support for the Mad River Valley Health Center in light of the presence of other health care professionals located in, and serving, the Mad River Valley. [Town Administrator, Selectboard]

## 8 | Transportation

### 8.A OVERVIEW

As is the case in most of rural America, any consideration of transportation in Waitsfield is largely dominated by a discussion of the automobile and the impacts of an automobile-dependent culture on our community. The town is not directly served by rail, a commercial airport, or any regional bicycle and pedestrian network other than public roadways. Recognizing this dependence on the automobile, the town has attempted to coordinate land use planning with traffic and transportation policies as a means of providing pedestrian connectivity, promoting transit, and ensuring traffic safety and efficiency throughout the community.

In recent years, changes in transportation priorities have been fueled by the rise of global oil prices and the concept of “peak oil.” With \$4 per gallon gas recently making its first appearance in Waitsfield and predictions of higher prices to come, the importance of multi-modal transportation planning in both town and private developments has soared.

This chapter examines the town’s transportation network, including state and local roads, traffic safety, and non-motorized travel and transit, and evaluates current conditions and issues relating to that network.

### 8.B ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

**State Highways.** Primary access to the town is provided by Route 100, which runs the length of the state and serves most tourist destinations along the main range of the Green Mountains. Route 100 links the Mad River Valley with Interstate 89 in Waterbury (Exit 10) and Middlesex (Exit 9), both approximately 10 miles to the north. It provides access to passenger rail service in Waterbury, as well as commercial air service and regional population and employment centers in Chittenden County and Montpelier. Route 100 not only serves town residents, but also provides the primary access to The Valley for visitors from Montreal and southern New England.

In addition to serving as the Mad River Valley’s principal arterial highway, Route 100 functions as Main Street through Waitsfield Village and Irasville. A result of this can be high traffic volumes during

peak periods, as well as potential conflicts between through-traffic and turning movements at busy commercial intersections. This raises specific concerns relative to traffic safety and efficiency within village centers, addressed in more detail below.

Access to Waitsfield is also provided from the west by Route 17, which crosses the Green Mountain Range over Appalachian Gap in Fayston, providing a link between Route 100 and Mad River Glen and Mount Ellen.

**Highway Improvements.** The Town of Waitsfield Route 100 Transportation Path is scheduled to be completed in 2012, and will provide pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and crosswalk improvements from Waitsfield Elementary School to Irasville. The project is of paramount importance to the community and its guests and visitors, and should be given top priority for completion.

**Highway Maintenance.** Until 1998, VTrans’ regional highway maintenance facility in the Mad River Valley was located adjacent to the Lareau Swimhole south of Irasville. The 1998 flood accomplished what towns in the Mad River Valley had attempted for at least two decades: the permanent removal of the riverside maintenance facility. A more modern facility has been relocated further to the south on Route 100, in the Limited Business District. This facility should meet the state’s maintenance needs for the foreseeable future.

**Highway Design Standards.** In response to growing concern that federal standards were inappropriate for Vermont’s small villages and rural settings, the state prepared and adopted Vermont State Standards for the Design of Transportation Construction, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of Freeways, Roads and Streets in 1997. These include standards for roads serving urban, village and rural contexts that are designed specifically for use in Vermont. The upgrade and construction of state, town and private roads in Waitsfield should be guided by these standards.

**Town Roads.** Waitsfield maintains nearly 37 miles of town roads, including nine miles of Class 2 and 20 miles of Class 3 roads. A summary of road mileage by classification and function is included in Figure 8-1.

Class 2 and 3 roads are maintained for year-round travel. Class 2 roads serve as major collectors providing access between towns. These include the North Fayston Road, Bragg Hill Road, North Road and East Warren Road. Class 3 roads are all other roads except state routes that are negotiable in all seasons. In most instances, regardless of classification, the town owns a 50-foot right-of-way (either as an easement or in fee simple) to accommodate town roads.

Waitsfield's roads are generally in good shape and adequate to accommodate current traffic volumes. While the town does not maintain a formal, long-term road improvement program, the Selectboard, Town Administrator and Road Commissioner have attempted to schedule road maintenance in an efficient and cost effective manner that minimizes year-to-year fluctuation in the municipal property tax rate.

Further, the Meadow Road bridge over the Mad River has been identified as deficient by the Selectboard and VTrans. A plan for the rehabilitation or replacement of that bridge has not been prepared, although such a plan could be expected within the next five years.

**Future Road Solutions.** In addition to road improvements needed to address current deficiencies, several projects have been identified as necessary to accommodate potential traffic growth as well as anticipated development in accordance with this plan.

The 2006 Waitsfield Village Parking and Pedestrian Circulation Study identified numerous design recommendations for the improvement of personal and vehicular transport within Waitsfield, as well as budgetary solutions, that should be considered as peak traffic increases and transportation challenges emerge. Those recommendations include but are not limited to the:

- ◆ Creation of defined visual gateways at the north and south entrances to Waitsfield; and
- ◆ Creation of increased community parking options near Bridge Street.

The 1997 Waitsfield Circulation and Access Management Plan detailed 15 strategies to minimize traffic impacts in Waitsfield Village and Irasville. The strategies included conceptual road connections designed to provide alternative local routes to support land use goals for Irasville and Waitsfield Village and to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety.

It is important to note that specific alignments for these alternative connections have not been formally identified by the town, and in many cases potentially affected landowners have not been involved in planning for possible routes. Such connections may take the form of collector roads serving through traffic, service roads creating a grid-network in village centers, or an interconnected network of rural roads providing alternative routes for local traffic.

The construction of these roads could take place in response to proposed private developments on land within the potential corridor, or through the public process of laying out and constructing town roads. Should the town choose the latter, an Official Map should be developed to provide a mechanism for acquiring future rights-of-way. Regardless of the mechanism used, future development should be designed in a manner that enables the alignment of interconnected routes in designated corridors.

**Class 4 Roads.** Unlike other town roads, Class 4 roads are not maintained for year-round travel. With important exceptions (e.g., minor portions of both Rolston Road and Old Center Fayston Road), most Class 4 road mileage is located within the town's Forest Reserve District and provides recreational opportunities and access for traditional forest-based land uses (e.g., forestry, hunting). Presently, the Selectboard has three management strategies for Class 4 roads: municipal winter maintenance without improving the road to class 3 status (Rolston Road); allowing private winter maintenance through a maintenance agreement (Palmer Hill Road); and no winter maintenance (most Class 4 roads).

Development on Class 4 roads may result in year-round use that require road upgrades and additional maintenance to allow for access by emergency vehicles. It can also interfere with recreational use. Options include regulating or prohibiting year-round development requiring such access, and/or downgrading selected Class 4 roads to legal trails. These options are especially important with regard to Class 4 roads that access properties located in the Forest Reserve District, where road policies should be consistent with the town's land use policies.

One exception to this, however, is the Rolston Road, which is located entirely within the Agricultural-Residential District and serves to link Route 100 with the East Warren Road. Maintaining this road for

year-round traffic is important for ensuring access between these two areas of town, especially in the event of damage to the Waitsfield covered bridge and/or the Meadow Road bridge.

**Road Maintenance.** The maintenance of the road system is the town's second largest annual expense, next to schools. In 2008, that expense was nearly \$500,000, with only 15 percent of the total funded through state aid to highways. The town maintains a road department staffed with three full-time employees, including the road foreman and two maintainers. They are also assisted by a volunteer road commissioner appointed annually by the Selectboard. The capital improvement program includes a schedule for replacing equipment. Reserve funds have been established to fund these acquisitions.

Recent flooding events (June 1990, May 2011, August 2011) have resulted in extensive damage to town road infrastructure. The frequency of flash flooding, the likelihood of such events forecast to increase in frequency and magnitude as a result of climate change, and the high costs associated with repairing or replacing undersized local transportation infrastructure, justify adoption of best practices for managing transportation infrastructure. Examples include new or replacement of existing structures using: (a) bridges; (b) larger diameter bottomless arch culverts; (c) culverts that are sized to convey a minimum Vermont Agency of Transportation design storm that allows for the passage of sediment, ice, and debris; and, (d) other road maintenance actions such as ditches and slopes, that are consistent with the town road and bridge standards described in the most recent Vermont Transportation Agency's Handbook for Local Officials. In addition to increasing the resilience of infrastructure to high flow events, and thereby reducing costs in the mid-to-long-term, such actions can also provide important ecological benefits by eliminating barriers to the movement of fish and other aquatic organisms (as required by the Federal Water Pollution Control Act), as well as terrestrial animals within and along stream corridors that roads cross.

**Scenic Roads.** The following roads have been identified as scenic:

- ◆ East Warren Road
- ◆ North Road
- ◆ Common Road
- ◆ Floodwoods Road

- ◆ East Road
- ◆ Meadow Road
- ◆ Brook Road
- ◆ Cross Road
- ◆ Palmer Hill Road
- ◆ Rolston Road
- ◆ Sherman Road
- ◆ Main Street (Route 100) north of Waitsfield Village District to the Moretown town line and south of the Irasville District to the Warren town line.

These are also depicted on Map 7 in Appendix B. While the reasons for designating a road as scenic are specific to each individual case, common features that contribute to a road's scenic character, including stone walls and canopy trees, are often found within the right-of-way. As such, they are susceptible to detrimental road maintenance practices, including removal, to accommodate widening, ditching and/or paving. The Selectboard approved a scenic roads policy and created a Scenic Roads Commission in 2006 in order to formalize review of road repairs, maintenance and upgrades that might affect the scenic nature of the designated roads.

Of particular relevance to the preservation of scenic roads is the question of whether existing gravel roads should be paved. This frequently involves work beyond resurfacing, including widening, ditching and upgrading the subsurface. To balance road maintenance and traffic safety needs with scenic preservation, a cost-benefit study that considers the aesthetic impacts of road improvements may be needed prior to the upgrade of a scenic road. Such analysis could be performed as part of a regular road program review.

**Covered Bridges.** Waitsfield maintains two covered bridges currently in use. Both are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The most heavily used bridge, which crosses the Mad River in Waitsfield Village, is reported to be the longest continuously used covered bridge in Vermont. Built in 1833, the Village bridge was last renovated in 2001. Given its 177 years of service, and the more than 2,000 cars which cross it on an average day, this bridge represents one of the better infrastructure investments made by the town over its long history. The Pine Brook covered bridge, built in 1870, has provided similar value.

**Private Roads.** With few exceptions, roads constructed within the past 30 years are privately owned and maintained. This relieves the town of construction costs and long-term maintenance responsibilities; yet it is still necessary to ensure that private roads meet minimum public standards for emergency access and safety, and do not adversely affect the public road network.

Standards for the development of private roads are addressed in the town's subdivision regulations. Such roads are typically maintained by a property or homeowners association, over which the town has little control. Given that public access can also be denied, the town should consider taking over private roads within designated village areas and/or where the entire community will benefit from an expansion of the town road network. Currently, the Selectboard may take over private roads provided such roads have been constructed to town standards.

**Mad River Byway.** The Mad River Byway is one of a collection of scenic Vermont roads recognized by the US Department of Transportation for their archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational or scenic qualities. It winds 36.5 miles through Middlesex, Moretown, Waitsfield, Buel's Gore, Fayston, Warren and Granville via Routes 2, 100, 100B and 17. The Mad River Byway designation bestowed in 2006 provides the opportunity to apply for federal funding for corridor management initiatives. Recently funded projects include the development of information kiosks, interpretive displays, wayfinding signage, and an information brochure. Future initiatives could include economic development efforts, village enhancements, tourism and recreation promotion, and multi-modal transportation improvements.

## 8.C TRAFFIC CONDITIONS AND SAFETY

**Traffic Congestion.** Waitsfield historically has been concerned about the high traffic volumes in town, especially along commercial sections of Route 100 where traffic volumes are at their highest (see Figure 8-2).

The town, through the memorandum of understanding with other Mad River Valley towns and Sugarbush Resort, has attempted to control traffic at key intersections during peak weekend hours throughout the ski season with the aid of traffic control officers from the Washington County Sheriff's Department.

This has been an effective traffic management practice in past years.

Another strategy to ease traffic congestion is the construction of alternative routes as discussed above. The benefits of this strategy were made apparent with the construction of the alternative access to Mad River Green shopping center in 1999, which has served to reduce congestion at the access immediately across from Irasville Common., Maintaining a viable transit system and improving pedestrian and bicycle circulation would also reduce automobile congestion within Irasville and Waitsfield Village.

For large special events, traffic control arrangements may be required as a condition of the Public Festival Permit issued by the Selectboard under the Public Festival Ordinance. This program ensures that traffic safety is maintained during periods of uncharacteristically high traffic.

Finally, reviewing development proposals to ensure that they will not overburden the capacity of existing roads and intersections is an important traffic management tool. Generally, intersections outside of the town's villages should be maintained at an above-average level of service (LOS) during the design hour. (LOS refers primarily to the time required to navigate an intersection at peak and non-peak times of day.) A reduction to average or below average service may be appropriate in some instances within the villages. Private developers that propose projects that will exceed capacity may be required to mitigate the impact of their development and/or fund necessary improvements to increase road and intersection capacity.

**Truck Traffic.** Another growing controversy involving local roads is the conflict between large trucks traveling on rural town roads and the residential and scenic nature of those roads. This conflict is likely to intensify as more residential development occurs in rural sections of Waitsfield. According to trip generation rates, every single family home can be expected to generate approximately 10 automobile trips per day on adjacent roads. Therefore, not only will residential development serve to intensify the interaction of commercial trucks and automobiles, the greatest cause of increased traffic on town roads will undoubtedly be residential development.

Truck traffic, moreover, raises special issues related to greater wear on public roads and the impact on the quiet character of residential neighborhoods. Due to

load restrictions on several bridges, including both covered bridges, most truck traffic uses the Tremblay Road/North Road/Common Road/East Warren Road to access most of the town east of Route 100.

**Access Management.** The frequency, location and design of highway accesses, or curb cuts, has a direct bearing on the safety and efficiency of both town roads and state highways. Issues associated with access management were addressed in detail in the aforementioned Waitsfield Circulation and Access Management Plan. That plan identified several techniques for managing highway access, most of which may be applied through the town's land use regulations, and road policies and ordinances. These include requirements for:

The frequency, location and design of highway accesses, or curb cuts, has a direct bearing on the safety and efficiency of both town roads and state highways. Issues associated with access management were addressed in detail in the aforementioned Waitsfield Circulation and Access Management Plan. That plan identified several techniques for managing highway access, most of which may be applied through the town's land use regulations, and road policies and ordinances. These include requirements for:

- ◆ Minimum sight distances at driveway or street intersections;
- ◆ Maximum number of driveways per lot;
- ◆ Mandatory shared driveways;
- ◆ Maximum curb-cut widths;
- ◆ Minimum and maximum driveway lengths;
- ◆ The installation of turning lanes;
- ◆ Easements to allow for future road extensions or connections to adjoining lots;
- ◆ Minimum or maximum on-site parking, shared-parking, and parking design;
- ◆ Minimum areas for loading and unloading; and
- ◆ Curbing, landscaping, and buffers to visually define and enhance access points.

Approval by the Selectboard is required for access onto town roads, and by VTrans for access onto state highways. To receive approval, the access also must be consistent with local land use regulations. Continued attention to access management by the Development Review Board will balance the needs

of motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists and improve safety and highway efficiency.

**Traffic Calming.** Techniques to maintain relatively slow traffic speeds in settled areas, enhance pedestrian safety, and improve the overall environment are often referred to as "traffic calming." Such techniques include narrowing vehicle traffic lanes, widening or installing sidewalks, and adding medians, on-street parking, roundabouts, raised and/or textured pedestrian crosswalks, bulb-outs, street trees and street furniture. Traffic calming is important in a variety of contexts:

- ◆ At busy intersections where pedestrian crossings may conflict with traffic flow and turning movements;
- ◆ Along Main Street (Route 100) within Waitsfield and Irasville, where traffic volumes are high, but pedestrian traffic and circulation is encouraged; and
- ◆ Along neighborhood or rural residential roads, to reduce traffic speeds and maintain the road surface.

The 2000 Waitsfield Street Tree Master Plan establishes detailed planting plans for the Route 100 corridor through Irasville and Waitsfield Village. Sidewalks, cross-walks, curbs, and on-street parking areas need to be more clearly defined in Waitsfield Village, and established in Irasville, as called for in the 2007 Irasville Master Plan. Traffic calming measures will be incorporated in the town's sidewalk project, described below, and should be considered in any improvements to Route 100 and connecting side streets within designated village areas.

**Parking.** The town, through its zoning regulations, requires that most land uses provide off-street parking. In some areas, including some properties in Irasville, this has resulted in excessive paved area. To alleviate this, the town's land use regulations were revised to provide the Development Review Board with greater discretion regarding the amount of parking required. While ensuring that private developments are able to accommodate the resulting demand for parking, greater use of shared parking facilities, including municipal lots, and on-street parking would create a more efficient development pattern. It may be appropriate to further reduce parking requirements where shared parking and/or transit service is provided.

Waitsfield Village, to a much greater degree than Irasville, has benefited from municipal parking (adjacent to the Masonic Lodge), shared parking (Bridge Street Marketplace) and on-street parking (on Bridge Street and Route 100). Additional opportunities for public parking should be explored in Waitsfield behind the Joslin Library and Federated Church, behind the Village Grocery on Parsonage Lane, and on Old County Road (also known as Loop Road).

In Irasville, greater use of on-street and shared parking, coupled with an expanded sidewalk network, should be incorporated into future master planning. In both village centers, better information signs and improved sidewalk connections would make better use of existing parking areas and reduce the need for additional parking associated with new development.

In addition to local parking needs, no formal commuter lot exists in the Mad River Valley, although several informal areas are used. The development of a safe, convenient commuter lot in an appropriate location should be explored.

## 8.D TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

**Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel.** Enhancing opportunities for local pedestrian and bicycle travel offers many benefits to the community. These include increasing opportunities for interaction between local businesses and customers; reducing traffic congestion, air pollution, and our collective reliance on non-renewable fossil fuels; fostering healthy living; providing recreational amenities for residents and visitors; and reinforcing historic, pedestrian-scale settlement patterns.

Waitsfield has encouraged efficient and safe pedestrian travel within Waitsfield Village and Irasville. In 1993, the town began planning with VTrans to upgrade and extend existing sidewalks, and to pave bicycle lanes, along Route 100 from Bragg Hill Road to the elementary school. Construction is anticipated in 2012.

Additional extensions to link this sidewalk with nearby commercial and residential uses should be pursued, as called for in the Irasville Master Plan. As Irasville develops, pedestrian facilities, including interconnecting sidewalks and a non-motorized “greenway,” should serve as dominant organizational elements. To support non-motorized travel, it is important that safe pedestrian crosswalks be installed at appropriate locations along Route 100.

The Mad River Path Association has made significant progress toward the establishment of an interconnected network of walking, hiking and bicycling paths in the Mad River Valley, including a system of paths linking The Valley’s villages and schools. A key element of this network is the Mad River Greenway, a path that parallels the Mad River on the north end of Waitsfield. Already widely used as a transportation and recreation resource, when extended, the Mad River Path will serve as an important pedestrian and bicycle connection from Waitsfield Village to Moretown Village and Harwood to the north, Fayston Elementary School and area ski resorts to the west, and Warren Village to the south.

Two other main sections of the path in Waitsfield have been completed. One section in Irasville links the Skatium to the town-owned pond. The Bridge Street connection runs behind the buildings in historic Waitsfield from the covered bridge to an old dam impoundment near the river’s infamous “S” turn and then up to Rt. 100 where it joins the Irasville section. The Austin Walk, originating at Lareau Swimming Hole, was constructed in 2010. Continuing to work with the Mad River Path Association to extend the path from Moretown to Warren, through acquisition, easements or landowner agreements, is encouraged as the town is supportive of the association’s efforts to complete and permanently protect the Mad River Path.

Waitsfield also is fortunate to possess many miles of informal walking paths and trails. Class 4 roads provide excellent walking opportunities, especially in the Northfield Range where Class 4 roads such as the Bowen, Palmer Hill, East and Sherman Roads offer access to the largely undeveloped mountains. Also, the Dana Hill Road serves the Howe Block of the Camel’s Hump State Forest.

In addition to Class 4 roads, many miles of private logging roads and trails are available to the public through the generosity of landowners. However, private roads are often at risk of being posted; public access may be prohibited as landowner-user conflicts arise.

In the future, the town should consider formalizing many of these informal trails through the dedication of permanent easements as residents have expressed strong support for a linked trail network. The continuing subdivision of land poses both a risk to this

informal network and an opportunity to obtain path easements as a condition to subdivision approval. In addition, public education to discourage inconsiderate recreational use of private trails (e.g., littering, leaving gates open), is important if local residents are to continue to benefit from the generosity of landowners.

Another method of formalizing trails on private property is the use of temporary easements; a practice the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) has used with much success. The VAST network includes a number of winter-use trails along the Mad River north of Waitsfield Village, with links to the Green Mountain Range in Fayston and over Northfield Gap east of the river.

**Local Transit.** Waitsfield, together with other Mad River Valley towns, has long supported the operation of an effective transit service. The 2003 Short Range Transit Plan for the Central Vermont Region recommended five transit routes, two of which (a spine from Warren to Waitsfield and a commuter link) would be year-round. The three other routes would provide seasonal service to the ski resorts. A fair number of respondents to the 2009 Town Plan survey showed interest in providing year-round transit service. The Mad River Valley Transportation Advisory Committee (MRVTAC), formed under the auspices of Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, continues to work to bring year-round transit services to the Valley.

Several different entities have provided public transportation service in the Mad River Valley since 1999. In 2003, Green Mountain Transit Agency absorbed service in The Valley, which had been named Mad Bus in 2001, and GMTA continues to run it today. They provided year-round service connecting Warren, Waitsfield, and Lincoln Peak from October 2003 until April 2005, at which time it was scaled back to seasonal service due to low ridership. Since 2005, GMTA has sought funding for a year-round commuter route between the Mad River Valley and other central Vermont communities but its requests were not funded because the projected ridership was deemed insufficient to warrant the expenditure.

The Mad Bus winter ski season route operations are funded through federal, state and local funds. Approximately 85% of the local funds come from Sugarbush and the remainder comes from contributions



from local establishments. The numerous Mad Bus routes, all free of charge except for the SnowCap Commuter, serve visitors and residents in the Mad River Valley who seek alternative transportation to work, play, or shop.

GMTA also provides medical transportation service to those who qualify either for Medicaid, Elderly and Disabled funds, or both. GMTA collaborates with area organizations, such as the Central Vermont Council on Aging, to offer rides for medical treatment, meal site programs, senior center, and shopping trips through volunteer drivers and/or cab service.

Additional commuting options for Waitsfield residents can be found on the State of Vermont's commuting and ridesharing resource, Go Vermont (<http://www.connectingcommuters.org/>). Go Vermont is a free matching service designed to connect commuters interested in a variety of ridesharing options including carpools and vanpools.

**Rail and Air.** Amtrak passenger rail service to several New England cities, New York City and Washington D.C. is available in Waterbury Village and Montpelier. The nearest air passenger and freight services are located at the Burlington International Airport in South Burlington, and the state-owned E.F. Knapp Airport in Berlin. The Warren Airport—a private, seasonal airport in Warren used primarily for recreational purposes, including commercial soaring—also provides air transportation options.

**Table 8-1: Waitsfield Road Classifications**

	Mileage	Function	Aid
State Highways (Rts. 100 & 17)	7.83	Arterial	Federal/Primary
Class 2 Town Highways	9.45	Collector	Federal/Secondary
Class 3 Town Highways	20.22	Local Access	Town/State
Class 4 Town Highways	7.16	Access/Recreation	Town
Legal Trail	0.60	Recreation	Town
Private Road		Local Access	Private

Source: VTrans

## 8.E GOAL

- 8.E-1 A safe, efficient, convenient, and environmentally responsible transportation network for all Waitsfield residents, visitors and businesses.

## 8.F POLICIES

- 8.F-1 Pursue a program of multi-modal transportation planning which integrates road and infrastructure improvements with land use, housing, economic development and resource protection goals and policies, and which is coordinated with surrounding towns and the region.
- 8.F-2 Maintain covered bridges for continued use in their present locations.
- 8.F-3 Maintain and reconstruct roads to accommodate new development in accordance with the Vermont State Standards for the Design of Transportation Construction, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of Freeways, Roads & Streets. As provided in those standards, road and highway improvement projects shall be designed in a manner that is sensitive to the setting and context of the highway segment. Improvements within village centers shall be designed in a manner that reinforces the scale and character of the village(s), promotes safe pedestrian and bicycle circulation and incorporates traffic calming
- 8.F-4 Maintain the safety and efficiency of state highways and town roads through appropriate traffic control strategies and devices, including continued use of traffic control officers during peak periods provided

by Sugarbush Resort during peak ski days and/or other entities during large events and activities that generate high traffic volumes.

- 8.F-5 Maintained and improve town roads on an as-needed basis as determined by the Selectboard and Road Commissioner. Significant capital improvements shall be scheduled in advance through the capital budgeting process. Explore establishment of a transportation reserve fund to provide matching funds for priority projects as opportunities arise.
- 8.F-6 Maintain the safety and efficiency of state highways and town roads through strict access management provisions administered through local land use and development regulations.
- 8.F-7 Prohibit development and land uses that would adversely impact traffic safety, the condition of town roads or over-burden road capacity unless appropriate mitigating actions can be implemented.
- 8.F-8 Continue to regulate traffic access, circulation and parking for all proposed non-residential land uses through conditional use and subdivision review.
- 8.F-9 Continue to require, through conditional use review and/or subdivision review, that new private roads meet the town's road standards.
- 8.F-10 Continue to require, through curb cut permits and land use regulations, that all new roads and all private road and driveway intersections with town roads meet minimum safety and design standards.
- 8.F-11 Ensure that expansion of the town's road network occurs in an integrated and coordinated manner; specific road connections, described in this plan, should be pursued by the town in conjunction with private developers.
- 8.F-12 Maintain scenic roads to protect, to the extent possible, those features located within the right-of-way which contribute to the roads scenic features (e.g., canopy trees, stone walls); pavement of gravel roads should only occur if necessary to ensure road safety and if no economic alternative exists.

**Table 8-2: Average Annual Daily Traffic**

	2010	2008	2006	2004	2002	2000	1998	1996	1994	1992	1990	1988	1986
<b>Route 17</b>													
Fayston Town Line to Route 100	3,700	3,700	3,800	3,500	3,400	3,800	3,000	3,000	2,710	3,880	1,830	2,430	2,910
<b>Route 100</b>													
Warren Town Line to Route 17	4,800	5,100	5,300	5,300	5,800	4,700	4,900	4,400	4,190	4,110	3,970	4,260	4,360
Route 17 to Mad River Green	7,200	7,300	7,600	8,300	8,100	6,500	6,700	6,000	5,730	5,220	5,040	5,410	5,530
Mad River Green to Bridge Street	7,100	7,200	7,800	8,600	8,400	8,700	8,400	7,000	7,820	5,825	5,630	6,040	6,180
Bridge Street to North Fayston Road	6,200	6,100	7,000	7,100	6,400	7,100	6,900	5,200	5,890	5,095	4,920	5,300	5,420
North Fayston Road to Moretown Town Line	6,100	6,000	6,000	6,100	5,500	6,600	6,900	5,100	4,380	5,000	4,855	5,210	5,150

Source: VTtrans

- |        |  |        |   |
|--------|--|--------|---|
| 8.F-13 | Ensure that development within scenic road corridors is designed so as to protect the identified scenic features within those corridors (e.g., open fields, ridge lines and hilltops, historic structures or districts). Protection measures shall be implemented through the town's land use and development regulations.   |        | transportation and recreation plan for Waitsfield and the Mad River Valley. To this end, the efforts of the Mad River Path Association are strongly endorsed.   |
| 8.F-14 | Reclassify Class 4 roads, or substantially upgrade such roads to make them accessible to automobiles on a year-round basis, only if such upgrade does not result in the loss of existing recreation values and is in accordance with the town's adopted Class 4 Road Policy. The upgrade and/or reclassification of Class 4 roads shall not be permitted to allow year-round vehicular access and land development within the Forest Reserve District. | 8.F-17 | Encourage, through the subdivision review process, the dedication of easements to permanently protect pathways and trail connections for non-motorized use.   |
| 8.F-15 | Provide an interconnected network of sidewalks and other pedestrian and bicycle paths in Irasville and Waitsfield Village, including incorporation of identified road and sidewalk connections into development and subdivision plans. New development shall provide such sidewalks and paths to be connected to existing or planned facilities.   | 8.F-18 | Maintain and expand support for the continued operation of a transit system linking Waitsfield Village and Irasville with the Mad River Valley's ski areas and regional population and employment centers. To this end, shelters and designated stops, sidewalks and park & ride facilities within village centers should be created and/or expanded. |
| 8.F-16 | Support the creation of an integrated walking path network—through acquisition, easements or use of landowner agreements— linking Waitsfield Village and Irasville with Mad River Valley schools, and the village centers of Warren to the south and Moretown to the north, and other community centers and resources, including the Lareau Swimhole, Skatium and Harwood Union High School, as part of the  | 8.F-19 | Install and maintain safe, well marked bicycle lanes along Route 100, Route 17 and, to the extent practical, along paved class 2 town roads.  |
|        |  | 8.F-20 | Support flexibility in the town land use regulations for parking lot design, parking space sizing, and space requirements to promote compact parking footprints. Consider requiring pervious surface for parking that will be used infrequently or only at peak times.  |
|        |  | 8.F-21 | Create parking districts to maintain public parking in Waitsfield Village and Irasville.  |
|        |  | 8.F-22 | Continue to coordinate transportation planning with other Mad River Valley municipalities and the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission with   |

- priority for the following routes (in order of priority): Waitsfield/Warren, Waitsfield/Moretown, Waitsfield/Montpelier.
- 8.F-23 Involve landowners likely to be affected by major transportation construction projects early in the project planning process.
- 8.F-24 Use road maintenance practices that factor in the frequency of flash flooding, the increased frequency and magnitude of high storm flows resulting from climate change, and the high costs associated with repairing or replacing undersized transportation infrastructure. Those road maintenance practices incorporate road and bridge standards from the Vermont Transportation Agency's Handbook for Local Officials and the guidelines from the Vermont Better Backroads Program for maintaining water quality.
- 8.F-25 Identify "visible" Ancient Roads prior to 2015 and decide which, if any, should be added to the Town's inventory of roads and legal trails for the state's Certificate of Highway Mileage
- 8.G-4 Work with other Mad River Valley towns, CVRPC, and VTrans to ensure that the function of Route 100 as a primary road is supported and that corridor issues are addressed in a cooperative manner. [Planning Commission, Town TAC representative, Selectboard]
- 8.G-5 Develop a clear class 4 road policy which identifies under what circumstances such roads may be upgraded, maintained and/or reclassified in accordance with the policies set forth above. [Selectboard, Planning Commission]
- 8.G-6 Encourage, through the subdivision review process, the dedication of easements to permanently protect pathways and trail connections for non-motorized use. [Planning Commission]
- 8.G-7 Work to ensure that the Mad River Valley transit system, initiated in 1999, is continued and expanded as needed. To this end, other policies and tasks which support the transit system, such as reinforcing compact growth centers, creating adequate parking areas (to serve as park and ride facilities) and improving pedestrian opportunities, should be pursued in an integrated manner. [Planning Commission, Town TAC representative, MRVPD\*, Selectboard]

## 8.G TASKS

- 8.G-1 Continue regional transportation planning through the Mad River Valley Planning District, the Central Vermont Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), and Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission. [Planning Commission, TAC representative, town MRVPD representatives, Selectboard]
- 8.G-2 In conjunction with Sugarbush Resort, review on an annual basis the need for traffic control officers and/or devices during peak traffic periods at the Route 100/Route 17 intersections and the entrance to Mad River Green and Village Square shopping centers. [Planning Commission, Selectboard]
- 8.G-3 Complete the planned construction of the Route 100 sidewalk, and consider the extension of the sidewalk and path network in Irasville and Waitsfield Village. [Planning Commission, MRVPD representatives, Selectboard, Mad River Path Association\*]
- 8.G-8 Review proposed road and highway improvement projects and encourage the incorporation of dedicated bicycle lanes wherever possible. [Planning Commission, Selectboard]
- 8.G-9 Evaluate truck circulation within the community and consider policies or actions to prevent or mitigate adverse impacts, including designated truck routes. [Road Commissioner, Selectboard]
- 8.G-10 Prepare and implement a traffic calming plan for Waitsfield Village and Irasville [Planning Commission, Selectboard, Tree Board]

## 9 | Energy

### 9.A OVERVIEW

Historically most of Waitsfield's energy needs were met locally—forests were felled for fuel, the Mad River was dammed for hydropower, and the annual harvest relied on the physical labors of man and beast. Twentieth century modernization, in the form of the electric light bulb and the internal combustion engine, transformed local energy consumption. Rural electrification connected the town to an expanding power grid, and an ever growing reliance on fossil fuels for home heating and cooling, electricity, and transportation linked the town to the global energy market.

International events, disruptions in oil supplies, and the rising costs of gasoline and heating oil are harsh reminders that such heavy reliance on these finite energy sources is not sustainable. Local businesses and residents of limited means are especially vulnerable to market conditions and fuel shortages. The cost of energy derived from fossil fuels has and will continue to increase as we move toward and pass peak production of oil and gas reserves. In addition, foreign fuel sources are unstable, and subject to huge price swings and supply shortages beyond our control.

Recognition of the threat of climate change has increased in the last ten years. Current patterns of energy consumption are widely understood to produce emissions that contribute to global warming. As a result, there is heightened interest nationally and statewide in the development of solar, wind and other low-emission, renewable energy resources and more fuel efficient and alternative fuel vehicles. Motor vehicles are the state's largest source of toxic and carcinogenic air pollutants. Based on annual per capita vehicle miles traveled, the average vehicle emits around a half ton of pollution each year. Vehicle emissions, even at low levels, pose a threat to local health, contribute to acid rain, and can cause widespread damage to crops and forests. Over the past decade, an increasing number of electric and flexible fuel vehicles have come on the market as viable alternatives to the traditional combustion engine.

Reliable, affordable and sustainable sources of energy are vital to Waitsfield's economy, social well-being, and future development. At present, factors

influencing energy cost and availability are largely beyond the control of the local community. The town's energy future is inextricably linked with energy policies and economic forces at the state, federal, and international levels. Waitsfield, however, can influence the community's energy outlook by taking steps to:

- ◆ Promote energy conservation and increased energy efficiency, e.g., through building energy audits, weatherization and equipment replacement;
- ◆ Encourage or require lot layouts and building siting, design and construction techniques that maximize access to onsite renewable energy resources and incorporate emerging technologies;
- ◆ Diversify our local renewable energy portfolio beyond wood, to include appropriately sited solar, hydro, and wind power development; and
- ◆ Provide safe and convenient alternatives to automobile travel for local trips.

### 9.B ENERGY SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Overall energy demand continues to increase despite rising energy costs, and increased energy efficiencies resulting from technological improvements. This is largely due to the amount of driving we do (transportation fuel consumption) and an increase in the electronic appliances, equipment and gadgets we use (electricity use). Statewide energy consumption is tracked by the Vermont Department of Public Service and Efficiency Vermont. The department updated the state's comprehensive energy plan, "The Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan", which was adopted on December 15, 2011. Local energy consumption is tracked annually to a limited extent by the Mad River Valley Planning District.

**Electricity.** Green Mountain Power Corporation (GMP), a subsidiary of the Québec energy company Gaz Métro, is the second largest electric utility in the state and the primary supplier of electricity to the town. GMP serves all of Waitsfield except for a small area along the North Fayston and Airport Roads, which is supplied by Washington Electric Coop.

GMP acquires energy from a variety of traditional and renewable sources, including HydroQuebec and

the Vermont Yankee nuclear facility. Vermont finalized negotiations with HydroQuebec in 2010 for a power purchase agreement that will provide nearly one-third of the state's energy needs through 2038. This agreement will ensure a future supply of relatively low-emission electricity to the state, at prices that are competitive with those in neighboring states. As this plan is being written, the future of Vermont Yankee is less certain. Initially scheduled to close in 2012, Vermont Yankee recently received a federal license renewal to extend its operations through 2032. Entergy Corporation, the plant's current owner, is challenging the state's legal authority to require plant closure in 2012.

GMP is actively pursuing alternative sources of electricity to offset anticipated lost power generation from the eventual closure of Vermont Yankee, and to strengthen its renewable energy portfolio, as outlined in its 2007 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). GMP has since signed an agreement to purchase power from the Seabrook nuclear plant in New Hampshire and is actively developing other sources, including in-state renewables. GMP recently made an offer to purchase Central Vermont Public Service (CVPS), the state's largest utility, subject to Vermont Public Service Board approval.

The primary transmission line serving the Mad River Valley is a 34.5 kV line that enters Waitsfield from Northfield, in the vicinity of the Northfield Gap Road. Power is distributed locally through a substation in Irasville (#39) that serves nearly three thousand meters. The local system was last upgraded in the 1980s and has some remaining reserve capacity—no major transmission or distribution system improvements are planned over the next five years.

GMP does plan to replace existing electric meters with digital wireless “smart meters” through its smart grid program, GMPConnects. When GMPConnects is up and running it will use fiber optic cable and digital technology to relay information back and forth between individual customers, Green Mountain Power, and electric grid components – including information about equipment performance, electric demand and use. GMP has also installed three public charging stations for electric vehicles in Vermont (the closest in Montpelier) under a pilot program, “GM-PEV”, to promote statewide electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure. Information is available to communities on station siting and permitting considerations

and suggested performance criteria. A local initiative, entitled MRVEV, is exploring the possibility of creating an all-electric vehicle car share in the Mad River Valley.

Total electricity demand in Waitsfield varied between 16,000 and 16,500 megawatt hours (MWh) annually from 2004 through 2008. Waitsfield accounts for 25% of the Mad River Valley's electricity consumption, and 18% of the county total. Local demand is evenly divided between residential and commercial uses. Average household consumption in 2008 was 7,003 kWh—down 3% from 2004, in part due to reported efficiency savings. The town's peak electric load occurs during the winter months, indicating that a number of buildings still rely, at least partially, on electricity for heating (2009 Mad River Valley Energy Study, Vermont Renewable Energy Atlas). Electricity remains the most costly form of space heating, with propane now running a close second (VT Fuel Price Report, May 2011).

**Fuel.** The Mad River Valley Planning District recently compared 2008 electricity and transportation energy consumption for each town by calculating the equivalent in MWh of fuel consumed. Waitsfield's transportation fuel consumption equaled 35,040 MWh—more than twice its electrical consumption (2010 MRVPD Annual Report). This underscores the fact that our collective reliance on motor vehicles, and our individual driving habits, are in large part responsible for much of our energy consumption and associated environmental impacts.

Vermont has no petroleum infrastructure, and relies on external sources for transportation and most home-heating fuel supplies. Three local oil and gas distributors supply Waitsfield residences and businesses. Fuel prices continue to fluctuate, but have increased dramatically over the past year – especially for regular unleaded gasoline (36%) and heating fuel oil (35%)—while the federal government has proposed cutting home heating assistance for low income households (LIHEAP) by 50% in FY12.

Available data indicate that over the past two decades Waitsfield households have increased the number of vehicles they own and the number of per capita miles they drive (Table 9-2). The US Bureau of Transportation Statistics reports that the number of registered vehicles in Vermont rose by 6% while the total miles driven by Vermonters increased 16.6% from 1998 to

2007. Light trucks (pick-ups, vans and sport utility vehicles), with lower fuel efficiency than most automobiles, now comprise a larger percentage of vehicles on the road. This suggests that our aggregate fuel efficiency is decreasing, leading to increased transport fuel consumption and fuel emissions.

Table 9-4 shows that the overwhelming majority of employed town residents (81%) commute to work alone – and that the number of single drivers has increased steadily since 1980, while the number of local carpoolers has declined. The average estimated commute time for Waitsfield workers is now around 21 minutes (American Community Survey, 2005-09). There are few alternatives available; public transit serving the Mad River Valley runs only during winter months. Travel between home and work accounts for a significant portion of local transportation energy consumption—a characteristic of most rural communities in the United States. Given rising fuels prices, this also suggests that transportation costs represent a significant and increasing burden to many local households.

Census data also provide limited information on the types of fuel used by town residents for home heating. The data suggest a major shift during the 1990s from the use of wood as a primary heating source to the use of gas (bottled, tank or LP). By 2000, more than 50% of occupied housing units in town were heated with gas. Census estimates through 2009 suggest that this is still the case—half of Waitsfield's occupied households heat with gas, while most others (30%) use fuel oil. Only 10% of local households now use wood as their primary heating source. The shift to gas for space heating over the past two decades reflects a statewide trend tied to new home construction, which is incorporating cleaner, more energy efficient fuels and heating systems. Many homes built in the 1960s and 1970s relied on inefficient electric heat, a practice that is generally no longer allowed under state energy standards for residential construction. These standards apply to all new homes and additions over 500 square feet.

Although it remains an important supplemental source of heat for many Waitsfield households, the use of wood tends to fluctuate in relation to the price of oil and gas, and local availability. A 2009 survey conducted by the Community Biomass Project, which included Waitsfield households, indicates that the use of wood may be increasing in relation to

rising gas and fuel oil prices—72% of survey respondents reported using cordwood during the 2008-09 winter season, averaging 4.3 cords per household. New wood stoves and furnaces, if properly installed and maintained, provide effective and efficient home heating. Outdoor wood furnaces are also gaining in popularity and, like woodstoves, are now regulated for air quality.

The economic, social and environmental consequences of such heavy reliance on fossil fuels have prompted state efforts to diversify Vermont's energy portfolio to include in the mix more efficient natural gas systems, cogeneration systems that produce electricity and heat, and greater reliance on renewable energy sources including wood, wind and solar power.

### **9.C ENERGY EFFICIENCY & CONSERVATION**

Energy conservation, by reducing energy consumption, increases available energy supplies. The state's energy conservation efforts in recent years have very successfully focused on demand side management to increase energy efficiency and reduce overall energy demand. Efficiency Vermont, the state's energy efficiency utility, offers a number of programs and financial incentives for local government, businesses and residents to increase energy efficiencies and reduce energy costs. The state has also enacted energy efficiency standards for commercial and residential construction that are administered through the Vermont Department of Public Service.

The need for energy efficiency and conservation is also recognized locally. Widespread participation by local residents in the 2009 Vermont Community Energy Mobilization pilot project helped bring energy efficiency improvements and direct savings to almost seventy Mad River Valley homes. The all-volunteer project brought together dozens of local volunteers and was supported by free products, training and other resources provided by Efficiency Vermont.

Waitsfield has an Energy Coordinator and an Energy Committee, appointed in 2007, who have contributed significantly to local energy efficiency and conservation efforts. With the support of the Select Board, town staff and other parties, the Energy Committee is addressing energy efficiency needs in municipal buildings. Comprehensive energy audits of the Joslin Memorial Library, the General Wait House, and the Waitsfield/Fayston Fire Station led to energy-saving

improvements at all three buildings. Re-insulation of the library attic, primarily funded by a Vermont Community Climate Change Grant, greatly diminished heat loss in that building. Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grants in excess of \$60,000, secured in 2010 through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, funded energy retrofit projects at the town garage, fire station and General Wait House.

The town in 2011 voted to establish its own energy reserve fund, with an initial allocation of \$5000, for future municipal energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Prior to this energy retrofits included in the capital budget were funded through annual operating funds.

## 9.D RENEWABLE ENERGY

The potential for renewable energy resources in Waitsfield include woody biomass, wind, solar and hydropower. As a result of rising fuel prices, new technologies, and the ability of utility customers to sell excess power back to the grid via net metering, renewable energy systems have become more economically viable. Federal and state subsidies, including tariffs and tax credits, allow renewable energy projects to better compete with heavily subsidized fossil fuel and nuclear energy development.

**Biomass.** For much of Waitsfield's history, wood was the principal local source of household heat. Although only 10% of local households currently use wood as their primary heating source, it remains a relatively low cost alternative to fuel oil and natural gas. There is increased interest statewide in using woody biomass – including wood chips and pellets made from low grade wood and sawmill waste – for heating, electricity, and combined heat and power applications. There is currently one woodchip/pellet supplier in town.

Waitsfield also has a large amount of forested land which, under effective management, could provide a sustainable source of energy in the future. The Biomass Energy Resource Center has estimated the net available low grade (NALG) wood supply that can be sustainably harvested for each town in Vermont, using a model developed with the Department of Forests Parks and Recreation and the Vermont Center for Geographic Information. Under this model Waitsfield's "woodshed" was mapped at 7,325 acres, which could generate up to 18,000 green tons of low

grade wood annually, with moderate harvesting on public land and little harvesting on private parcels less than 50 acres. This yield could potentially generate 126,000 BTU of thermal heat or 9,000 MWh of electricity annually.

The Community Biomass Project, a three-year research project of the University of Vermont, Vermont Family Forests, and the Northern Forest Alliance, conducted a more detailed analysis of potential woody biomass production in five Mad River Valley towns, including Waitsfield. According to project studies, the town's total reported annual harvest of cordwood from 2005 through 2008 was 861 cords – an average of 215 cords (or 517 green tons) annually—representing 10% or less of annual low-grade wood production. Related modeling more conservatively estimated that the five Mad River Valley towns could sustainably generate between 23,000 and 50,000 green tons of low quality wood per year (2009 Community Biomass Project wood harvest and assessment reports).

Extensive harvesting, if not properly managed, can lead to environmental degradation and decreased forest health through nutrient loss, increased storm water runoff and soil erosion, stream sedimentation, water pollution, habitat loss, and the reduction in quality of the Mad River Valley's scenic viewshed. Woodlot management, and adherence to accepted state management practices for logging operations, reduce the adverse impacts of harvesting, and can enhance the capacity of local forests to meet a variety of community and landowner objectives.

The Energy Committee is discussing recent study findings regarding the Mad River Valley's woody biomass resource—i.e., firewood, chips, and pellet material—as distinct from timber saw logs. The data gathered will help the town and communities throughout the region better manage this resource should the demand for local woody biomass increase. The committee is also investigating options to use a portion of the available fuel source to heat local buildings, municipal and otherwise. Several Washington County schools, including Harwood Union High School, have transitioned to wood (chip or pellet) heating systems under Vermont's "Fuels for Schools" program. Automated wood-fired systems are proving to be an affordable heating alternative to conventional systems in such settings.

Other potential, but more limited, sources of biomass energy include waste vegetable oil from local restaurants, grass and oil seed production. It is estimated that the 2,000 acres of agricultural soil in town best suited for canola, soybean and sunflower oil production could yield more than 100,000 gallons of oil annually (Vermont Renewable Energy Atlas).

**Hydropower.** The Mad River and its tributaries once supplied water power for Waitsfield's earliest industries. Today these industries are gone, and while a hydro facility still exists downstream in Moretown, none currently operate in town.

There may be potential in the town for small scale "micro-hydro" development that supplies individual users, but the Mad River lacks the deep gorges and falls that are necessary to support larger, commercial operations. Also, while hydropower is often cited as a clean energy source, the environmental impacts of dam construction, operation and management—including the effects of changing water levels on river flow, stream habitat, water quality, and adjoining riparian areas—are not as benign as once thought and are given greater consideration in state and federal dam licensing proceedings.

**Solar.** The contribution of solar energy to Waitsfield's total energy supply is growing. More structures are being sited, oriented and designed to incorporate passive solar construction techniques for space heating and natural lighting. Passive solar building design and solar thermal heating systems can significantly increase energy efficiencies and reduce costs. Until recently, the upfront costs of solar photovoltaic (PV) systems were generally too costly for the average homeowner, but emerging technologies and state, federal and utility incentives have made grid connected net-metered PV systems more affordable.

As of July 2011, the Public Service Board had issued certificates of public good for 21 net-metered solar PV installations in Waitsfield, ranging in capacity from 2.5 to 142 kW, with a total reported generating capacity of 392 kW. This includes a certificate issued in 2010 (CPG NM-1133) for a 72.28 kW municipal system that was to be installed at the town garage property on Tremblay Road, but did not go forward for a number of reasons, including changes to proposed power purchase agreements. The Energy Committee, who worked diligently on this project,

continues to support a municipal renewable energy installation that will help offset energy costs.

Technological advances, including the incorporation of photovoltaic components in roofing and siding materials, may make solar power an even more viable source of electricity in the near future. An initial GIS analysis done for the Vermont Renewable Energy Atlas identified 968 building sites in Waitsfield that are potentially suitable for roof-mounted solar arrays and 687 acres that may be suitable for ground-mount solar (Vermont Renewable Energy Access).

The siting of some existing solar installations, particularly along Route 100 (the federally designated Mad River Byway) has raised concerns about the impacts that such facilities can have on the town's scenic, historic and agricultural resources. As a result, the Planning Commission has developed community siting standards, for consideration by the municipality and the Public Service Board, that are intended to avoid and mitigate potential impacts of facility development, while promoting new installations in appropriate locations.

**Wind Power.** Wind power, like hydro and solar power, is a low-emission energy source that is not depleted with use. Several years ago, the Vermont Department of Public Service conducted a statewide wind resource assessment, including the mapping of Vermont's most favorable wind resource areas. The optimum sites for large, commercial wind are high elevation areas with steady, moderate to high winds (14.5+ mph), in proximity to access roads and transmission lines. The report states that the two potential sites for wind development are in the Northfield Range near the transmission line and, based on wind speeds, in the Green Mountain Range to the west.

As a result of recent improvements in turbine technology and federal subsidies designed to offset purchase and installation costs, wind power is now receiving a significant amount of attention both locally and statewide for utility (commercial) and smaller-scale (up to 500 kW) net-metered electrical generation. Large, commercial wind power has received greater attention in Waitsfield as a result of a preliminary proposal by a private wind developer exploring the viability of installing a series of wind turbines along the Northfield Ridge. Waitsfield residents have expressed significant concerns regarding wind power's potential visual, health, environmental, and economic impacts.

Wind development at the size, scale, and extent of the conceptual proposal for the Northfield Range highlight these concerns that the character of the town would change dramatically with the installation of industrial wind turbines along the town's ridgelines. In response to these concerns, the Planning Commission has developed the Waitsfield Community Standards (see 9.G) for siting renewable energy projects. These standards are for municipal and Public Service Board ("PSB") consideration and specifically exclude wind and solar facility development at elevations over 1700 feet (the Forest Reserve District), consistent with long-established policies to limit all new development in high elevation areas.

## 9.E ENERGY PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

**Efficiency Vermont.** Created by the PSB in 1999, Efficiency Vermont is the first statewide energy efficiency utility in the nation. Energy conservation programs are financed by the state's electric utilities through an energy efficiency charge that is passed on to ratepayers. Current programs available to Waitsfield residents and businesses include:

- ◆ Efficient Products—energy efficient product information and discount coupons.
- ◆ Vermont Energy Star® Homes Program—technical assistance and rebates to homebuilders and buyers who build energy efficient homes.
- ◆ Commercial Energy Opportunities—technical and financial assistance to commercial and industrial businesses to improve the efficiency of existing and new facilities.
- ◆ Dairy Farm Program—technical assistance, financial incentives and low-interest financing for energy efficient farm equipment.
- ◆ Residential Energy Efficiency Program (REEP)—technical and financial assistance to developers, owners and managers of low-income multi-family housing to reduce energy costs.
- ◆ Income-Eligible Services—technical and financial assistance to low-income Vermonters who are participating in the state's weatherization program to make additional electricity-saving improvements.
- ◆ Emerging Market Initiatives Program—identifies, evaluates and tests innovative energy

efficiency technologies and practices to promote their use.

**Energy Assistance Programs.** Rising energy costs are a particular burden for individuals, households and homeowners with limited or fixed incomes. A number of energy assistance programs are available to income-eligible households; most are administered through the Central Vermont Community Action Council in partnership with state and federal agencies and area utilities. These include, but may not be limited to:

- ◆ Fuel and utility assistance programs—to help pay for seasonal and emergency heating fuel supplies and electrical service. Heating programs rely heavily on federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) appropriations. Emergency funds are also available through state-funded general assistance programs.
- ◆ WARMTH program—a statewide program that raises emergency funds through individual donations to assist households through direct payments to fuel suppliers and electric utilities.
- ◆ Weatherization assistance programs—available to owners or renters (with landlord participation) including free energy audits, free lighting and appliance upgrades, and renovation services. These programs are funded through federal weatherization programs, the state's weatherization trust fund, and utility assistance programs.

Federal funding for both fuel assistance programs and the community action agencies that administer these programs is at risk under current federal budget proposals. State and local government may be called on in the very near future to fill funding gaps, or to find other innovative ways to address the energy needs of local households.

**Transportation.** Limited transportation alternatives exist that allow Waitsfield residents to become less dependent on motor vehicles to get around. Since most of the town's energy use is related to transportation fuel consumption, every effort should be made locally to promote ride sharing, alternative modes of transportation, and less auto-oriented patterns of development. There has been considerable effort in the Mad River Valley to provide alternatives to the automobile for local trips, including extensions of the Mad River Path network, sidewalk projects along

Route 100, the incorporation of bike lanes in planned road upgrades, and participation in the Safe Routes to Schools program. A local rideshare and volunteer driver program, and the development a centrally located park-and-ride facility that also serves as a transit stop, could help provide rides and facilitate carpooling for destinations within and beyond The Valley. Go Vermont, administered through the Vermont Agency of Transportation, provides state and local information on car-pooling, ride sharing, van-pooling, and special public transportation needs, as described in more detail in Chapter 8 (Transportation).

**Land Use & Development Patterns.** Compact, mixed-use development, as envisioned for Irasville, can reduce reliance on the automobile, vehicle miles traveled, and inherent system energy costs—including energy costs associated with maintaining roads and related infrastructure. Targeting economic and residential growth within areas intended for more concentrated development allows people to walk to their destinations, and makes public transit services between growth centers more economically feasible.

At the site level, a south facing building orientation and landscaping can effectively reduce energy demand. Clustering, and other energy efficient development patterns can be encouraged and/or required through local zoning and subdivision regulations.

**Buildings & Equipment.** In addition to energy codes for new residential, commercial and public buildings, there are a number of other programs offered by the state to promote municipal energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy resources, such as the School Energy Management Program and programs that support the conversion of school heating systems to wood-burning systems.

Municipal energy savings can continue to be realized through regular energy audits of municipal buildings and the use of “life cycle costing” practices that incorporate long-term energy savings in the fiscal analysis of facility construction and equipment purchases. Such costing methods often demonstrate that long-term energy savings more than offset the higher initial purchase or construction cost of energy-efficient equipment and building improvements. The town’s new energy reserve fund will help cover the cost, and leverage other funds, for planned improvement projects.

Residential and commercial development that exceeds minimum state requirements can also be encouraged through incentives offered under local zoning and subdivision regulations and local energy assistance programs.

**Renewable Energy.** Waitsfield residents approved a motion in 2010 to solicit bids for a solar installation designed to meet the electricity requirements of town-owned properties. The town was not able to take advantage of this opportunity but, with the support of town voters and the town’s Energy Committee, will continue to pursue the installation of one or more municipal renewable energy systems to help offset municipal energy costs. The town’s energy reserve fund, as established by the town in 2011, can also be used for this purpose.

Recent discussions about alternative energy have also generated initial support for a community-based, group net-metered “solar orchard” as one way to increase the town’s capacity for local energy generation while addressing the visual impacts that typically accompany both large-scale and distributed power generation projects. The intent is to identify one or more parcels of land that could serve as primary locations for the bulk of solar power development in the community. This would offer landowners within environmentally sensitive areas, along scenic corridors, or with parcels that are too small or without access to enough sunlight, a chance to develop solar power resources while minimizing impacts on natural resources, neighboring property owners, or the community at large. Identifying appropriate locations poses significant challenges that will necessarily require community engagement and a long-term vision that is compatible with the type and location of development called for in the town plan.

**Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program.** In 2011, Waitsfield residents authorized the town to establish a Property Assessed Clean Energy program that will provide low-cost loans to local homeowners for efficiency improvements and renewable energy system installations, to be repaid over time through an annual assessment on the property tax bill. Waitsfield residents reaffirmed this authorization with a subsequent vote at Town Meeting. As enacted by the state, this program is expected to get underway in 2012, to be administered by the town in association with Efficiency Vermont (operated by the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation).



## 9.F FACILITY SITING & DEVELOPMENT

Energy generation and transmission systems that are linked to the electrical grid are preempted from local land use regulation. They are instead regulated by the Public Service Board (PSB) under 30 V.S.A. Section 248 (Section 248 review). These include net metered distributed energy installations, as well more commercial, utility-scale generation, transmission and distribution facilities. The PSB must consider project conformance with municipal and regional plans prior to issuing a Certificate of Public Good.

**Municipal Participation.** The town does not have statutory party status in PSB (Section 248) proceedings, but does receive notice of most applications (petitions) before the board. The town may participate informally by providing comments on a proposed project, or request more formal status as an intervenor with rights to participate and appeal. Town participation in the state's review process, based on adopted community standards under this plan, is the best way to ensure that local conservation and development objectives are considered and weighed by the Public Service Board. The Planning Commission has developed specific community standards for energy facility siting and development in Waitsfield, below in Section 9.G, that are to be considered in the municipal review of applications before the Public Service Board, in crafting local regulations for off-grid facilities, and in the siting and development of municipal and community-supported generation facilities.

## 9.G WAITSFIELD COMMUNITY STANDARDS

**Purpose.** The purpose of these municipal energy policies is to promote the development of renewable energy resources and energy facilities in the Town of Waitsfield, while limiting the adverse impacts of such development on public health, safety and welfare, the town's historic and planned pattern of development, environmentally sensitive areas, and our most highly-valued natural, cultural and scenic resources – consistent with related development, resource protection and land conservation policies included elsewhere in this plan. These policies are to be considered in undertaking municipal energy projects and programs, in updating the town's bylaws to address renewable energy development, and in the review of new or upgraded energy facilities and systems by the town and the Public Service Board under 30 V.S.A. § 248.

**General Standards.** The Town will consider supporting the following types of energy development, in order of priority:

- ◆ Increased system capacity through state, utility and municipally-supported energy efficiency and conservation programs.
- ◆ Individual and group net-metered renewable energy projects, community-based projects, and other small-scale distributed renewable energy systems serving individual users, in appropriate, context-sensitive locations
- ◆ In-place upgrades of existing facilities, including existing transmission lines, distribution lines and substations as needed to serve the town and region.
- ◆ New community-scale energy facilities, including new transmission and distribution lines, substations, hydro dams, wind and solar farms, co-generation facilities and biomass plants that are designed to meet the expected needs of the Mad River Valley communities

To the extent physically and functionally feasible, existing utility systems, including transmission lines, distribution lines and substations, shall be upgraded or expanded on site or within existing utility corridors before new facilities or corridors are considered.

The Town of Waitsfield will endorse or permit the development and installation of energy facilities that conform to community energy facility development and siting standards through participation in Public

Service Board (Section 248) proceedings or, where applicable, through local financing and incentive programs and regulations.

### Public Health and Safety Standards

**Use Classification.** A small net-metered or off-grid renewable energy facility, including a solar array, small wind facility or combined system intended solely to serve an individual residence or business, will be considered an accessory structure allowed in all zoning districts in which structures are allowed.

**Height.** Zoning district height limitations under local bylaws, where applicable, should be waived for renewable energy facilities, as enabled under 24 V.S.A. § 4414.

- ◆ The maximum tower height for net-metered, or similar off-grid wind energy facility shall not (a) exceed 120 feet in total height, as measured vertically from the ground to the rotor blade tip at its highest point, or (b) extend in total height more than 30 feet above the existing tree canopy or other obstructions within 300 feet of the tower, whichever is greater.

**Setbacks.** Except for transmission and distribution lines and utility connections, all energy facilities – including substations, commercial, utility and net-metered generation facilities and accessory structures – must meet minimum setback requirements for the zoning district(s) in which they are located. In addition:

- ◆ All ground-mounted wind energy facilities must be setback at least 1.5 times the total facility height, as measured vertically from the ground to the rotor blade tip at its highest point, from all property lines, occupied buildings on adjoining properties, overhead utility lines, public and private rights-of-way and established trail corridors, unless easements are secured from adjoining property owners.
- ◆ Guy wires used to support wind towers are exempt from minimum district setback requirements, but shall be set back at least 20 feet from all property lines.
- ◆ A building-mounted wind turbine or solar panel must meet minimum setback requirements for the building on which it is mounted. The installation of a net-metered or similar off-grid energy system on a nonconforming structure will not

constitute an increase in the degree or amount of nonconformance under local regulations.

- ◆ Setback requirements for renewable energy facilities may be reduced by the town, as allowed under 24 VSA § 4414 as necessary to access a renewable energy resource, if the reduction in the setback distance is functionally necessary for system operation, represents the minimum necessary to allow for facility siting, and adverse impacts to adjoining properties, structures, facilities, and uses can be avoided through structural design and orientation, landscaping and screening, the use of glare and noise reduction techniques, or other accepted mitigation measures, or an easement is secured from the adjoining property owner.
- ◆ Facility setback distances from property lines, or from occupied structures in existence at the time of application, should be increased as necessary to mitigate identified public health and safety hazards or nuisances to adjoining property owners (e.g., noise, vibration, glare, shadowing and shadow flicker, ice throw).

**Ground Clearance.** The blade tip of any wind turbine shall, at its lowest point, have a ground clearance of no less than 30 feet, as measured vertically from the ground to the tip of the rotor blade at its lowest point.

**Access.** New generation facilities shall be sited in a manner that avoids or, to the greatest extent physically feasible, minimizes the need for new and extended access roads and utility corridors.

- ◆ Facility access should be provided from existing access roads where physically feasible, and access roads and utility corridors should be shared, to minimize site disturbance, resource fragmentation, the creation of additional edge habitat, and the introduction and spread of invasive exotic species.
- ◆ Identified impacts to public highways from facility construction, operation and maintenance, including highway improvements required to accommodate the facility, shall be mitigated by the developer.
- ◆ Public access to generation and transmission facilities, including substations, must be restricted as necessary to protect public health and safety.

**Noise.** Noise generated by any energy facility, including wind energy systems, shall not exceed the lesser of (a) 45dB(A) as measured at any property line, or (b) 5 dB(A) above the ambient sound level, except during a short-term event such as a utility outage or a severe wind storm.

**Shadow Flicker.** Wind energy facilities shall be sited or screened so that shadows cast by rotor blades will not result in shadow flicker on occupied buildings located in the vicinity of the project.

**Burial.** Utility controls and onsite line connections shall be wireless or buried, except at the point of connection with distribution lines.

**Signs.** Energy facilities and structures shall not be used for display or advertising purposes. Signs, except for owner and manufacturer identifications and safety warnings that do not exceed one square foot, are prohibited on all structures.

**Lighting.** In accordance with the town's dark sky policy, energy facilities, including wind and transmission towers, are not to be artificially lighted except as necessary to meet Federal Aviation Administration requirements.

- ◆ An Obstacle Collision Avoidance System (OCAR) as approved by the FAA shall be used to avoid visual lighting impacts. If an OCAR cannot be approved, the FAA lighting alternative that results in the least amount of visual disturbance, and minimizes project visibility from public roads and vantage points, shall be incorporated in system design.
- ◆ Substation lighting should be the minimum necessary for site monitoring and security, should be cast downward, and must not result in light trespass or glare on adjoining properties.

**Codes.** Energy facilities must comply with all manufacturer specifications, state or industry safety and electric codes, and utility connection requirements. Documentation of code compliance may be required for facilities subject to municipal review.

**Interference.** Facility operation shall not reduce or interfere with television, radio, telemetry, or other telecommunications signals, including public safety communications systems.

**Decommissioning and Abandonment.** Generation facility permits or certificates must include provisions

for system abandonment, decommissioning and site restoration including, for larger systems (e.g., >100 kW), required sureties for facility removal and site restoration.

### Facility Siting Standards

**Site Designation.** Sites planned for or intended to accommodate planned energy facility development, including the location of existing and planned commercial and net-metered generation facilities and utility corridors, are to be shown on site development and subdivision plans reviewed by the town.

- ◆ Incentives (e.g., waivers, density bonuses) should be provided under local regulations for energy efficient development, and for the incorporation of net-metered renewable energy facilities in new development.
- ◆ Waitsfield's bylaws also should be updated to preserve solar and wind access for existing and proposed renewable energy facilities to the extent authorized under state law.

**Upland Exclusion Areas.** All new energy facilities – including wind towers, transmission and distribution lines, accessory structures and access roads – are specifically prohibited in the Forest Reserve District, above 1,700 feet elevation, in conformance with long-standing town policies to limit all high elevation and ridgeline development due to its undue adverse scenic and environmental impacts. Any energy development over 1500 feet in elevation shall not result in undue adverse impacts to surface waters, ground water and mapped source protection areas, core forest areas, inventoried wildlife habitat and travel corridors, and mapped scenic resources.

**Hazard Areas.** With the exception of transmission and distribution lines, new energy facilities that are not attached to existing or permitted structures shall not be located in:

- ◆ Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs), including floodways and floodway fringes identified on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for the town. Any allowed facility located within these areas must meet minimum National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements, as reviewed and permitted by the municipality or the state.
- ◆ Fluvial erosion hazard areas identified on Waitsfield FEHA maps.

- ◆ Very steep slopes, with natural (pre-development) grades in excess of 25%.

**Conservation Areas.** Energy facilities are to be sited to avoid where physically feasible, or to otherwise minimize encroachment and mitigate the adverse impacts of facility development on:

- ◆ Surface waters, wetlands and associated setback and buffer areas, as specified for all development under town bylaws.
- ◆ Primary agricultural soils as mapped by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service for the state.
- ◆ Significant wildlife habitat, including core habitat areas, and travel and migratory corridors, as identified from state inventories and data sets, local inventories, and site investigations associated with facility development.
- ◆ Onsite mitigation – e.g., through facility clustering, relocation, buffering and permanent conservation easements – is preferred. Off-site mitigation measures should be required where on-site mitigation is not physically feasible.

**Agricultural Land and Open Space.** Energy facilities, including solar arrays and other generation facilities, transmission and distribution lines, accessory structures and access roads are to be located on non-agricultural land or along field edges to avoid fragmentation of, and to minimize and mitigate adverse impacts to agricultural land and open fields.

**Forestland.** Energy facilities, including wind towers and other generation facilities, transmission and distribution lines, accessory structures and access roads are to be located along existing tree lines, or on otherwise disturbed forestland, as necessary to avoid the fragmentation of, and to minimize and mitigate adverse impacts to productive timber stands and critical forest habitat.

- ◆ Forestland intended for commercial biomass production must be sustainably managed and harvested in a manner that preserves critical forest habitat and long-term forest health.

**Visual Impacts.** Applicants must demonstrate through site planning, facility siting and proposed mitigation that the visual impacts of new and upgraded energy facilities will be minimized as outlined in the standards set forth below:

- ◆ All energy facilities and accessory structures are to be designed and constructed of materials, colors, and textures that blend into the surrounding natural or built environment to the extent feasible. Wind towers, turbines and blades shall be of a neutral, non-reflective and unobtrusive color (e.g., white, off-white or gray).
- ◆ Facilities are to be sited to outside of, or to the edge of scenic views or viewsheds so that they are not a prominent focal point.
- ◆ The facility should not extend above the background horizon line.
- ◆ The facility should be screened from view through the use of existing topography, structures, vegetation or strategically placed tree, shrub and ground cover plantings that do not block distant views.

**Designated Scenic Areas.** The documented historic, rural and scenic character of the following areas in the Town of Waitsfield shall be preserved under any form of new energy development. New energy facilities sited within or as viewed from these areas shall not create a significant physical, visual, audible, or historically incongruous or incompatible intrusion into these areas. New facilities, including generation facilities greater than 20 kW, substations and transmission lines, are specifically prohibited within or as viewed from these areas unless significant associated impacts can be avoided, for example through facility siting, screening or line burial.

- ◆ Designated historic districts, including the Waitsfield Village Historic District, the Waitsfield Commons Historic District, and the Mad River Valley Rural Resource District, which are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places;
- ◆ Town-owned conservation land, including Scrag, Wu Ledges, Austin and Tardy parcels;
- ◆ Significant views within the Mad River Scenic Byway Corridor (Routes 100 and 17), a National Scenic Byway, as identified in the byway corridor management plan; and
- ◆ Views from locally designated scenic roads, as listed under Chapter 8 of the plan, or as subsequently designated by the Waitsfield Select Board.

**Historic Districts, Sites and Structures.** Energy facilities, including wind systems and solar photovoltaic (PV) or thermal panels, that are located in the town's three designated historic districts, or on properties with federal or state-listed historic structures, are to be sited in accordance with current Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and the following:

- ◆ The historic character of listed properties and structures shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- ◆ Ground installations are preferred to roof-mounted installations on historic structures. Ground installations, to the extent functionally-feasible, shall be installed in locations that minimize their visibility, such as a side or rear yard, and be screened from view of public rights-of-way and adjoining properties.
- ◆ Roof-mounted systems may be placed on new construction, non-historic buildings and additions.
- ◆ Solar panels and other roof- or wall-mounted structures shall not be placed on primary building facades, including street-facing walls or roofs, unless there is no other suitable location on the site or structure.
- ◆ Roof- or building-mounted systems on an historic structure shall not physically damage the structure, alter its character-defining features, including existing roof lines or dormers, nor obstruct significant architectural features such as overlaying windows or architectural detailing. Attachment points must be minimized and allow for future system removal.
- ◆ Roof-mounted Installations are to be placed below and behind parapet walls and dormers, on rear-facing roofs, where feasible. Panels are to be mounted flush with and at the same angle as the existing roof surface and, on flat roofs, set back from the roof edge to minimize visibility. They should not be visible above the roofline of the primary facade. Panels and mounting systems must be compatible in color to established roofing materials to minimize their visibility

## 9.H GOALS

- 9.H-1 Promote sustainable development in Waitsfield by reinforcing traditional land use patterns and municipal development policies, maximizing energy conservation through weatherization of existing structures and appropriate siting of new development, encouraging appropriate development and use of renewable energy resources, protecting natural and cultural resources, and offering transportation alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle.
- 9.H-2 Ensure the long-term availability of safe, reliable and affordable energy supplies to meet the needs of the town and neighboring communities.
- 9.H-3 Reduce municipal energy consumption and costs, community reliance on fossil fuels and foreign oil supplies, and greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change – through increased energy and fuel efficiency, energy conservation, and active transition to alternative fuels and renewable energy sources.
- 9.H-4 Sustainably develop Waitsfield's renewable energy resources and local distributed energy generation capacity – including municipal and community generation and supporting smart grid technology – consistent with adopted plan policies and community energy facility and siting standards.
- 9.H-5 Avoid or minimize the adverse impacts of energy development on public health, safety and welfare, the town's historic and planned pattern of development, environmentally sensitive areas, and Waitsfield's most highly valued natural, cultural and scenic resources, consistent with adopted plan policies and community standards for energy development, resource protection and land conservation.

**Table 9-1: Vehicle Miles Driven and Vehicle Registrations in Vermont**

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total Miles (millions)	6,596	6,543	6,811	6,811	9,677	8,309	7,855	7,713	7,832	7,694	7,312	7,646	
Miles Per Capita	10,993	11,020	11,167	11,166	15,729	13,421	12,641	12,379	12,553	12,385	11,769	12,297	
Total Vehicles Registered				548,000		532,000	540,000	521,000	603,000	581,000	569,728	568,468	571,900
% Automobiles				55%		51%	51%	51%	51%	51%	51%	50%	
% Trucks				41%		44%	43%	44%	45%	45%	45%	45%	
% Other				4%		5%	6%	5%	4%	4%	5%	5%	

Source: US Bureau of Transportation Statistics

**Table 9-2: Waitsfield Households by Number of Vehicles**

	1990	2000		2010	
0 Vehicles	2%	30	4%	39	5%
1 Vehicle	38%	245	33%	287	36%
2 Vehicles	41%	349	48%	360	45%
3+ Vehicles	19%	110	15%	110	14%

Source: US Census (2010 from American Community Survey)

**Table 9-3: Waitsfield Home Heating Fuel**

	1990	2000	2010
Gas	144 25%	373 51%	402 50%
Electricity	89 16%	86 12%	43 5%
Fuel Oil / Kerosene	176 31%	198 27%	251 32%
Coal	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Wood	161 28%	77 10%	93 12%
Solar	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%

Source: US Census (2010 from American Community Survey)

**Table 9-4: Mode of Travel to Work for Waitsfield Residents**

	1980	1990	2000	2010
Work at Home	57 9%	107 13%	100 10%	107 11%
Drove Alone	375 58%	577 71%	723 74%	769 76%
Carpool	129 20%	90 11%	104 11%	65 6%
Transit	0 0%	8 1%	0 0%	17 2%
Walk	74 11%	27 3%	40 4%	37 4%
Other	10 2%	3 0%	10 1%	12 1%

Source: US Census (2010 from American Community Survey)

**Table 9-5: Average Fuel Price per Gallon in Vermont**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Fuel Oil	\$1.44	\$1.34	\$1.24	\$1.44	\$1.65	\$2.27	\$2.61	\$2.72	\$3.74	\$2.41	\$2.93	\$3.79
Kerosene	\$1.65	\$1.65	\$1.44	\$1.65	\$1.96	\$2.58	\$2.95	\$3.05	\$4.16	\$2.85	\$3.28	\$4.20
Propane	\$1.44	\$1.55	\$1.34	\$1.55	\$1.86	\$2.16	\$2.41	\$2.53	\$3.09	\$2.56	\$2.95	\$3.34
Gasoline	\$1.55	\$1.55	\$1.44	\$1.65	\$1.96	\$2.37	\$2.67	\$2.90	\$3.33	\$2.34	\$2.96	\$3.76
Diesel	\$1.75	\$1.65	\$1.55	\$1.75	\$2.06	\$2.68	\$2.94	\$3.12	\$4.10	\$2.70	\$3.31	\$4.21

Source: Vermont Department of Public Service (adjusted to 2009\$ using the CPI)

**Table 9-6: Retail Price of Electricity for Green Mountain Power Customers**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All Sectors	12.08 ¢	11.79 ¢	12.56 ¢	11.96 ¢	11.84 ¢	11.47 ¢	11.33 ¢	11.09 ¢	11.71 ¢	11.56 ¢
Residential	15.75 ¢	15.47 ¢	16.04 ¢	15.35 ¢	14.94 ¢	14.51 ¢	14.33 ¢	14.01 ¢	14.78 ¢	14.68 ¢
Commercial	12.63 ¢	12.37 ¢	13.03 ¢	12.26 ¢	12.26 ¢	11.91 ¢	11.77 ¢	11.58 ¢	12.16 ¢	11.93 ¢
Industrial	8.38 ¢	8.06 ¢	9.26 ¢	8.62 ¢	8.58 ¢	8.33 ¢	8.26 ¢	8.00 ¢	8.59 ¢	8.46 ¢

Source: US Energy Information Administration Form EIA-861 Database. Expressed in cents per kWh adjusted to 2009\$ using the CPI.

9.H-6 Minimize the impacts of potential fuel shortages on emergency services, critical public functions, and local residents and businesses.

9.I-6.c Impacts to sediment transport and aquatic organisms' passage in streams; and

9.I-6.d Their use of land with prime agricultural soil.

## 9.I POLICIES

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9.I-1 Encourage energy efficiency and conservation as primary considerations in new municipal construction projects, equipment purchases and operations. Life cycle costing shall be used by the town in evaluating capital expenditures as appropriate.

9.I-7 Prohibit free-standing solar and all wind energy generation structures in the Forest Reserve District above 1,700 feet elevation.

9.I-2 Encourage, to the extent practical, the use of energy efficient municipal vehicles (e.g., hybrid, bio-diesel).

9.I-8 Continue to ensure that expansion and development activities at Sugarbush do not exceed the current or planned capacity of local electrical supplies and transmission facilities through the Memorandum of Understanding administered by the MRVPD.

9.I-3 Development should be directed toward designated growth centers and limited in the least accessible areas of the community to minimize the need for new road infrastructure and reliance on the private automobile.

9.I-9 Discourage the use of electricity as a primary heating source.

9.I-4 Support land use and conservation policies that encourage ongoing forest management to maintain a local source of fuel-wood.

9.I-10 Facilitate walking and cycling, as alternatives to automobile travel for local trips, by providing adequate path, sidewalk and bike lane infrastructure connecting major commercial and residential developments throughout the Mad River Valley.

9.I-5 Support land use and conservation policies that encourage agricultural uses on prime agricultural soils to increase the supply of and access to locally produced food and reduce the total food transport miles required to sustain Waitsfield families.

9.I-11 Facilitate the development of a solar orchard by working with interested citizens to identify appropriate sites and eliminate policy and legal obstacles that limit access to federal and state tax incentives.

9.I-6 Encourage small scale and appropriately sited development of renewable energy generation, including, but not necessarily limited to, solar panels, wind turbines and micro-hydro. Guidelines for the development of such resources should minimize:

9.I-12 The town – in collaboration with the Mad River Valley Planning District, the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, neighboring communities and utilities serving the town – will participate in long-range utility planning to ensure that adopted plan policies and community standards are identified and considered in future energy planning and development.

9.I-6.a Undue adverse visual impacts on adjacent properties, scenic corridors and Mad River Valley viewsheds;

9.I-13 Existing and proposed municipal policies, programs and regulations will be evaluated for their effect on municipal energy use, and revised as needed to promote reduced energy consumption, increased energy efficiency, and the sustainable development and use of local renewable energy resources.

9.I-6.b Forest fragmentation, environmental degradation, and habitat disruption;

9.I-14	Energy and fuel efficiency will be primary considerations in municipal construction projects, equipment and vehicle purchases and facility operations.		conforms to adopted plan policies and community facility siting and development standards.
9.I-15	The town will collaborate with the Mad River Valley Planning District, area utilities and service providers to promote community energy literacy, and to provide information about available energy assistance and incentive programs, state energy codes and energy system permitting.	9.I-21	New development shall not exceed the capacity of existing and planned generation, transmission and distribution systems. Development with high energy demand must maximize energy efficiency, incorporate on-site generation, or undergo project phasing in relation to planned system upgrades as necessary to mitigate anticipated service or facility impacts.
9.I-16	The town will develop and implement a PACE program as approved by voters in 2011, and consider other available incentives (e.g., tax credits, property tax exemptions), to help finance or offset the cost of eligible efficiency, weatherization or renewable energy projects	9.I-22	New development must be designed and constructed to at minimum meet state energy standards, through site and building design, material selection and the use of energy-efficient lighting, heating, venting and air conditioning systems. Electrical heating is strongly discouraged as a primary heating source.
9.I-17	The town will participate in Public Service Board (Section 248) review of new and upgraded generation and transmission facilities as necessary to ensure that adopted community standards are given due consideration in proposed energy facility development. This may include joint participation with other affected municipalities, the Mad River Valley Planning District, and the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.	9.I-23	New development shall be located and designed to reduce transportation energy demand, vehicle miles traveled, fossil fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.
9.I-18	New energy facility development within or that may affect the Town of Waitsfield must conform to adopted community standards for energy facility siting and design (attached) to receive municipal support or approval.	9.I-23.a	Irasville and the Waitsfield Village Residential and Commercial Districts, representing the town's historic and designated growth areas, are targeted to accommodate the majority (more than 50%) of new development, including higher density mixed use, pedestrian-friendly residential and commercial development, to be supported by existing and planned infrastructure, sidewalks, and public transit services. Auto-dependent sprawl outside of these districts shall be avoided.
9.I-19	The Planning Commission, in association with the Energy Committee, will identify and map those areas of town that are suitable for the siting and development of renewable energy facilities and resources in conformance with adopted plan policies and community standards.	9.I-23.b	New development outside of Village Districts will be concentrated [clustered] in locations (e.g., hamlets, industrial parks, PUDs) that can physically support energy efficient, pedestrian-oriented development to be served by common or shared parking areas and walkways, and accessed by existing or planned bike lanes, public paths or transit routes.
9.I-20	The town will continue to pursue local generation capacity on municipal property, and actively assist in the planning and development of a community-based, group net-metered solar orchard facility that	9.I-23.c	Municipal and community facilities open to the public shall be located in designated village districts,

	within walking distance of the village center [or must be accessible by public transit].		measures to reduce nonessential energy consumption in the event of an abrupt energy shortage.
9.I-23.d	Local employers should provide programs or incentives for ridesharing and public transit use, opportunities for telecommuting and teleconferencing and, where applicable, on-site employee housing, to reduce employee vehicle miles traveled.	9.I-29	The town will consider zoning and subdivision amendments to include standards for small on-site renewable energy systems that are not regulated by the PSB; to promote more energy efficient types and patterns of development; to protect access to renewable energy (e.g., solar, wind); to provide for the incorporation of net-metered renewable energy systems in subdivision and site plan design, and to provide incentives for energy efficient construction that exceeds minimum state standards, that maximizes access to renewable energy resources (e.g., solar orientation), or that incorporates individual or group net-metered renewable energy systems in subdivision design.
9.I-24	The town will continue to work with the Mad River Valley Planning District and area transit providers to re-establish year-round transit service, and to identify, plan for and develop needed transit routes and facilities, including local park-and-ride facilities. Local rideshare or volunteer driver programs also should be considered.		
9.I-25	The town will incorporate “complete street” principles for street design that are intended to safely accommodate all transportation system users – including pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders as well as motorists – in planned town highway improvements.	<b>9.J TASKS</b>	
9.I-26	The town will continue to collaborate with the Mad River Path Association, the Mad River Valley Planning District, neighboring towns and local landowners to plan for, maintain and develop an interconnected regional path network, in part to provide a transportation alternative for Valley residents.	9.J-1	Track municipal energy use and costs, and develop an overall energy budget to manage the town’s energy consumption, which may include the addition of local generating capacity. [Energy Coordinator, Energy Committee]
9.I-27	The town, through its Energy Committee will work with the Planning District, the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, and area utilities to establish the regional infrastructure needed to support alternative fuel vehicles (e.g., charging stations), to include one or more publicly accessible, centrally located sites in Waitsfield.	9.J-2	Evaluate existing and proposed municipal policies and programs for their effect on municipal energy use, and revise as needed to promote reduced energy consumption, increased energy efficiency, and the sustainable development and use of local renewable energy resources. [Energy Coordinator, Energy Committee]
9.I-28	The town will work in cooperation with local agencies, emergency service providers, and regional suppliers to develop emergency contingency plans that ensure access to critical energy supplies and	9.J-3	Develop a strategic 5-year municipal energy action plan that more specifically guides energy efficiency investments and improvements, and the transition to and development of renewable energy resources. [Energy Coordinator, Energy Committee]
		9.J-4	Identify and map those areas of town that are suitable for the siting and development of renewable energy facilities and resources in conformance with adopted plan policies and community standards.

[Planning Commission, Energy Committee, Conservation Commission]

- 9.J-5 Promote community energy literacy, and provide information about available energy assistance and incentive programs, state energy codes and energy system permitting. [Energy Coordinator, Energy Committee]
- 9.J-6 Maintain the town's energy reserve fund, and incorporate planned efficiency improvements (e.g., facility retrofits, renovations, and equipment upgrades) in the town's capital budget and program. [Energy Committee, Planning Commission, Selectboard]
- 9.J-7 Implement the PACE program as approved by voters in 2011, and consider other available incentives (e.g., tax credits, property tax exemptions), to help finance or offset the cost of eligible efficiency, weatherization and renewable energy projects. [Energy Committee, Energy Coordinator, Selectboard]
- 9.J-8 Pursue local generation capacity on municipal property, and actively assist in the planning and development of a community-based, group net-metered solar orchard facility that conforms to adopted plan policies and community facility siting and development standards. [Energy Coordinator, Energy Committee, Conservation Commission, Selectboard]
- 9.J-9 Work collaboratively to establish the regional infrastructure needed to support alternative fuel vehicles (e.g., charging or fueling stations), to include one or more publicly accessible, centrally located sites in Waitsfield. [Energy Coordinator, Energy Committee, Selectboard]
- 9.J-10 Develop procedures for municipal participation in Public Service Board proceedings and the review of proposed projects for conformance with adopted community standards. [Energy Coordinator, Planning Commission, Selectboard]



- 9.J-11 Amend zoning and subdivision regulations to (1) include standards for small on-site renewable energy systems that are not regulated by the PSB; (2) promote more energy efficient types and patterns of development; (3) protect access to renewable energy (e.g., solar, wind); (4) provide for the incorporation of net-metered renewable energy systems in subdivision and site plan design, and (5) provide incentives for energy efficient construction that exceeds minimum state standards, that maximizes access to renewable energy resources (e.g., solar orientation), or that incorporates individual or group net-metered renewable energy systems in subdivision design. [Planning Commission, Energy Committee]
- 9.J-12 Explore incentives to local employers (e.g., reduce on-site parking requirements) in exchange for programs to reduce their employees' reliance on single occupancy vehicles for commuting (e.g., ride-share programs). [Energy Committee, Planning Commission]



## 10 | Cultural & Historic Resources

### 10.A OVERVIEW

Waitsfield residents have long had an interest in preserving the town's rich social and cultural history, including its historic sites and structures. The Waitsfield Historical Society, a volunteer organization with over 100 members, is committed to preserving and celebrating local history. The society, housed at the town-owned General Wait House, sponsors a variety of special events and educational programs. Long-term plans for the General Wait House include renovating the attached barns to house a three-season historic museum and meeting space.

The 1987 Rural Resource Protection project resulted in the Mad River Valley Resource Protection Plan, which identified the Mad River Valley's historic and archaeological resources as a major element of rural character, along with scenic resources, agricultural and open land, and river and trail resources. The project also led to the founding of the Mad River Valley Rural Resource Commission, the first multi-town certified local government created under the National Historic Preservation Act. The Commission is made up of representatives from the three Mad River Valley towns and staffed by the Mad River Valley Planning District.

The commission's mission is to advocate for the protection of historic resources that contribute to the area's rural character, to assist towns in protecting these resources, and to provide educational opportunities. The commission has since worked to update initial sites and structures surveys and compile oral and video histories, and most recently completed an inventory of the Mad River Valley's historic barns.

### 10.B SETTLEMENT PATTERN

Waitsfield's historic development is written on the local landscape. The town's historic settlement pattern of clustered villages surrounded by an open river valley and forested uplands has been well-established since the 19th century. The town's agrarian heritage and rural character have been maintained largely through the preservation of its working landscape. Waitsfield's villages and smaller hamlets developed at a scale and density that is pedestrian friendly, with clearly defined streetscapes and public spaces,

prominent public buildings, and a variety of goods, services and employment opportunities.

Waitsfield's traditional settlement pattern contributes significantly to the town's scenic character. The town is blessed with one of the most extraordinary scenic landscapes in Vermont. Encompassing a pleasant blend of rolling meadows, wooded hills, a meandering river, and striking historic structures, the town's landscape is a source of pride to residents and an important attraction to visitors. Historic settlements, open farm fields, forested hillsides and ridge lines, and tree-lined roads are all important scenic resources.

The preservation of the town's historic and scenic character is important for a variety of reasons: to promote tourism, to preserve the agricultural land base, to enhance recreational opportunities, and to protect important natural and cultural landscape features. Careful site selection and design, and more detailed cultural, environmental and/or visual impact assessments where appropriate, can minimize adverse impacts to the town's cultural and scenic landscape and resources, and its rural character.



### 10.C ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Knowledge about the town's distant past is limited. Buried archaeological sites are often uncovered only when disturbed by site development work. As a result, these important sources of information about the town's past are not readily identifiable, but can be easily destroyed through subsequent development.

An initial assessment of the Mad River Valley's archaeological potential in 1990 investigated two

previously reported prehistoric sites and five new historic sites. It was concluded that numerous sites likely exist in the Mad River Valley, including buried riverine and scattered upland prehistoric sites, historic homesteads, and industrial mill sites along the Mad River and its tributaries. Areas more likely to contain archeological resource include:

- ◆ Level, undisturbed, well-drained soils near water bodies or other strategic resources;
- ◆ High terraces (700+ feet above msl) bordering ancient Lake Vermont shorelines;
- ◆ Locations adjacent to major river confluences;
- ◆ Known mill sites; and
- ◆ Sites of structures that are no longer standing, as identified from historic maps.

Also of historic significance, though not well-documented, are other cultural landscape features, including: stone walls, fences and corner posts or witness trees that once marked field and property boundaries; foundations and cellar holes; quarry sites, old road beds; and other visible remnants of past land use and occupation. Such features, if identified on subdivision and site development plans, can be documented, incorporated in subdivision and site design, and protected where appropriate. For development within highly sensitive areas, further archaeological assessments may be necessary.



## 10.D HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES

Waitsfield has a wealth of historic resources that includes hundreds of documented historic sites and structures, and others that have yet to be identified or catalogued. Some of the town's most historic structures, including its two covered bridges and the Joslin Round Barn, have been accepted for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (see Map 7 in Appendix B). Inclusion on the National Register places no restrictions on the use of property, but is typically a source of pride for property owners.

The Vermont State Register of Historic Places includes the historic districts discussed below, as well as 78 other historic structures located throughout town. A structure must be at least fifty 50 years old and retain its historic integrity to be eligible for listing on state and national registers. Most structures identified in the state's inventory are historic homes, but several farm complexes, school houses, and public buildings were also listed.

The Rural Resource Commission completed a barn inventory identifying 74 barns of historic significance in Waitsfield. These buildings help culturally and visually define the town's agrarian heritage. Many barns included on the state survey, however, are no longer actively used for agricultural purposes, and as such there is little economic incentive for their maintenance. There are several examples in town of barns which have been successfully converted to non-agricultural use, while retaining their historic integrity including: the Joslin Round Barn, which houses the Green Mountain Cultural Center; and the Skinner Barn which is used for performing arts. Such adaptive reuses, as allowed under the town's land use regulations, may help preserve these historic structures.

## 10.E HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The State Register of Historic Places includes three districts in Waitsfield: the Waitsfield Village Historic District, Mad River Valley Rural Resource District, and the Waitsfield Commons Historic District. All three of the town's historic districts are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and are shown on Map 7 in Appendix B.

The Waitsfield Village Historic District encompasses approximately 75 acres and 71 structures within its boundaries including historic homes, stores, public buildings, barns and outbuildings. Contributing



structures date from 1790 to 1930. The district's predominant architectural style is Greek Revival, but other styles are also represented. Prominent buildings include the Waitsfield Federated Church, the Joslin Memorial Library, the General Wait House, and the Bridge Street Market Place. The district also includes, near its center, the Great Eddy Covered Bridge, which is the oldest continually used covered bridge in Vermont.

While the historic character of the village is largely intact, contemporary buildings dominate the northern part of the district. Efforts are ongoing to ensure that new development within this district is more compatible with its historic architecture and character. The Mad River Valley Health Center is an example of such effort and its intended result.

The Mad River Valley Rural Historic District, listed on the National Register in 1994, stretches four miles and incorporates roughly 2,000 acres along Route 100 in Waitsfield and Moretown. The district includes a collection of well-preserved historic farmsteads representing the agricultural history of Vermont. Most structures date from the early- to mid-1800s, although there are a number of late-19th century barns. Land along the river has been farmed since the Mad River Valley was first settled in the 1790s. Farming has kept the valley bottom open, in sharp contrast to the forested mountain slopes to the east and west.

The Waitsfield Common Historic District was the first settlement in The Valley by those of European descent and is an example of an 18th century hilltop settlement. The district contains five vernacular Federal-period houses dating from 1793 to 1810, an 1810 farmstead, a cemetery dating from 1793, and a 1798 public common (divided into two parcels by town roads). Though the area has changed somewhat over the years, it remains largely intact and could serve as a model for new compact residential developments.

## 10.F SCENIC RESOURCES

As mentioned above, Waitsfield's traditional settlement patterns and associated rural landscape is the community's greatest aesthetic resource. This landscape consists of several key features, however, that have been identified as distinct scenic resources in a variety of studies and public opinion surveys over the past 20 years, including the 1988 Rural Resource Protection Plan and several community surveys. It is the protection of each of these distinct features that will ensure the preservation of Waitsfield's scenic landscape and, by extension, much of its rural character. These features include:

- ◆ Open farmland and meadows, which often serve as the foreground for expansive views;
- ◆ Forested knolls, steep mountain-sides and ridge lines which provide the unbroken background for most distant views, most significantly land above an elevation of 1,500 feet and lower hill-sides and forested knobs that rise steeply to the east of the Mad River (between the river and the Waitsfield Common/East Warren plateau) and are highly visible from Route 100;
- ◆ The historic context of development, including compact villages surrounded by open land and the relationship of clustered farm buildings (of mixed scale and massing) surrounded by farmland;
- ◆ Scenic roads, especially those of a scale and character that discourage high speed travel while offering a pleasant walking and recreational environment;
- ◆ The Mad River and adjacent riparian land and floodplain;
- ◆ Individual buildings which, because of their scale, character or historic significance, such as a large barn, serve as a visual and cultural focal point in the landscape; and
- ◆ The night sky, which despite increasing light pollution associated with commercial development in Irasville and scattered residential development, still provides a magnificent view of the stars.

## 10.G CULTURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

The 2009 public opinion survey reconfirmed findings from earlier surveys — that there is a great deal of local support for preserving the town's rural character, including its traditional settlement patterns, and



historic, scenic and recreational resources. There are a variety of regulatory and non-regulatory options available to encourage, or in some cases require, the protection of local cultural resources.

In recent years the town has pursued a number of these options, including the establishment of a local conservation fund for the purchase of land and interests in land (e.g., the Scrag Mountain and Wu Ledges municipal forests, Maple Avenue Farm multiple-property conservation project, and the Lareau Swim Hole), a local tax stabilization program for land kept in agriculture, and, additional regulatory protections and provisions.

- ◆ The town's land use regulations include a Historic Waitsfield Village Overlay District, the purpose of which is to maintain the historic character of the Waitsfield Village Historic District as listed on the National Register. The regulations provide standards and a required review process for exterior alterations. Also, the proposed demolition of any contributing structure must meet associated review standards intended to require the documentation and/or preservation of historic structures within the district.
- ◆ Listing on the National Register may afford some protection in the review of federally and/or state funded development projects, and also ensures that property owners are eligible for available state and federal assistance, including preservation grants and tax credits.
- ◆ Additional state assistance is available for historic properties within designated villages under Vermont's Downtown Program and Waitsfield has obtained designation for Waitsfield Village.
- ◆ Village Center Designation was obtained in 2007 that applies to Historic Waitsfield Village

and provides a number of benefits to owners of historic properties and extra consideration for grant applications.

- ◆ The Mad River Watershed Conservation Partnership also promotes land conservation as a means of preserving The Valley's rural character.
- ◆ The Mad River Valley Rural Resource Commission is also an entity available for protecting local cultural resources.



## 10.H GOAL

- 10.H-1 Identify, protect and preserve Waitsfield's cultural landscape and resources, including its traditional settlement pattern, historic built environment, and scenic features.

## 10.I POLICIES

- 10.I-1 Site and design development to be consistent with Waitsfield's traditional settlement pattern, including historic densities and scales of development, local road networks, and streetscapes, particularly within designated historic districts.
- 10.I-2 Site and design development to avoid adverse impacts to Waitsfield's historic sites and structures, and historic architectural styles should be considered when developing within designated historic districts.
- 10.I-3 Preserve the integrity of historic buildings to the extent feasible while allowing for on-going use and

- maintenance. Adaptive reuse shall be allowed where appropriate, including the re-use of historic barns, to preserve structures that no longer serve their original function.
- 10.I-4 Document any building listed on the state historic sites and structures survey prior to demolition (to identify and record significant historic and architectural details, preferably in consultation with the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation or a qualified historic preservationist) Copies of the documentation should be provided to the Waitsfield Historical Society for safekeeping.
- 10.I-5 Site and/or cluster development to avoid undue adverse visual impacts to scenic resources, including open fields, steep hillsides and ridge lines, as viewed from public vantage points. Screening, buffer areas and/or landscaping may be required where appropriate to minimize visual impacts.
- 10.I-6 Design development to maintain and/or enhance the appearance of properties as viewed from off-site. To this end, the town shall require all development, other than single family homes on existing lots, to comply with site design and landscaping standards under the town's zoning regulations.
- 10.I-7 Site and design renewable energy generation and telecommunication facilities and utility line extensions in a manner that avoids impacts to cultural and scenic features, and shall not be located within the Forest Reserve District at elevations of 1,700' and above. In no case shall telecommunications towers be lighted or exceed an elevation of 10 feet higher than the nearest forest canopy.
- 10.I-8 Locate utilities serving development underground, unless the Development Review Board finds that requiring utilities to be placed underground is not necessary due to presence of above-ground utilities serving nearby contiguous properties and that the requirement would place an unfair financial burden on the applicant.
- 10.I-9 Protect and maintain those scenic features within the rights-of-way of designated scenic roads, including but not necessarily limited to road width, surfacing materials, bordering trees, walls and fences in accordance with an adopted municipal scenic road maintenance program.
- 10.I-10 Maintain and/or re-establish tree canopies along public roads in accordance with an adopted tree planting program, and along new roads as required under local land use regulations.
- 10.I-11 Protect visual access to the night sky through the careful design and control of lighting to prevent glare and minimize sky glow. Lighting shall be carefully designed to avoid new light pollution (e.g., glare, sky glow), and reduce existing light pollution, through the use of appropriate techniques, including cut-off fixtures, down-casting, and limiting levels of illumination.
- 10.I-12 Design signs to be harmonious with the historic character and pedestrian scale of the town's village centers, consistent with traffic safety, and to avoid roadside clutter or interference with the enjoyment of the rural landscape outside of the village centers.
- 10.I-13 Continue to support the efforts of the Waitsfield Historical Society, and the Rural Resource Commission, to work with local property owners to identify, protect and promote Waitsfield's resources, including its historic sites and structures.
- 10.I-14 Promote private use of available historic preservation assistance programs (e.g., Historic Preservation Tax Credits, Barn Again grant program).
- 10.I-15 Encourage incentive and assistance programs and other non-regulatory means of cultural and scenic resource protection where feasible, in accordance with adopted resource protection plans.

## 10.J TASKS

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| <p>10.J-1 Continue to inventory, catalogue and map Waitsfield's historic and scenic features. [Rural Resource Commission*, Waitsfield Historical Society*]</p> <p>10.J-2 Update land use regulations as needed to further protect Waitsfield's historic and scenic resources, including the adoption of conservation and "residential hamlet" subdivision design standards, and consideration of adopting additional historic and/or design review overlay districts to protect the town's traditional settlement pattern, cultural resources, and scenic landscape (see Chapter 12). [Planning Commission, Conservation Commission, Selectboard]</p> <p>10.J-3 Adopt specific lighting standards under the town's zoning regulations and, at the same time, conduct public informational meetings to educate the public regarding strategies to avoid light pollution. [Planning Commission, Selectboard]</p> <p>10.J-4 Update the town's tree planting and maintenance program, particularly as needed to re-establish tree canopies along public roads and rights-of-way. Implement the Waitsfield Street Tree Master Plan. [Tree Board, Selectboard]</p> <p>10.J-5 Seek funding as needed for the redevelopment of the town's historic properties, including Waitsfield's historic public buildings. [Rural Resource Commission*, Selectboard, Library Commission, Historical Society*]</p> | <p>10.J-6 Seek funding as needed to conserve significant rural resources, through the purchase of land or interests in land (e.g., conservation easements, development rights). [Conservation Commission, Selectboard, Mad River Watershed Conservation Partnership*]</p> <p>10.J-7 Develop a plan for renovating the Wait House barns for public and cultural purposes. [Selectboard, Waitsfield Historical Society*]</p> <p>10.J-8 Promote private use of available historic preservation assistance programs (e.g., Historic Preservation Tax Credits, Barn Again grant program). [Rural Resource Commission*, Historical Society*]</p> <p>10.J-9 Explore the establishment of a "Town Green" in Irasville to serve as a center for community events and outdoor gatherings (see Map 9). [Planning Commission]</p> |
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# 11 | Natural Resources

## 11.A OVERVIEW

Waitsfield lies within the heart of the Mad River Valley, defined by the Northfield Range to the east, and the main range of the Green Mountains to the west. The physical features of Waitsfield's landscape have greatly influenced local patterns of human activity, settlement and commerce. Waitsfield Village developed around the most reliable source of power at the time, the Mad River. The town's traditional agricultural base, which once extended into the surrounding hills, is today largely confined to its most productive soils, found along the river valley and the broad plateau around Waitsfield Common. Those areas least desirable for development, Waitsfield's remote and rocky uplands, form a scenic backdrop and include productive forest lands, headwaters and important wildlife habitat.

Though waterpower has long been replaced by other sources of energy, and the town has slowly shifted away from its agricultural base, the physical landscape and the quality of the natural environment continue to attract visitors and residents and influence local development patterns. Waitsfield's natural setting offers a range of cultural, environmental, recreational and economic opportunities, while at the same time posing a number of significant constraints and challenges.

The town's natural landscape is enhanced by its built environment. This integration of natural and cultural features create a distinct sense of "place" that is unique to Waitsfield. The following describes the natural features that contribute to the town's unique sense of place, and options for conserving and protecting these resources for existing and future generations.

## 11.B CLIMATE

Climate and weather patterns are important planning and design considerations because of their effect on such things as soil erosion, wildlife populations, plant growth, air quality, stormwater runoff and flooding, groundwater supplies, road maintenance, energy demand for cooling and heating, access to alternative energy sources and the viability of weather dependent industries such as skiing.

Vermont's northern climate is dominated in winter months by cold, dry Canadian air, and in summer by warm moist air from the Gulf of Mexico. Weather patterns vary locally with topography and relief. Located on the eastern side of some of the state's highest mountains, Waitsfield experiences slightly lower average winter temperatures and higher rates of precipitation than other parts of Vermont. On average, the town receives over 43 inches of precipitation (measured as rainfall) annually.

Much attention has been given to global climate change in recent years. The effects of climate change are already evident in Vermont, including more intense storms linked to rising average temperatures. Over the next 50 years, climate change models have projected that the average temperatures in the state will increase five to nine degrees Fahrenheit. Such an increase would reduce the number of months with average low temperatures below freezing from the current six to four, and increase the number of months with average highs above 80°F from two to three or four.

While some human residents may not miss the extra months of winter weather, the plants and animals around us will. Climate change is expected to alter the frequency and magnitude of storm events, rain-on-snow events, ice storms, and even the timing and frequency of droughts. Climate change is also expected to alter the town's natural environment by changing the plant species that can thrive in Waitsfield, the migrating patterns of birds, the timing of the budding and flowering of plants, the temperature of rivers and ponds, and countless other changes throughout the interconnected web of life.

If climate change proceeds as currently anticipated, the climate and natural environment in Vermont will become more like that of the mid-Atlantic region by the end of the 21st century. For more than 50 years, Waitsfield has been a winter tourism and recreation destination, but climate change has the potential to undermine this critical component of the Mad River Valley's economy.

Waitsfield should anticipate that a changing climate will bring dramatic social, economic, and environmental change to The Valley which indicates a need

for diversification of the local economy, action to limit future emission of climate changing air pollutants, and steps to enable our human and natural communities to adapt as effectively as possible to the changes that are likely coming.

### 11.C AIR QUALITY

Weather patterns, especially wind, impact air quality. Like most of Vermont, Waitsfield's is fortunate to enjoy exceptional air quality. The town lies within a Class II attainment or clean air region as defined by Vermont's Air Quality Implementation Plan. As such, moderate changes in existing air quality are permissible, although a maximum level of pollution cannot be exceeded in accordance with Vermont's Air Pollution Control Regulations.

Given the absence of large-scale pollution generators in the community, local air quality concerns are limited mainly to emissions from traffic, inefficient or improperly operated heating systems and some agricultural practices. While no existing problems have been identified, the cumulative effect of these sources may increase with additional growth.

Of more immediate concern are impacts on air quality resulting from pollution generated far from Vermont. Most notably, the coal-burning power plants of the Midwest have been cited as the main cause of airborne pollutants that are detrimental to the health of forests and pond ecosystems, particularly fragile high-elevation ecosystems, throughout the Northeast. These impacts, in addition to global climate change, are arguably the largest air quality-related challenges facing Waitsfield in the next several decades.

### 11.D TOPOGRAPHY

Waitsfield, Warren and Fayston comprise the upper watershed of the Mad River, which drains northward into the Winooski River and ultimately into Lake Champlain. Much of Moretown and a portion of Duxbury also share the watershed to the north. Waitsfield's topography is characterized by a mountainous eastern border, marked by the ridge line of the Northfield Range; the broad plateau west of the range that runs from East Warren to the south of Waitsfield Common; the Mad River Valley below; and a series of steep, intermittent ridges and hills bordering the river valley, leading west into Fayston.

**Elevation.** Elevation in Waitsfield ranges from a height of 2,911 feet above mean sea level at the summit of Scrag Mountain, the town's most prominent peak, to 608 feet at the point where the Mad River flows into Moretown. Differences in elevation affect local climate, weather and growing seasons, which vary throughout town. Traditionally, settlement has been concentrated between the elevations of 650 and 1,500 feet. Land over 1,500 feet in elevation (4,507 acres) remains largely undeveloped, although some residential development has occurred in recent years. Land over 2,500 feet in elevation (393 acres) is somewhat protected from incompatible development through Act 250, although that law does not prohibit development.

**Slope.** Waitsfield's steeper slopes and hillsides are poorly suited for most types of development, posing serious limitations for site clearance, construction and the installation of infrastructure and utilities; and serious risks for stormwater runoff, slope failure, soil erosion, and the sedimentation of surface waters. The U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has identified general development constraints and management recommendations for different slope categories.

According to the NRCS, careful management to limit site disturbance is necessary on slopes in excess of 15 percent. All construction activities should be avoided on slopes in excess of 25 percent. State regulations also prohibit the installation of on-site wastewater systems on slopes in excess of 20 percent. General areas of steep slope are identified on Map 3 in Appendix B; however site assessments may be needed to determine slope limitations and management requirements for a particular development site.

In addition to physical constraints, development on steep slopes and prominent ridge lines can adversely impact the town's scenic landscape. Development in such areas, particularly at higher elevations, is often highly visible from numerous vantage points, and contrasts dramatically with the scenic backdrop provided by unbroken forest cover. Land above an elevation of 1,500 feet and the steep hillsides and prominent knolls rising from the valley floor have been identified through computer-based visual sensitivity analysis and community visual assessments as being especially vulnerable. Special measures have been incorporated in local land use regulations to prevent such development, or otherwise minimize its aesthetic impact through careful siting, landscaping and screening.



## 11.E WATER RESOURCES

Clean, plentiful water is a basic resource that is too often taken for granted. Waitsfield's water resources include abundant, naturally replenished surface and ground water supplies that sustain the natural environment and support a variety of human activities. Surface waters include upland headwaters and tributaries of the Mad River, the main stem of the Mad River, and small ponds scattered throughout town. Local ground waters include one of the largest identified aquifers in the state. The quality of these waters, which is thought to have improved over the past 30 years, must continue to be maintained and enhanced.

**Rivers and Streams.** Waitsfield is located entirely within the Mad River watershed (with the very minor exception of limited high elevation acreage located east of the ridge line of the Northfield Range which is within the Dog River watershed). The Mad River, which flows 7.5 miles through town, is fed by upland headwaters and a number of major tributaries located partly or entirely within the town, including Folsom, Pine and High Bridge Brooks, which form in the Northfield Range, and the lower sections of Mill and Shepard Brooks flowing in from Fayston (see Map 6 in Appendix B). The Mad River and each of its major tributaries are distinct in character, and serve a number of important ecological, cultural, recreational, and aesthetic functions.

Most surface waters in Waitsfield are designated by the state for management purposes as Class B waters, which are intended to support a variety of environmental, public and recreational uses. Headwater streams, defined by the Vermont Environmental Board as all year-round and intermittent streams above an elevation of 1,500 feet, are provided limited

protection if a development is subject to Act 250 review. Headwaters above 2,500 feet in elevation are defined as more pristine Class A waters.

Surface waters can serve as a barometer of environmental well-being. The 1991 report, *Watching the River's Health: The Condition of the Mad River and How to Improve and Protect It*, resulted in the formation of the Friends of the Mad River, a nonprofit river advocacy group. The organization's mission is to restore and maintain the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the river system, and build public support for clean water.

In 1995, a river management plan, *The Best River Ever*, was developed that identified the following major problems and threats to the river and its tributaries:

- ◆ Accelerated erosion and stream sedimentation resulting from poor construction, road and land management practices;
- ◆ Impacts from stormwater including altered hydrology and sedimentation;
- ◆ Lack of stream bank vegetation, resulting in stream bank erosion and higher water temperatures that affect local trout habitat;
- ◆ Threats to biodiversity and ecosystems from invasive species such as *Didymosphenia geminata* (rock snot) and Japanese knotweed;
- ◆ Water pollution from failing on-site septic systems, stormwater runoff, and poor agricultural practices;
- ◆ Threats to public river access from development, overuse, misuse and changes in land ownership;
- ◆ Other threats, from contaminants, excessive water withdrawal for snow making, and gravel removal; and
- ◆ Lack of information and education about the river, including how the river functions, and how we contribute to the river's problems.

The Best River Ever also included over 100 specific recommendations to address each of these areas, many of which have been implemented.

The Friends of the Mad River have sponsored a number of programs and projects over the years to monitor and enhance water quality, support recreational

uses, and learn more about how the river functions. These include:

- ◆ Annual river cleanups;
- ◆ Assisting riparian landowners with stream bank stabilization and tree planting projects;
- ◆ Completion of extensive geomorphic (physical) assessments of the river leading to the development of the Upper Mad River Corridor Plan;
- ◆ Wildlife monitoring through sponsorship of Keeping Track®;
- ◆ Publication of a Mad River resource guide for teachers;
- ◆ Publication and distribution to every household of a guide for protecting the Mad River; and
- ◆ The Mad River Watch Program, which is an ongoing lay monitoring program that collects and publicly reports water quality data.

High bacteria (E.coli) counts have long been documented through local monitoring data and also in a 1998 study of selected tributaries of the Mad River. This pollution results from failing septic systems, agricultural runoff, and other sources. Currently the Folsom Brook and the Mad River, from the covered bridge in Waitsfield Village to its mouth, are included on the state's list of impaired waters targeted for improvement. These surface waters are listed because monitoring data indicate that bacteria levels currently exceed state water quality standards and impair the use of these waters for swimming and other contact recreation.

A total maximum daily load (TMDL) will be developed that will establish maximum pollutant levels from various sources and/or land uses. TMDL development will involve pollutant source assessments, the calculation of pollution loading rates that meet water quality standards, and associated source reduction requirements.

Gaining public access to the river and protecting its riparian zone is also a local priority. For many years, the only permanent access to the Mad River in Waitsfield was the Couples Club Recreation Field. In 1993, the town acquired the six-acre Lareau Swim Hole parcel for use as a wayside park. Since then, the town has also acquired: the five-acre former Austin parcel adjacent to the swim hole; a deeded access to the river on the former Woliner (now Neill) parcel,

which includes a segment of the Mad River Greenway and a small parking area for the greenway adjacent to the Meadow Road; and a seven-acre parcel with river frontage immediately upstream of the swim hole (Tardy parcel). One hundred twenty-five acres of nearby woodland known as Wu Ledges, with approximately one-half mile of river frontage on the east side, was donated to the town in 2004. The combination of the Wu Ledges, Austin, Lareau and Tardy parcels protects approximately six-tenths of a mile of river frontage on the east side and about 0.15 mile on the west side, with about 300 feet protected on both sides.

In December of 2000 the town purchased the Munn site, a tract of 12.2 acres located at the intersection of Rt. 100 and Kingsbury Road, for the purpose of possible gravel extraction, recreation, wastewater disposal and/or scenic protection. This parcel has approximately 800 feet of frontage on the east side of Mad River.

Phase I and Phase II geomorphic assessments of the Mad River and some of the tributaries were recently conducted with financial assistance of the Department of Environmental Conservation's Ecosystem Restoration Program. Those studies resulted in the mapping of the fluvial erosion hazard area for the Mad River.

**Groundwater.** Fractured bedrock in the high elevations of the Northfield Range and gravel deposits in the lowlands and along the valley floor serve as the principal recharge areas for local groundwater supplies. Groundwater sustains base flows for the Mad River and its tributaries. It also currently provides potable water supply to all Waitsfield's homes and businesses, through a combination of private and small community wells and springs.

While the town benefits from generally abundant groundwater supplies, this dependence on scattered wells, particularly along Route 100 and in village areas, poses risks of potential groundwater contamination from a variety of sources. Once a groundwater source is contaminated, remediation, if feasible, is typically very expensive. There are a number of known contamination sites in Waitsfield, most of which are associated with leaking underground fuel storage tanks. The state requires remediation and/or monitoring of these sites to prevent further contamination of groundwater and potable water supplies.

Groundwater supplies are also affected by periods of drought. During droughts many shallow wells and springs may temporarily dry up. With climate change, weather patterns should be expected to change, but it is difficult to predict at the local level whether this will result in increased or decreased precipitation.

Given the density of development and the lack of a comprehensive plan for wastewater disposal, the groundwater source areas in Irasville and Waitsfield Village are particularly at risk for contamination. Concerns over potential contamination have been a driving force in the effort to provide these centers with municipal water. After more than a decade of planning, design, funding acquisition, and permitting, construction of a new municipal water system began in 2010 to serve the Irasville and Waitsfield Village growth center.

Vital to the protection of groundwater sources is an awareness of their recharge areas. Aquifer recharge areas are zones that contribute to subsurface supplies. A recharge area consists not only of the land area directly above the aquifer through which precipitation percolates, but also of upland areas from which runoff drains towards the aquifer. Uses of these lands, which may have the potential for spills of toxic or dangerous substances, also have the potential to pollute the aquifer. Excessive impermeable surfaces (e.g. from parking lots, buildings, etc.) deplete the groundwater supply. Also, as there is exchange between surface and ground waters, land uses that pollute upstream waters may in time damage downstream aquifers.

Aquifer recharge areas have yet to be adequately mapped, but source protection areas (SPAs) have been delineated as required by the state to protect public community water systems serving 15 or more service connections, or 25 or more users year-round. Under new state and federal regulations, source protection plans also must be developed for non-transient, non-community public water systems, which serve more than 25 people for at least six months of the year. SPAs are delineated for the Fly-In business park, Verd-Mont mobile home park, the elementary and Spring Hill schools, the shopping centers in Irasville, Mad River Meadows, the Eagles, and Butternut Hill.

Within designated SPAs, special consideration must be given to prohibiting, or carefully managing, development and practices that could contaminate local ground water supplies. These include poorly designed

or failing septic systems, underground storage tanks, and the storage of hazardous materials and road salt.

Vermont's groundwater protection law (10 VSA, Chapter 48) sets forth general policies for SPAs, and the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) has published recommended land use guidelines for SPAs. In addition, in 2008 the Vermont Legislature passed Act 199 that enhanced groundwater protection in Vermont by declaring groundwater to be a public trust resource that must be managed by the state for the benefit of all Vermonters.

Act 199 also established a large groundwater withdrawal-permitting program that requires any commercial groundwater withdrawal of more than 57,600 gallons per day (gpd) to obtain a permit from ANR. One of the criteria that a large groundwater withdrawal must meet is that the withdrawal must conform to any town or regional plan. As such, Vermont municipalities have the authority to control where and to what extent large groundwater withdrawals occur through their town plan, as well as the ability to regulate commercial extraction through zoning.

## 11.F EARTH RESOURCES

**Geologic Features & Hazards.** The bedrock underlying Waitsfield consists largely of highly metamorphosed graywacke, phyllite, gneiss and schist. Despite its location in the heart of the Green Mountains, there are no large-scale commercial rock quarries or mineral deposits in town. Only two small-scale quarry operations exist, both of which are operated on a limited basis. The Mad River does offer the recreational collector a chance to find small amounts of placer gold in return for a hard day's work; hand panning for recreational purposes does not require a state permit but landowner permission should be sought and granted prior to any panning.

Geologic hazards are minimal, though isolated rock falls and slides are common on steep or unstable slopes. Regional earthquakes, typically centered in the Adirondack Mountains or southern Quebec, occur with enough frequency and strength that public infrastructure, buildings and utility systems should incorporate basic seismic standards for earthquake resistance.

**Sand and Gravel.** Sand and gravel, found in association with glacial and stream deposits, are locally more abundant and economically viable to extract for

commercial and municipal purposes. The total extent of these deposits is unknown, although soils maps indicate roughly 2,200 acres of sand and 1,900 acres of gravel is known to exist here. There are two permitted, privately owned sand and gravel pits in town, but only one is active.

Historically, gravel extraction from the Mad River was common. In the 1980s, it was recognized that gravel extraction was depriving many of the state's river systems of the sediment needed to maintain its geomorphic stability and causing extreme streambed degradation. Gravel extraction from the rivers and streams is now carefully regulated by the state.

Upland extraction operations also raise a host of potential conflicts. Active extraction operations result in noise, dust, truck traffic and visual blight. Such operations also can create safety hazards, affect groundwater supplies, result in the deterioration of local roads and infrastructure, create tensions with neighboring landowners, and impact an area's rural character for residents and visitors.

However, road maintenance and construction projects are dependent upon sand and gravel, which if not available locally must be hauled from more distant

locations at great expense. In order to maintain safe, attractive roads in a cost-effective manner, the town has secured a reliable and economic source of gravel located east of Route 100 on the former Howard-Tucker parcel, which is accessed from the AmeriGas property south of Armstrong Road. The Town obtained permits for sand and gravel extraction in 2009, and anticipates that the site will provide the Town's road and construction needs for a minimum of twenty years.

The adverse impacts of sand and gravel operations can be addressed to a certain extent through local and state regulations, good management practices and mitigation. These tools can help to ensure that extraction operations have minimal impact on the local area and neighboring properties, and that sites are adequately reclaimed to allow for subsequent use once extraction is completed. Nonetheless, proposed operations must be carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine their compatibility with local circumstances and priorities.



## 11.G SOILS

**Agricultural Soils.** Within the Mad River Valley, Waitsfield contains the greatest concentration of soils defined by the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) as prime agricultural soils. This includes 1,200 acres of prime agricultural soils and another 3,100 acres of soils of statewide agricultural importance. Most of these soils are found in valley bottomlands, but also extend along the broad plateau south of Waitsfield Common (see Map 4 in Appendix B).

The town's less fertile upland soils went out of production a century ago with the abandonment of hill farms, but local farmers continue to rely on the best soils to remain economically viable. The location of active farmland in town strongly correlates with the location of prime agricultural soils. Because these soils are relatively well-drained and support on-site septic systems, they are also inexpensive to develop for a variety of other uses. Subdivision and associated development continue to threaten productive farmland, particularly outside of designated floodplain areas.

Prime agricultural soils are a finite resource. Once converted to other uses, they are rarely returned to agriculture. They sustain and enhance local capacity for food production, and support existing and future farming operations. For these reasons, the town's best agricultural soils must be protected from other forms of development.

Farmers are also required to observe accepted agricultural practices, including the maintenance of buffer strips along waterways, to help minimize soil erosion and loss from farming operations.

**Forestry Soils.** NRCS also has identified the best soils to support commercial forestry, including many upland soils that are too shallow, rocky or steep to support other types of development. As a result, prime forestry soils are generally less threatened by development, but are more sensitive to site disturbance and erosion. To help prevent soil erosion, the state has adopted acceptable management practices to prevent soil erosion and maintain water quality on logging jobs.

**Septic System Suitability.** Currently, all the town's sewage treatment needs are addressed through individual or clustered on-site systems. Soil suitability for on-site septic systems, as determined from state design standards, varies widely throughout town. Map 5 in Appendix B gives an indication of soil suitability for on-site septic systems under state standards. Under this soil classification system, approximately half of the total acreage of Waitsfield is considered either marginally suitable or unsuitable for on-site systems. The majority of the unsuitable soils are located on very steep slopes, with the heaviest concentration being above 1,500 feet in the Northfield Range.

State standards adopted in 2002 reduced required isolation distances to bedrock and groundwater and allow for alternative technologies, which may open up more land to development over time. Local land use regulations should adequately safeguard these areas from incompatible forms of development rather than relying on state septic regulations to limit development.

## 11.H FOREST RESOURCES

Forest is the dominant land cover in Waitsfield, accounting for almost 12,300 acres, or approximately



75 percent, of the town's total land area. Forest resources provide a number of benefits, including an economic return for local landowners, air and water quality, stream flow attenuation, wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities for town residents and visitors, and an important visual backdrop to most scenic vistas. In assessing issues relating to forest resources in town, an understanding of concerns relating to timber management and ownership patterns is important and are addressed under the land use chapter of this plan (Chapter 12).

**Forest Fragmentation.** Forest fragmentation refers to the division of large tracts of contiguous forest land into smaller, disjointed parcels, or their conversion to non-forest cover that diminishes the forest's capability of supporting sustainable forest management, species diversity of both plants and animals, and a host of ecosystem functions. In particular, the fragmentation of productive forestland through subdivision into smaller and smaller pieces and multiple ownerships is a growing problem nationally and in Vermont. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the amount of forest cover in Vermont is decreasing for the first time in approximately 100 years, and the Winooski River watershed is Vermont's most threatened watershed with regard to likely forestland fragmentation.

**Forest Management.** Sound forest management results in a stable economic return for landowners, local resources to support local industry, and perhaps most importantly, an incentive for keeping large tracts of land free of development and available to the public for recreation, wildlife, scenic enjoyment, other "ecosystem services." However, poor forest management can result in the degradation of biological diversity and can damage scenic landscapes.

Generally, a sound forest management plan should consider multiple objectives, including sustainable timber production, the protection of water quality, maintaining a diversity of wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and aesthetic enhancement, depending on the site specifics of the parcel in question and the landowner's vision and needs. Whatever the objectives of a forest property owner, developing and implementing a forest management plan in consultation with a qualified forestry professional is one of the best means of managing a forest parcel for long term, sustainable forest production. Such a plan also provides an opportunity to balance timber production with other important objectives including wildlife protection and recreation.

**Private Forest Lands.** The majority of forestland in Waitsfield is under private ownership. While much of the private forest is made up of large parcels associated with single-family residences, many undeveloped parcels of managed timber lands also exist. Much of this privately-owned forestland is located in the Northfield Range, although large tracts of managed woodlands are located adjacent to the valley bottom. Of the privately-owned forestland in town, more than 4,000 acres are currently enrolled in the state current use program, and are therefore managed in accordance with a forest management plan approved by the county forester. In addition to land under forest management, small saw mills currently operate in Waitsfield, providing a value added industrial base utilizing local forest resources

**Municipal Forests.** In 1991, the town received a gift of 360 acres located on the southwest portion of Scrag Mountain, including much of the ridgeline south of the summit. Since then the town acquired an additional 20-acre parcel, and adjacent parcels of 60 acres and 200 acres were donated to the town in 2008, expanding the municipal forest to approximately 640 contiguous acres of rugged high-elevation land straddling the Northfield ridge. This land provides multiple municipal use opportunities to the town involving recreation, wildlife, scenic and watershed resources, and timber management. Primary access for public recreation and town forest management is enabled through a condition attached to a subdivision approval on private land at the north end of Bowen Road. There is no deeded access to land on the east side of the ridge, but if access cannot be arranged with abutting landowners Vermont statutes may enable the town to access these lands for timber harvesting purposes.

As mentioned in the Water Resources section above, the town also acquired the 125-acre Wu Ledges forest through a donation in 2004. The Wu Ledges parcel encompasses substantial frontage along the east side of the Mad River and much of the hillside that provides the eastern backdrop to Irasville. In addition, as part of the Hastings Meadow subdivision, the town acquired fee title to an adjacent 14-acre forested parcel, a conservation easement on an adjacent undeveloped 25-acre parcel, and trail rights on some neighboring private land. Together, these lands include a diversity of forest types and natural communities, and a network of public trails for hiking, snowshoeing, skiing and mountain biking.

The Conservation Commission has taken the lead on stewardship and management of the Scrag and Wu Ledges forests on behalf of the town. Over the last few years the Commission has overseen the completion of extensive inventories of the natural communities, bird habitat, and timber resources of these parcels. The Commission is now embarking on the process of developing comprehensive management plans for these parcels, integrating the various inventories with information on other attributes, such as recreational opportunities, along with public input on goals and uses.

Public lands like the Scrag and Wu Ledges forests provide a variety of benefits through management of their natural resources and open space amenities and by serving as buffers between more developed areas. These public lands require fewer and less costly services than more intensively used private properties, and thus serve to diminish the need for ongoing taxpayer support. Municipal revenue can be realized through periodic sales of carefully managed renewable timber, thus contributing to Vermont's highly-valued working landscape and forest products industry. Tourism and recreation opportunities, supported by the public access and visual amenities available from undeveloped town forest lands, are a major element of the Mad River Valley's economic structure. Well-considered uses of those lands, including public participation in the planning and management process, will help to maintain and improve the quality of The Valley lifestyle.

Opportunities to expand municipal forests through the purchase or gift of land may exist. Any expansion, however, should be followed by a comprehensive management plan, and should result in the acquisition of lands that will meet the town's policies and objectives with respect to its valuable natural assets.

**Camel's Hump State Forest (Howe Block).** Approximately 550 acres of the Camel's Hump State Forest are located in Waitsfield, in the Howe Block, along the Fayston boundary immediately south of Irasville on Dana Hill. This land is under multiple use management, subject to a Land Management Plan developed by the Vermont Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation. In addition to protecting much of a highly visible hillside, the state forest is actively used by local residents for hunting, hiking, skiing and biking.



## 11.I ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

Environmentally sensitive areas include those areas or features that serve important ecological functions, and are especially susceptible to degradation from land use and development activities. As such, they are generally considered for protection through both regulatory and non-regulatory means.

**Wetlands.** Wetlands historically were viewed as worthless, mosquito-ridden bogs best suited for draining and filling for more productive uses. Wetland areas are now known to serve a variety of important ecological functions, including but not limited to storm water management and flood control, surface and ground water recharge and protection and wildlife habitat. Thus, they are now protected under state, federal and local regulations. Wetlands also present significant development constraints associated with poor drainage and high water tables.

There are no extensive wetland areas in Waitsfield, but many smaller wetlands are scattered throughout town (see Map 6 in Appendix B). The largest concentrations are found in the flood plains of the Mad River and in poorly drained areas in higher elevations south of Bald Mountain, including Printice Swamp.

As of the writing of this plan, there are roughly 640 acres of mapped wetlands regulated by the state as shown on the Vermont Significant Wetland Inventory (VSWI) map for the town. This VSWI map is being updated and it is expected that more of the small wetlands, not previously shown, will be included. Even when this process is complete, site specific information and delineations may be required for the review of impacts associated with a particular development.



Protection is provided through the designation of buffer areas at least 50 feet in width within which very few activities are allowed.

The loss of wetlands, especially upland (palustrine) wetlands, is an issue of national, state and local concern. In some circumstances, where full protection is not feasible given other considerations, mitigation resulting in no net loss of wetland area or function may be appropriate. Wetlands have been identified in areas designated for development within Irasville. In 2001, a functional evaluation of delineated wetlands in Irasville was completed, which showed that the majority of the wetlands in the district were classified as wet meadows and had limited wetland functions.

To the extent feasible, Irasville's wetlands should be incorporated in site planning, design, and storm water management systems. However, in order to achieve higher densities of concentrated development as envisioned for this area, some may need to be developed and mitigation of impacts provided. Further planning for Irasville should continue to explore options for wetlands protection and mitigation with state and federal officials.

**Floodplains and River Corridors.** Flooding is Waitsfield's most common form of natural disaster and the most costly and dangerous to public health and safety. Flooding is also part of a natural process to dissipate the potentially damaging energy carried by raging rivers and minimize water quality degradation.

Waitsfield has experienced flooding and attendant damages stemming from high rainfall events, rain on snow events, higher than normal spring runoff events, and higher than normal precipitation that was associated with tropical storms and hurricanes. The frequency and magnitude of flooding can also be associated with the amount of impervious cover that inhibits infiltration, resulting in greater stormwater runoff.

Flooding can cause inundation – floodwaters rising to levels that can flood roads and basements, whose velocities can be destructive to buildings and dangerous to people. Flooding can also cause fluvial (river-based) erosion, particularly if the stream channel is unstable. Fluvial erosion can threaten public infrastructure (e.g. roads, bridges, and culverts), private homes and business, and public safety and can result in significant property damage.

Mapped floodplains include those areas that have a one percent chance of flooding in any year. These areas serve as a safety-valve by temporarily carrying and retaining bank overflow from spring runoff and heavy storms, and are vital to the health of the river and the safety of the community. Waitsfield's mapped 100-year flood plain extends mostly along the Mad River and the lower reaches of its major tributaries (see Map 6 in Appendix B). Over the past several years, the flood plain maps have been reviewed and updated.

In addition to the risks associated with inundation, there is the related hazard posed by storm-swollen streams and rivers, which may unexpectedly deepen, over-widen, or jump their banks and cut new channels. Due largely to human influences, many stream and river channels are no longer stable. Their instability creates an erosion hazard during major storms, which are becoming more common as a result of climate change. Fluvial (river-related) erosion hazards often exist in locations that are unlikely to be inundated with flood waters. Eroding stream banks are also a significant source of sediment and polluting nutrients entering major rivers and lakes, which decreases water quality.

Management efforts, directed toward long-term solutions that help curb escalating costs and minimize the danger posed or damage caused by storm-swollen streams, can help reduce flood and erosion hazards along river and stream corridors, improve water quality and aquatic habitat, and enhance aesthetic and recreational values of the town's rivers and streams.

Waitsfield experienced a significant flood in 1998 and, most recently, a flood in the spring of 2011, and a devastating flood from Tropical Storm Irene in August of that same year. Waitsfield is committed to improving its resiliency to flood impacts. The town has adopted flood hazard area regulations to limit development within flood hazard areas, as required for municipal participation in the federal flood insurance program. These regulations are intended to protect life and property, and to allow property owners to obtain National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) flood insurance and mortgages at relatively affordable rates. In 2010, the town adopted new floodplain and fluvial erosion hazard regulations and maps as mandated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the NFIP. The town updated its flood hazard bylaws and added a fluvial erosion hazard bylaw to reduce the impacts associated with flooding.

The town adopted the Vermont Transportation Agency's Road and Bridge Standards contained in the most recent edition of The Orange Book for Local Officials to reduce stormwater impacts on town road infrastructure. The town is also working with the University of Vermont to conduct a stormwater management master plan for the town.

Given the increasing cost of taxpayer-funded flood recovery, Waitsfield is also committed to developing and implementing flood hazard mitigation to reduce and avoid the costs associated with the damage that would otherwise occur to homes, businesses, and public infrastructure in the wake of a flood. Hazard mitigation is defined as taking sustained actions to reduce or eliminate the long-term risks to people and property from flooding. Flood hazard mitigation includes strategies that use the beneficial functions of landscape features such as floodplains, river corridors, wetlands, and shorelines to cost-effectively reduce the impacts of flooding. These features provide the town with a first line of defense to dampen the damaging effects of flooding by storing floodwaters, as well as the sediment, nutrient pollution loads, and debris carried by floodwaters. Nationwide, one dollar spent in mitigation saves four dollars in avoided costs from flood damages.

**Wildlife Habitat.** Waitsfield is home to a variety of plant and animal species and natural communities (distinct assemblages of plants and animals in particular environmental settings) that contribute to local biological diversity and ecological integrity, and support traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, foraging, bird-watching and other wildlife viewing. Forested upland areas harbor a wide array of bird species; mammals, such as black bear, deer, bobcat, moose, coyote, fisher, and rumored catamount populations; and many species of reptiles, amphibians, and insects. The Mad River and its tributaries support natural and stocked populations of brook, brown and rainbow trout. Wetland and river corridors, open lands and field edges also provide critical habitat for a variety of species. Wetlands supporting wildlife habitat, although not common in Waitsfield, are essential for the survival of mink, otter, beaver, black bear, moose, ducks, herons, other wading birds and shore birds, a variety of amphibians and reptiles, and other species.

Human activities, however, can have devastating impacts on local wildlife populations, including:

- ◆ The fragmentation and loss of contiguous habitat areas due to subdivision and development;
- ◆ The fragmentation or interruption of seasonal travel corridors;
- ◆ Habitat degradation from air and water pollution; and
- ◆ The introduction of exotic species.

The extent of knowledge about wildlife habitat in Waitsfield and the Mad River Valley has been significantly bolstered by the 2007 Natural Heritage Element Inventory and Assessment for Waitsfield and Fayston prepared by Arrowood Environmental. The purpose of this inventory was to map and assess the natural heritage elements that are important to the preservation of biological diversity. The scope of the project included the identification, inventory, assessment and ranking of five resource elements: wetlands, vernal pools, upland natural communities, wildlife habitat and connecting lands and rare elements.

The Arrowood study provides an overview of the various natural communities found as well as specific habitat types (land with physical characteristics that are critical to the survival of one or more species). While the study includes several maps of different natural features, those maps are not necessarily comprehensive in that extensive fieldwork was not

conducted as part of the study. Therefore, delineation of natural heritage resources still must occur on a site-by-site basis, and unmapped resources likely exist in Town. The study does, however, identify the physical features that comprise the significant wildlife habitats in Waitsfield, including:

- ◆ **Core Habitat**, described as “forested wildlife habitat that is far removed from human activities and their artifacts, such as roads, houses and active farmland.” This includes all of the Forest Reserve District and some adjacent land, especially Mount Waitsfield and the steep valley wall adjacent to the Mad River east of the North Road, as well as much of the land encompassing — the Wu Ledges Town Forest and adjacent areas especially to the south.
- ◆ **Deer Winter Habitat**, or deeryard, is generally found on south or west facing slopes below elevations of 2,000 feet, where coniferous forests predominate. Not only are such areas critical to deer, but nearly half (169 species) of Vermont’s vertebrate wildlife species rely on coniferous forests for at least part of their life needs. Due to their relatively high concentration, deeryards in Waitsfield serve a regional function. Covering approximately 4,000 acres, deeryards are concentrated primarily along the steep slopes parallel to the Mad River, and in the Folsom Brook drainage area.
- ◆ **Wetlands** identified in the study include several different types that are important to wildlife, including floodplain forests, seeps, wetland complexes, oxbow communities and vernal pools, which typically contain water only seasonally.
- ◆ **Mast Stands** are concentrated stands of mast-ing trees (e.g., American beech) that provide fruit or nut production. When concentrated into a stand, these trees provide a critical food supply for a variety of wildlife, including deer, turkey and bear. Mast stands are of particular importance to local bear populations, which tend to prefer stands that are isolated from human habitation. Eight mast stands were identified in Waitsfield, most — but not all — within larger areas defined as core habitat.
- ◆ **Forested Riparian Habitat**. As noted in the section of this chapter that addresses “rivers and streams,” riparian vegetation is not only important for maintaining water quality and

temperature — and therefore fish populations — but also for providing necessary habitat for amphibians, several mammals, including river otter, long-tailed weasels, moose and big brown bats, and a variety of bird species. Establishing stream buffers that limit encroachments and maintain vegetation is an effective way to protect this resource.

- ◆ **Grassland Habitat**, which consists of active farmland used for pasture or hay, is important to a variety of mammals and birds (some species, including deer, fox and bear, even use agricultural land planted in row crops).
- ◆ **Rare & Endangered Species Habitat** sites are inventoried by the Vermont Non-Game and Natural Heritage Project. Because of the vulnerability of the species in question, the precise locations of identified habitats are made available only to relevant officials and experts, and are not published or made available to the general public. To date, no rare or threatened habitats have been identified in Waitsfield, although a complete inventory has not been undertaken.
- ◆ **Ledge, Talus & Cliff Habitats** are used as nesting sites for a number of bird species, as well as denning sites for bobcats and porcupine. It is important that an adequate buffer be established — a minimum of 100 feet — to avoid disturbance from development activities. These areas include several craggy outcrops on the steep lower valley wall rising east of the Mad River, and in the Northfield Range.
- ◆ **Wildlife Travel Corridors** are places where landscape and land use characteristics combine to form an area where wildlife can move across roads to and from habitat areas. Three categories of corridor locations were identified: (1) general corridors likely used by a range of species; (2) potential travel corridors for bear and deer; and (3) travel corridors for amphibians moving between upland and wetland habitats. Although 27 “likely” travel corridors have been identified in Waitsfield, field verification of the location and function of travel corridors is needed.

The Arrowwood study includes management recommendations that can help landowners manage their property in a manner that maintains the ecological functions for wildlife. The study also identified “contiguous habitat units” that describe large areas where

several different habitat types are combined to form a unit of relatively continuous wildlife habitat. All or a portion of 14 different contiguous habitat units have been identified in Waitsfield. This provides a useful context for understanding how various wildlife habitats interrelate in supporting the Mad River Valley's wildlife populations. As discussed in Chapter 8, maintenance of road infrastructure such as culverts and bridges should be done in a way that anticipates the increased frequency and magnitude of high storm flows that are likely with climate change (e.g. using larger diameter and/or bottomless arch culverts). Such actions can offer a win-win solution by reducing maintenance costs in the mid-to-longterm and providing ecological benefits by improving conditions for the movement of aquatic and terrestrial animals within and along stream corridors that roads cross.

As is true of other shared natural resources like the Mad River and our mountain ridgelines, it is important for Waitsfield and the neighboring towns to think about wildlife habitat and natural heritage resources not only on a town-by-town basis but also in a broader, collective context. Such an integrated perspective—one that is not confined by town boundaries—is essential if we and our neighbors throughout the Mad River Valley and beyond are to sustain the diversity of habitat and species that is a defining part of our sense of place. The Arrowwood study for Waitsfield and Fayston, and a parallel one that Arrowwood completed for Warren in 2008, provide an excellent foundation of knowledge from which to advance this type of shared approach to the conservation of wildlife habitat and key natural heritage assets.

The Mad River Valley towns have taken a step in this direction with the development of the Forests, Wildlife, & Communities (FWC) Project in 2008. FWC Project is a collaboration among the Mad River Valley Planning District, local and state conservation organizations, state and federal agencies, and representatives in the town of the Mad River Valley to implement a regional and landscape level approach to wildlife and forestland conservation by engaging and assisting landowners, residents, and local officials about community-oriented and landowner-based strategies for forestland and wildlife habitat conservation. One output of the FWC Project has been the development of maps that bring a valley-wide lens to the individual Arrowwood studies. Through the support of the VT Fish & Wildlife Department and various FWC Project partners, the maps help

prioritize previously mapped resources and serve as a valuable resource for municipal and watershed level planning. The 2011 Tiered Ecological Priorities Map, developed as a planning tool for municipal governments in the Mad River Valley, identifies areas that ecologists have deemed important for conservation. The map prioritizes resources into four levels, reflecting what are believed to be the most important places for maintaining The Valley's fish and wildlife populations and biological diversity. A second map, Ecological Conservation Focus Areas, identifies the degree of co-occurrence or overlapping of several ecological principles. It shows areas appropriate for conservation action, such as where to focus technical assistance or voluntary land acquisition. Together, the information in these maps provide a platform from which the towns and landowners can consider appropriate actions—whether individually or collectively—to sustain the Valley's vital habitats.

## 11.J INVASIVE EXOTIC SPECIES

While some exotic species don't pose a danger in their new host environments, many persist and proliferate to the detriment of native species, natural communities, and ecosystem functions. These organisms can pose a risk because they often have no natural predators and can out-compete native species, greatly reducing biodiversity and altering "ecosystem services" such as forest productivity and outdoor recreation. Thus, these species—which can include both terrestrial and aquatic plants and animals—have been labeled "invasive exotic species."

Invasive exotic species pose a number of environmental, economic, and human health threats. Unfortunately, Waitsfield and the rest of the Mad River Valley are not immune to the effects of invasive exotic species, and the threat from them is growing. The list of such species that are already present in the Mad River Valley is extensive – for instance, Japanese knotweed, glossy buckthorn, honeysuckle, Japanese barberry, Didymo (or "Rock Snot"), winged euonymus or "burning bush," purple loosestrife, and wild chervil. And others that could have a transformative effect on our forests—such as Asian longhorn beetle, emerald ash borer, and hemlock wooly adelgid—are not here yet but may not be far off.

While some species like knotweed are already widespread, the good news is that many are not yet prolific locally and so offer an opportunity for effective

management to prevent or limit their spread. Before the threat and impacts of existing and new exotic invasive species intensify, the Town should do whatever it can independently and in collaboration with others (e.g., the other Mad River Valley towns, appropriate state agencies, nonprofit organizations like the Friends of the Mad River and the Vermont Chapter of The Nature Conservancy) to develop and implement an effective prevention and management regime. Potential elements include:

- ◆ Surveying the presence and location of invasives in town (and the Mad River Valley more broadly). Seek input from foresters and other land managers on what they are finding.
- ◆ Developing an "Early Detection/Rapid Response" protocol to limit and control small-scale outbreaks of invasives before they proliferate into larger, more difficult problems.
- ◆ Addressing invasives in the development and implementation of management plans for town-owned lands.
- ◆ Linking with the emerging statewide citizen science monitoring initiative for invasives, which will include a mapping component and protocols for assessment.
- ◆ Working with the town road crew to adopt and implement best management practices to prevent the spread of invasives (e.g., ensuring all fill that is moved in town is "weed-free," cleaning equipment, changing mowing regimes). The New Hampshire Department of Transportation's 2008 publication "Best Management Practices for Invasive Plants" is one source for formulating BMPs.
- ◆ Replacing any plantings in front of town-owned buildings that have invasives. Use this project as an example to help the public understand and prevent the spread of invasives.
- ◆ Promoting the use of natives by any applicants that are seeking design approvals through the town. At the very least, make sure that the list of approved plants does not include known invasives.
- ◆ Educating landowners about invasives by having information on the town website.
- ◆ Conducting and publicizing an invasives management/restoration project on town lands.

- ◆ Encouraging residents to replace any invasives on their property with native species.
- ◆ Exploring the establishment of a Valley-wide Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) to promote collaborative planning, management, and outreach to prevent or reduce the spread of invasives.

## 11.K GOALS

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- 11.K-1 The responsible stewardship and sustainable use of Waitsfield's natural resources in a manner that protects and enhances the town's and the broader Mad River Valley's environmental well-being for the benefit of future generations.
- 11.K-2 The conservation of natural features that contribute to Waitsfield's and the Mad River Valley's ecological health and biological diversity.
- 11.K-3 Flood resiliency, mitigation, and restoration following flood events such as the one that occurred in May 2011 and Tropical Storm Irene which occurred in August 2011. Particular attention should be paid to protecting the flood-prone Historic District in Waitsfield.

## 11.L POLICIES

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- 11.L-1 Identify and protect important natural resources, including prime agricultural soils, forest resources (soils, products, habitat), significant wildlife habitat, floodplains, river corridors, water resources and other features described in this plan.
- 11.L-2 Accomplish the protection of identified natural resources through measures and programs that support, where appropriate, the sustainable use of those resources, including management of productive forests, agricultural use of productive soils, commercial and non-commercial recreational use of land and water, and the generation of renewable energy in appropriate locations.
- 11.L-3 Support the continuation and expansion of the state current use program to tax farm and forest

	properties at their productive value rather than their development potential. Encourage the participation of Waitsfield property owners in that program.	11.L-7	Explore the benefits of expanding of the Green Mountain National Forest proclamation boundary to encompass land located east of Route 100 which would allow the Town to obtain and/or facilitate federal technical and conservation assistance and Forest Service funds.
11.L-4	Support the efforts of local, regional and statewide conservation organizations to protect open space in Waitsfield through voluntary programs (e.g., purchase or donation of development rights). Priorities for open space protection include:	11.L-8	Ensure that the extraction of finite earth resources, including sand and gravel, is conducted carefully to minimize adverse impacts on surrounding properties and the community at large, and to ensure restoration of the site upon completion of the extraction activity. Development of such resources should be carefully sited to retain, to the extent possible, future access.
11.L-4.a	Productive agricultural land and working farms;	11.L-9	Prohibit land development on slopes of 25% or greater.
11.L-4.b	Primary agricultural soils, including those not presently in production, unless such soils are located on parcels identified as appropriate areas for future development ;	11.L-10	Enact, incentivize and support measures to preserve primary agricultural soils for continued and future agricultural use and prevent the fragmentation and development of these resources through the town's land use regulations.
11.L-4.c	High elevation land (above 1,500 feet) in the Northfield Mountain Range;	11.L-11	Design land subdivisions and land development, outside of designated growth centers, to minimize development on and fragmentation of land characterized by primary agricultural soils.
11.L-4.d	Significant wildlife habitat and travel corridors (as defined in this chapter);	11.L-12	Prohibit land development on wetlands, unless it can be done with appropriate mitigation, particularly with regard to any critical ecological function that may be compromised by development.
11.L-4.e	Trail corridors, river accesses and areas for dispersed recreation (e.g., hunting, hiking, biking and other non-motorized activities);	11.L-13	Design all land subdivision above an elevation of 1,500 feet carefully to minimize or mitigate adverse impacts to significant wildlife habitat, productive forest land, scenic viewsheds, shallow soils and headwater streams. Appropriate methods to avoid or mitigate such impacts include clustering development on the least sensitive portion of the site and retaining the bulk of the subdivided parcel(s) as open space.
11.L-4.f	Riparian lands, river corridors and floodplain;		
11.L-4.g	Identified scenic viewsheds; and		
11.L-4.h	Undeveloped parcels adjacent to existing conserved lands.		
11.L-5	Pursue land conservation projects in accordance with the overall policies of this plan, including, but not necessarily limited to, those related to land use, housing and economic development.		
11.L-6	Support the efforts of the Mad River Valley Planning District, Mad River Valley Rural Resource Commission and other organizations to implement and update the Mad River Valley Rural Resource Protection Plan.		

- 11.L-14 Prohibit land development, including the construction of roads and extension of utilities, above an elevation of 1,700 feet, with the exception of activities related to non-commercial recreation, forest management and low-impact seasonal camps.
- 11.L-15 Design land subdivision and land development to avoid undue adverse impacts to significant wildlife habitat and wildlife travel corridors, including those in the 2007 Natural Heritage Inventory, and contiguous habitat units located outside of designated growth areas, including village and industrial districts and appropriate areas for residential hamlets. An adverse impact to significant wildlife habitat is any consequence of development that would demonstrably reduce the ecological function of habitat on a particular parcel. An adverse impact to contiguous habitat units (or core habitat) is one that would result in a demonstrable reduction in the ecological function of the area, or the type of impact that, along with other impacts in the area, would lead to a cumulative reduction in the ecological function of the habitat in the contiguous habitat unit.
- 11.L-16 Design local incentives to encourage the conservation of large, unfragmented landscapes.
- 11.L-17 Protect and enhance the quality of Waitsfield's surface waters through the maintenance of vegetated buffers and river corridors along all streams.
- 11.L-18 Prohibit the removal of gravel from the Mad River and tributaries in excess of volumes presently allowed by the state.
- 11.L-19 Design land subdivisions and land development to control storm water runoff, increase infiltration and avoid adverse off-site impacts to water quality. Post-development storm water should infiltrate or flow off the property at similar rates and locations to pre-development conditions.
- 11.L-20 Consult with the Friends of the Mad River and local fishery groups on projects that may potentially impact the Mad River and tributaries.
- 11.L-21 Support the efforts of the Friends of the Mad River and other organizations to implement and update the Best River Ever: A Conservation Plan to Protect and Restore Vermont's Beautiful Mad River Watershed.
- 11.L-22 Support the establishment of municipal water and the further investigation of wastewater options to serve designated growth centers as a means of avoiding contamination of ground and surface waters.
- 11.L-23 Maintain the existing classifications of the town's surface waters, with the exception of headwater streams above an elevation of 1,500 feet which should be upgraded to Class A.
- 11.L-24 Develop and implement a plan to allow the encroachment into wetlands with limited ecological functions within the Irasville Village District. Such a plan should include clear strategies for the maintenance or replacement of any lost ecological functions either within or outside of the district.
- 11.L-25 Design land development within mapped water supply source protection areas carefully to avoid groundwater contamination, and uses posing a high risk of contamination.
- 11.L-26 Control the extraction of groundwater for commercial purposes carefully to ensure that water is extracted at sustainable rates and to prevent the depletion of water supplies in the community.
- 11.L-27 Promote sustainable forest management to ensure the maintenance of water quality, the enhancement of wildlife habitat and the avoidance of adverse impacts on scenic resources, including upland areas in the Northfield Mountain range. (See Acceptable Management Practices for Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont).

- 11.L-28 Continue to evaluate development proposals against the policies of this plan during local and state regulatory processes to ensure that such proposals are in conformance with the plan.
- 11.L-29 Manage town-owned conservation properties (Scrag, Wu Ledges, Austin, Tardy) for a responsible, sustainable mix of public values in accordance with management plans prepared by the Conservation Commission with appropriate public input.
- 11.L-30 Collaborate with other Mad River Valley towns and appropriate public and private organizations to further the sound stewardship across municipal boundaries of shared natural assets including the Mad River, mountain ridgelines, wildlife and habitat.
- 11.L-31 Prevent and eliminate invasive exotic species in Waitsfield and the Mad River Valley through town actions, public engagement with landowners and other residents, and collaborative efforts with other towns and partners.
- 11.L-32 Continue to prevent development of critical facilities in flood-prone areas and in the floodplain and floodway.
- 11.L-33 Continue to protect natural and beneficial functions for mitigating flood hazards.
- 11.L-34 Promote hazard mitigation as a cost-effective measure to improve the town's resilience to flooding.
- 11.L-35 Protect the Historic District using hazard mitigation strategies, including flood-proofing and/or elevating structures.
- 11.L-36 Support the the goals of the Forests, Wildlife, & Communities Project, utilizing the Tiered Ecological Priorities Map for conservation planning and development review proceedings. Reference the Ecological Conservation Focus Area Map when focusing on technical assistance or ascertaining cost-efficient utilization of the town's conservation resources.

## 11.M TASKS

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- 11.M-1 Enact, through zoning and/or subdivision regulations, measures to preserve primary agricultural soils for continued and future agricultural use and minimize the fragmentation and development of these resources. [Planning Commission]
- 11.M-2 Form a committee, to include willing landowners, to develop a multi-property management and conservation plan for lands in the Forest Reserve District. [Conservation Commission, Planning Commission, Tree Warden]
- 11.M-3 Develop a revised master plan for Irasville that includes water, wastewater, and stormwater systems designed to correct and avoid contamination of surface and groundwaters. [Selectboard, Town Administrator, Planning Commission]
- 11.M-4 Appoint representatives to participate, on behalf of the town, with the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) in the preparation of TMDLs (total maximum daily load) for the Mad River and larger Winooski River watersheds. [Planning Commission, Friends of the Mad River\*]
- 11.M-5 Consult with the Friends of the Mad River and local fishery groups on projects that may potentially impact the Mad River and tributaries. [Planning Commission, Friends of the Mad River\*]
- 11.M-6 Integrate fish and wildlife inventory data and information into strategies that encourage the preservation of these resources and wildlife corridors in the area. [Conservation Commission, Planning Commission]
- 11.M-7 Participate in the review and revision of the Camel's Hump State Forest (Dana Hill Forest) management plan to ensure that wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities and aesthetic resources are protected and enhanced. [Selectboard, Town Administrator, Conservation Commission]

- 11.M-8 Develop long range management plans for undeveloped town-owned parcels, including Scrag Forest, Wu Ledges, Lareau Swimhole and adjacent land, and the Brook Road parcel. [Conservation Commission, Selectboard]
- 11.M-9 Develop a criteria/ranking system with which the town can evaluate proposed conservation projects for conformance with this plan. [Conservation Commission]
- 11.M-10 Consider preparing and/or adopting Best Management Practices (BMPs) to guide for forest management activities in Waitsfield, and explore appropriate means with which to encourage local compliance with those BMPs. [Tree Warden, Planning Commission, Conservation Commission]
- 11.M-11 Coordinate with land conservation organizations to ensure that conservation projects in Waitsfield are consistent with the goals and policies of this plan. [Selectboard, Town Administrator, Planning Commission, Conservation Commission, Mad River Watershed Conservation Partnership\*, Forests, Wildlife, & Communities Project]
- 11.M-12 Maintain a reserve fund to support local land conservation efforts, with annual allocations included in the capital budget and program. [Selectboard, Town Administrator]
- 11.M-13 Explore ways to educate landowners, especially new arrivals to the community, about techniques for good land stewardship and natural resource conservation. [Planning Commission, area real estate brokers\*]
- 11.M-14 Develop and implement flood hazard mitigation plans when possible. [Planning Commission, Development Review Board, Selectboard]
- 11.M-15 Review and compare the Agency of Natural Resources and Agency of Transportation's guidelines on transportation infrastructure maintenance and development. Determine which should be used in Waitsfield. [Planning Commission, Friends of the Mad River\*]
- 11.M-16 Explore the establishment of a Valley-wide Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) to promote collaborative planning, management, and outreach to prevent or reduce the spread of invasives. [Conservation Commission, Planning Commission, Friends of the Mad River\*, Vermont Chapter of The Nature Conservancy\*, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources\*, The Mad River Path Association, Mad River Valley Recreation District]

## 12 | Land Use

### 12.A OVERVIEW

This chapter describes a future land use plan for Waitsfield. In doing so, it is partly a culmination of the preceding chapters of the plan. Many of the policies related to the protection and enhancement of cultural and natural resources, housing, and economic development are closely related to land use. Likewise, land use decisions and policies have an impact on how the town deals with the needs of a growing population, addresses transportation needs, and provides community facilities and services. To avoid redundancy, the policies of previous chapters related to land use are not reiterated, although those considerations are all reflected in the following discussion.

Identifying a common plan for the use and development of land, and achieving that plan through government policies and regulations, is among the most important, and controversial, planning issue faced by local communities. Historically, almost all land use decisions were made by individual land owners. Because of the profound impact that these many individual decisions have on the community, affecting property values, the demand for public services and facilities, environmental health, public safety, the availability of finite resources, economic opportunity, and the local quality of life, land use decisions are increasingly recognized as a legitimate public concern. These concerns must be balanced with the legal rights of landowners which are defined by a combination of local, state and federal law, and are afforded basic protections under both the Vermont and U.S. constitutions.

### 12.B CURRENT LAND USE

Existing land uses are the result of more than 200 years of Waitsfield's development and evolution. As stated elsewhere, Waitsfield is a rural community with a working landscape, a regional commercial center, a bedroom community, a tourist destination, and is home to a variety of species, habitats and natural resources. This is reflected in the dominant land uses and types of land cover that presently exist.

A dominant characteristic of Waitsfield is the extensive forest cover, especially in mountainous areas and on steep slopes rising from the valley floor. The

town's physical character, however, is defined by the contrasting patchwork of that forest with large areas of farmland, especially in the vicinity of Waitsfield Common and the valley floor, and an attractive built environment. Commercial development is concentrated in existing centers, Waitsfield Village and Irasville, and in the Limited Business and Industrial Districts. Residential development is widely distributed throughout town, although concentrations exist in the village centers and in rural areas served by major roads near the villages.

### 12.C SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Waitsfield has been actively involved in land use planning and development regulation since the early-1970s, and to a lesser extent for many years prior. The future land use plan for the town builds upon historic precedent and past planning efforts. Put simply, it is based upon the desire to maintain and reinforce the town's traditional settlement pattern. This pattern is distinguished by the following distinct features:

- ◆ Compact, mixed use village centers, and industrial areas, served by major transportation routes;
- ◆ A rural landscape surrounding the village centers, encompassing working farms, open meadows and forest and low density residential development;
- ◆ Small, compact residential "hamlets" located in appropriate locations throughout the rural landscape; and
- ◆ The least accessible and most fragile areas, including the mountainous eastern boundary, remaining essentially undeveloped.

To this end, the town has designated distinct land use districts, each with a different character and subject to different development pressures and land use considerations (see Map 11 in Appendix B). Overlapping some of these districts are "overlay" districts which have been established for the historic Waitsfield Village area, the mapped areas of flood and fluvial erosion hazards, and the area that was formerly the Commercial Lodging District. These overlay districts contain provisions that apply only to certain lands or structures within the underlying district. The

following sections describe the unique development context of each district, identify key considerations regarding future land use and development, and establish the foundation for goals and policies set forth at the end of this chapter.

It is noteworthy that much of the discussion regarding land use involves consideration of land use regulations. Where appropriate, non-regulatory tools and programs are also addressed, although these were included to a greater extent in previous chapters. The reason for this is that the Town Plan serves as the blueprint for the town's land use regulations. An important goal of any planning process that results in the adoption of land use regulations is to balance the legitimate interests of the community—as expressed through public policies—with the rights and expectations of individual landowners. The extent to which a community achieves such a balance, however, is always subject to individual judgment and interpretation.

## 12.D FOREST RESERVE DISTRICT

The Forest Reserve District is defined as all land with an elevation of 1,500 feet and above, a total of approximately 4,800 acres, most of which is located in the Northfield Range. The district boundary was established due to geographic and geological characteristics which make these upland areas poorly suited for development. This is especially true at elevations above 1,700 feet, which deserve special consideration regarding land use and development. Distinguishing features of the Forest Reserve District include:

- ◆ Extensive areas of steep slopes, especially above an elevation of 1,700 feet;
- ◆ Thin, highly erodible soils;
- ◆ Over 32 miles of small, fragile headwater streams;
- ◆ Highly visible and scenic hillsides and ridge lines;
- ◆ Very limited access to maintained roads, with no maintained roads serving land above 1,700 feet;
- ◆ Large tracts of productive forest land and, according to the Vermont Biodiversity project, extensive areas of core wildlife habitat.

Although portions of the Forest Reserve District were once used for agriculture, as evidenced by stone walls and patchwork forest patterns, it is almost

entirely forested today. Historically, development in the forest reserve district has been limited, with scattered camps and very few single-family homes. All existing year-round homes are located below 1,700 feet. Changing construction and transportation technology in recent years, however, and a growing market for lots which offer a big view, have increased development pressure in this district. This raises several land use concerns, summarized below.

**Road Access.** The Forest Reserve District encompasses the least accessible areas of town. Few roads provide access, most of those being unmaintained Class 4 roads (such as Palmer Hill, Northfield Gap and Bowen Roads in the Northfield Range, and the Dana Hill Road in the southwest corner of town). Because of the physical conditions found throughout this district, road improvements are expensive and difficult to maintain. This is exacerbated by the distance from other town roads and services.

Proposals to upgrade Class 4 roads to provide year-round access for residential development have been made in recent years. Such upgrades could alter the character of the district through increased pressure to subdivide large parcels for year-round residences, resulting in the fragmentation of wildlife habitat. Emergency access to development in this district is also difficult due to site conditions, and the potential exists for conflict between year-round automobile traffic and other traditional activities, such as logging operations and recreation.

**Residential Development.** Related to the encroachment of maintained roads into this district is the increased attraction of the area for residential development. The district has traditionally been used for timber production, primitive camps and recreation. Not only will additional residential development lead to further land fragmentation, it could: burden the town with increased demand for services in remote areas; increase the potential for conflict between homeowners and other traditional users of the area; result in the diminishment of water quality in headwater streams; and adversely impact prominent ridge lines and hillsides.

In order to limit the adverse impacts of additional residential development in this district, the upgrade of roads and subdivision of large forest parcels should be discouraged. If residential development does occur, careful site selection and screening of new homes

should occur, and landowners should be encouraged to restrict further subdivision of large parcels. It is especially important that development be limited to those areas that are most accessible and pose the fewest physical constraints and lowest risk of environmental degradation—land below an elevation of 1,700 feet.

**Forestry.** Much of the property within the Forest Reserve District is managed in accordance with a forest management plan, and two large parcels are in public ownership and under multiple-use management (Scrag Town Forest and Camel's Hump State Forest). As was stated elsewhere in this plan, good forest management can ensure a sustainable income from timber harvesting while maintaining a healthy environment. A key to good forest management is incorporating best management practices to ensure water quality, minimize soil loss, promote forest regeneration, maintain and enhance habitat and create forest conditions that are aesthetically pleasing.

Programs are available to provide financial incentives to landowners in return for sound management of their property. The state current use program provides tax relief for landowners in return for forest management, and several state and local programs are available to purchase conservation easements from willing landowners.

**Wildlife, Headwater Streams & Recreation.** Important to any consideration of land use and/or development activity in the Forest Reserve District is the potential impact on wildlife habitat, aesthetics, water quality in headwater streams, and the availability of an adequate land-base for dispersed, non-commercial outdoor recreation such as hiking, hunting, and snowmobiling. The public has a clear interest in protecting some of these resources, such as clean water and viable wildlife populations.

Maintaining access for recreation, however, is largely dependent upon the cooperation of landowners. Several large parcels have been posted to prohibit recreational use in recent years, emphasizing the importance of maintaining Class 4 roads for recreational use, and securing better access to Scrag Forest. Other options to maintain public access, including property tax abatement in exchange for leaving property unposted, should be explored.



## 12.E AGRICULTURAL-RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

The largest land use district in Waitsfield, encompassing approximately 10,860 acres, is the Agricultural-Residential District. Within this district is the majority of the town's cleared land, including several active farms, significant wildlife habitat (especially deer yards), the majority of the town's housing units, and a handful of small businesses.

As its name implies, this district was established to accommodate two dominant land uses, agriculture and housing. With single-family homes on lots of varying sizes being the dominant type of housing, maintaining a balance between these two land uses, while maintaining the district's rural character, is an ongoing challenge. Issues associated with this challenge are addressed below.

**Rural Character.** The landscape within the Agricultural-Residential District is a critical element of Waitsfield's rural character and special charm. The term rural character may be ambiguous, although the Mad River Valley Rural Resource Protection Plan loosely defines The Valley's rural character as the historic working landscape formed by open farmland, barns, farmhouses and other historic structures, the scenic backdrop formed by forested hillsides and mountains, tree shaded roads and a meandering river.

Maintaining the town's rural character has long been a planning goal of the community, and continues to be emphasized within this district. Methods to maintain the rural landscape include continued support and protection of working farm and forest land, and balancing that with the careful development of new housing. Achieving this balance is among the most important land use challenges facing the community.

The need for additional affordable housing, especially ownership opportunities for middle-income households, is critical to Waitsfield's economic and social well-being. New approaches that support residential development in appropriate locations while protecting the land base needed to maintain a working landscape in this district are required for Waitsfield to avoid losing its rural character and to prevent excessive development.

**Agriculture & Forestry.** Despite widespread decline in agriculture in many areas of Vermont, farming has fared relatively well in Waitsfield in recent decades. Presently, nearly 3,300 acres of land is open, much of which is in agricultural production. This includes three dairies and 30 other diversified farms as counted by the 2007 Agricultural Census.

In addition to commercial agriculture, there has been a sharp increase in the number of residents keeping horses over the past 10 years. This helps to maintain the agrarian landscape, fosters a direct relationship between landowners and the land, and provides a market for local agricultural products such as hay.

Maintaining a land base for farming and forestry not only helps to maintain Waitsfield's rural character and working landscape, it contributes to the local economic base in a sustainable manner. In the face of global climate change and an increasing world population, maintaining a local food supply may prove in the long run to be critical to the community's survival.

At the same time, the current demand for housing options for local residents is not expected to decline in the near future and a significant portion of the town's new residential growth will likely occur in the Agricultural-Residential District. Maintaining a land base for the production of food and fiber while accommodating the demand for housing is among the greatest challenges facing Waitsfield.

Methods to prevent the conversion of farmland to development and support the economic viability of agriculture include both regulatory and non-regulatory programs. Both should focus on the most productive farm and forest land, such as large tracts of primary agricultural soils, and on lands which are characterized by multiple resources (e.g., outstanding scenery, historic structures, wildlife habitat). When considering the appropriate tool(s) to maintain the economic viability of farmland, it is important to maintain a long-term perspective of what is economically viable,

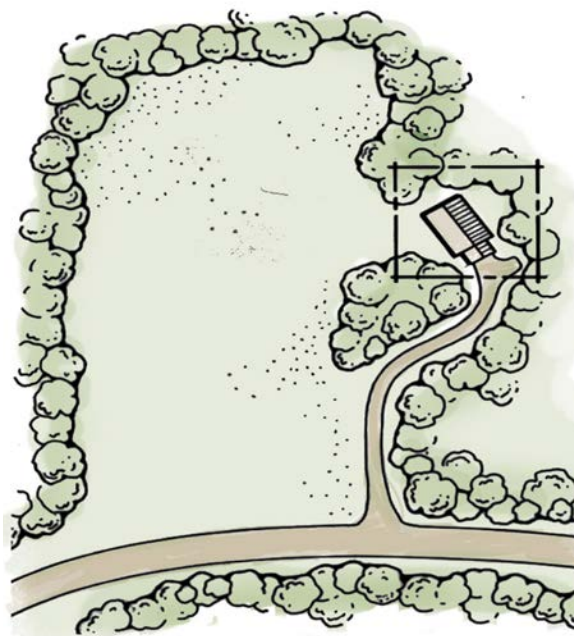
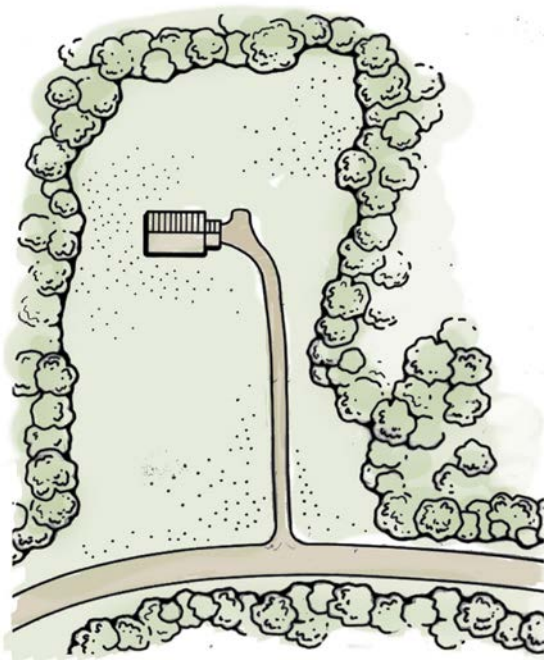
rather than making such a determination at a single point in time.

Non-regulatory tools that have been used successfully in the past include the town's tax abatement program for working farms, which reduces the tax burden on farmers, and land conservation programs in which a conservation easement may be purchased on farmland, thereby removing the development rights and leaving the land affordable for farmers. All or portions of five farm properties, including three dairy farms, have benefitted from the purchase of development rights within the past 20 years.

**Subdivision & Residential Development.** Due to traditional land uses in the Agricultural-Residential District, a great deal of property remains in large parcels under agricultural or forestry management. As a declining percentage of town residents were engaged in farming, however, land subdivision, primarily for residential purposes, has reshaped large portions of the landscape in recent decades. While the subdivision of large parcels frequently benefit the community by providing housing sites for local residents and allowing the transfer of property between parties, poorly conceived subdivision can result in a degradation of the environment and severe impacts on scenic and natural resources.

For the past 25 years, the town has been actively guiding emerging development patterns through the regulation of subdivisions. While this has resulted in more thoughtful subdivision of land, and has ensured that the protection of important natural resources is a consideration during any subdivision application process, the rate of subdivision, and residential development, does not appear to have been affected. During the 1990s, 148 new lots were created, almost all of which were located in the Agricultural-Residential District and as shown on Map 14 in Appendix B, that pattern of residential development continued in the 2000s.

Through the subdivision regulations, the town can ensure that new development does not harm sensitive natural areas, that adequate sewage disposal and water supplies exist, that new roads and utilities are coordinated with improvements on neighboring properties and will meet minimum standards, that farm and forest land remain available for production, and that residential development is encouraged at appropriate densities in appropriate locations.



Common methods of limiting impacts on natural resources and fragile features is through the identification of buildable areas on proposed lots, typically through the use of designated building envelopes, and through the use of conservation or open space subdivisions. A building envelope is the area on which construction will occur, typically selected as the portion of the lot upon which development will have the minimum adverse impact. The illustrations above show how a building envelope can be used to allow for a house site while preserving the agricultural use of an open meadow.

Conservation subdivisions are intended to ensure that subdivision design is based on the identification and protection of key site elements, such as open fields, steep slopes, solar access, etc., and that building envelopes and site improvements are sited, and property boundaries configured, to minimize the impact and fragmentation of those features. Often, clustering of the development on the least sensitive portion of the subdivided parcel is an important feature of conservation subdivisions. The illustration to the left shows how a small subdivision can be designed in this manner.

**Residential Hamlets & Density.** As explained above, the Agricultural-Residential District is the primary location for housing development in the town

(although policies of this plan call for a greater concentration of housing within growth centers). Single-family homes on moderate sized lots (1-15 acres) comprise the majority of housing in this district. The demand for residential development will increase, especially if the factors contributing to the desirability of Waitsfield as a residential community continue as expected.

While the current zoning allows one housing unit on a single acre, some areas of town are better suited than others for moderate and high density residential development. This is especially true for areas near town services. Specific areas that have been identified for consideration for greater residential densities include:

- ◆ Land north of Waitsfield Village and west of Route 100;
- ◆ Land adjacent to Route 100 and the Warren town boundary, in the vicinity of Bundy Road;
- ◆ Opportunities for small-scale in-fill development in the area to the south/west of the lower East Warren Road, including the area served by the Hastings and Palmer Hill Roads;
- ◆ Other areas that may be identified through a public planning effort.

Those areas characterized by undeveloped open land, significant natural resources (e.g. floodplains, steep slopes, etc.), and limited proximity to town services, are not suited for moderate density residential development. These include:

- ◆ Productive farmland, especially along the Mad River/Route 100 corridor and the Common and East Warren Roads;
- ◆ Areas with steep slopes and extensive deer yards; and
- ◆ Higher elevation ridges and knolls which rise above the Mad River and are highly visible from Route 100.

Incentives to encourage higher density residential development and new residential hamlets (small clusters of houses configured in a traditional small-village pattern or oriented around common features such as a park or open space) in those areas that are appropriate for development, while discouraging development in other areas, should be explored. For such a strategy to work, the community will need to have an informed debate regarding desired development

patterns and residential densities in the Agricultural-Residential District.

**Commercial Enterprises.** Other than farming and forestry, housing is the primary land use in this district. Because of the potential conflict between residential and commercial uses, especially in a rural area, few commercial land uses are allowed in the Agricultural-Residential District. Potential conflicts include high traffic volumes generated by many commercial activities, noise and similar disturbances to neighborhood tranquility, and community support for strengthening village districts in Town which could be undermined by commercial sprawl.

A commercial activity which is of growing importance in the Agricultural-Residential District are home-based businesses. Advances in communications and technology, and the trend toward small cottage industries, have increased the important role played by home occupations in Vermont's economy. According to the 2000 census 10.2% of Waitsfield's labor force is employed at home, nearly double the percentage of the County's (5.9%) and state's (5.7%) labor force working at home. The challenge posed by home-based businesses is ensuring that they are compatible with the rural, residential setting, and do not impact neighboring properties through noise, outdoor storage or traffic, or disturb the residential character of neighborhoods.

A limited number of other commercial activities may be compatible with residential neighborhoods in rural settings. These include small lodges and inns and certain recreation and cultural facilities. Such uses can be designed to minimize potential conflicts with residential development and actually be an amenity to area residences. Methods to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts include limiting large scale activities and large traffic generators, ensuring that buildings and uses are of a scale and design that are compatible with residential uses, and locating such uses in historic structures that are no longer viable for their original function (e.g., historic barns—see Chapter 4).

**Resource Extraction.** The demand for the extraction of such natural resources as sand and gravel and potable water for commercial sale are also important issues relating to land use in the Agricultural-Residential District. Unlike most other land uses, resource extraction by its very nature must occur where those resources are located. This presents the potential for

conflict with such other less intensive land uses as housing and recreation.

Sand and gravel extraction may be controlled through zoning to ensure minimal impact on scenic resources during operation and after restoration of the site. Such safeguards as screening, landscaping, restoration plans, bonding for restoration, restricted hours of operation, limited rates of extraction and appropriate traffic management can be considered while reviewing proposed extractions. The impact of trucking sand and gravel on town roads is of particular concern. This may also be addressed by controlling the number, duration and character of truck traffic to ensure road safety, minimize impacts on the neighborhood and avoid excessive deterioration of town roads.

The commercial extraction of groundwater is another issue which has been much discussed locally in past years. Commercial groundwater extraction could provide benefits to the town, including the potential for maintaining large tracts of undeveloped open space. As productive land becomes less economically practical to manage solely for agriculture and forestry, other financial incentives need to be available for landowners to maintain large tracts of undeveloped land. Commercial water extraction provides such an incentive.

Many of the same issues relating to gravel extraction also apply to water extraction, although the disruption of a site resulting from water extraction is not nearly as severe as a gravel pit. Truck traffic and impacts to groundwater are important considerations. With regard to traffic, however, alternative means of transporting water (e.g., pipelines) could be available that are not possible with gravel extraction.

The impact of groundwater extraction on neighboring water supplies, and on the public interest of ensuring that an adequate supply of water remains in the community, are also important issues. Prior to any large-scale withdrawal, safeguards to ensure that neighboring water supplies will not be adversely affected should be established, and issues associated with the impact of privatization of a basic life resource, and the transport of that resource out of the watershed, should be addressed.

## **12.F ADAPTIVE REDEVELOPMENT OVERLAY**

The Adaptive Redevelopment Overlay District encompasses an area of nearly 560 acres along the Route 100 corridor between Irasville and the Warren town line, which was formerly known as the Commercial Lodging District. The distinguishing feature of this district is the presence of several commercial and cultural facilities: the Featherbed Inn, Lareau Farm Inn/American Flatbread, Madbush Inn, and the Yesterday Design/Build School.

In 2009 changing economic conditions, including hotel development at Sugarbush Resort and the expansion of certain existing uses beyond what was originally anticipated, prompted the reconsideration of the Commercial Lodging District's purpose. This resulted in the creation of the Adaptive Redevelopment Overlay District, which allows for the redevelopment and expansion of certain existing sites and businesses in a manner that promotes sustainable, tourism-oriented development in an area historically designated and used for such purposes.

**Rural Character.** The general character and landscape of the Adaptive Redevelopment Overlay District is similar to that of the surrounding Agricultural-Residential District. District boundaries were generally drawn to exclude highly visible areas and productive farm land, which mitigate the impacts of non-residential development. The district is also served by the Mad Bus, although the distance from village centers necessitates that most commercial activities be automobile-dependent.

The same strategies used to maintain the rural character of the Agricultural-Residential District apply to the Adaptive Redevelopment Overlay District. Regardless of the use, careful consideration should be given to ensure that new development is well screened and landscaped, takes full advantage of natural site conditions and does not detract from the character of adjacent properties, including those on the west side of Route 100. Site design should reflect the traditional rural character of the Route 100 corridor, and every effort should be made to discourage suburban or strip development patterns within this district. In instances involving agricultural land, an effort should be made to site development in a manner which preserves the existing character of open fields. Commercial uses should only be allowed at very low densities, preferably in association with the preservation of open space.

**Land Use.** A key concern regarding the future of the Adaptive Redevelopment Overlay District has been the appropriate mix of uses that should be allowed here. The overlay district allows certain small-scale industrial businesses that are compatible with the rural setting and can be expected to promote well-paying jobs. Such uses are envisioned to be low-density (e.g., require a sizable acreage) and to be associated with value-added processing of local agricultural and forest products (e.g., food products, wood products), thereby linking the businesses to policies designed to protect the town's rural character and working landscape. thereby linking the businesses to policies designed to protect the town's rural character and working landscape.



## 12.G WAITSFIELD VILLAGE DISTRICTS

Waitfield Village historically served as the town's commercial and service center, although much of the retail and commercial base has shifted to Irasville in recent decades. But most community services, including the fire department and ambulance service, library, town offices and elementary school, remain in the village.

**Village Character.** Waitfield Village is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a Historic District. The village exemplifies a classic New England development pattern characterized by a compact development center, dominant public buildings and contrast between the village and surrounding countryside. While the village's historic character is largely intact, much of the contemporary development at the northern end deviates from the traditional styles found elsewhere in the village.

An important element of the village's historic character is the sharp contrast between the compact village and the surrounding countryside. The wooded hillside west of the village, and farm fields to the east, are subject to conservation easements and will remain undeveloped. The Mad River and the exposed ledges and winding character of Route 100 to the south also define strong boundaries and a clear southern gateway to the village.

The area to the north of the village, however, including agricultural land bordering Route 100, is critical to maintaining the sharp distinction between the village and the surrounding countryside. The northern boundary of the Waitfield Elementary School property and the row of pine trees north of the Waitfield Telecom property create a strong northern gateway.

Discouraging single-story architecture also should help maintain the village's traditional scale, and careful consideration should be given to the impact of signs and lighting to avoid detracting from the pleasant streetscape found in the village. Opportunities for enhancing the streetscapes should also be pursued, including planting trees to reinforce a canopy along Route 100 and Bridge Street and to ensure the continued presence of shade trees in front and side yards.

To ensure that future development is compatible with the village's historic character and to discourage the demolition of historic structures, a Historic Waitfield Village Overlay District was adopted in 2002 and two distinct zoning districts were established.

**Village Residential District.** The Village Residential District was established to maintain the residential character of the village outside of the historic commercial core in the vicinity of Bridge Street, and to encourage additional residential development. The presence of the polo field in this district presents an opportunity to establish a formal village green. This has begun with the donation of the polo field and the creation of the Flemer Field Community Green.

Efforts are needed to maintain the existing housing base of the village, and to discourage the conversion of residential properties to solely commercial uses. Requiring that some commercial uses, such as retail and offices, locate within mixed use buildings and encouraging upstairs apartments should maintain a housing base and protect the village's residential character.

**Village Business District.** Waitsfield Village historically served as the commercial and service center for much of the Mad River Valley. While many of the retail and professional businesses have relocated to the shopping centers in Irasville, between 80,000 and 90,000 square feet of commercial and institutional floor space is currently located in the village. Much of this total is comprised of professional office space and municipal services.

Existing retail uses are located throughout the village, especially on Bridge Street and along Route 100 north of Bridge Street, which has been designated as the Village Business District. Most of these businesses are craft and specialty shops primarily catering to out-of-town visitors. The Bridge Street Market Place, a commercial complex in the core of the village consisting of four historic structures renovated with the aid of federal historic preservation tax credits, was designed as a retail center. Because of a high demand for office space, much of the marketplace is occupied by non-retail uses. While these firms do not contribute to the village's attraction as a commercial destination, they do provide high quality employment unaffected by the cyclical nature of the tourism industry.

**District Boundaries.** The Village Business District should continue as a retail, service and employment center for the Mad River Valley. Specialty shops should be encouraged to occupy the storefronts along Bridge Street and Route 100, and professional and business offices should occupy rear areas and second floors.

At only 7.4 acres, however, the Business District does not encompass all properties that could be considered part of the village's commercial core. Modest expansion of the district both to the south and north could enhance the economic potential of the district, but should only occur if such expansion will not detract from the historic character of the village, or the residential character of the village residential district.

## 12.H IRASVILLE

The Irasville Village District has served as Waitsfield's principal growth center for nearly 30 years. Centrally located in the Mad River Valley at the crossroads of Routes 100 and 17, Irasville is the result of farsighted land use policies and public and private investment initiated in the 1970s and continuing through today. Encompassing approximately 190 acres, Irasville

was envisioned as a compact, mixed use village serving the commercial, cultural and housing needs of the Mad River Valley. Nearly 200,000 square feet of mixed-commercial space, over 80 residential dwellings, and several recreation facilities have been constructed in Irasville since it was first designated as a growth center.

Irassville not only serves Waitsfield residents, the neighboring towns of Fayston, Moretown and Warren all recognize Irassville as their communities' "downtown" in their respective town plans. This function as the Mad River Valley's downtown has been supported with strategic infrastructure improvements, including road construction to establish a partial grid street network, and planned sidewalk construction to provide pedestrian access within Irassville and a pedestrian connection to historic Waitsfield Village. The lack of community wastewater or water systems, however, coupled with the lack of integrated storm water management, have resulted in a fragmented development pattern and limited capacity to accommodate growth pressure. The construction of a municipal water system and a sidewalk from the elementary school to Route 17 in 2010-13 is a significant step forward in improving the downtown infrastructure.

**Master Planning.** Several master planning efforts have been initiated in the years since Irassville was first designated as the town's growth center. The goal of each of these efforts was the preparation of a master plan that:

- ◆ Illustrates the desired future development pattern within the district in a manner that reflects an efficient use of land and a high density, pedestrian oriented village center;
- ◆ Defines the development characteristics that should provide the necessary foundation for improved building and site design standards under the town's development regulations;
- ◆ Establishes a framework to ensure that development results in an interconnected network of roads and paths, which in combination will reduce reliance on the automobile and provide local alternatives to Route 100;
- ◆ Identifies open space that should be incorporated into development plans, including both formal (e.g., village green) and informal (natural area, wetland) types of open space; and

- ◆ Addresses facility and infrastructure needs, including storm water management facilities needed to address the potential water quality impacts of high density development in a coordinated manner.

Master planning efforts date back at least to the early 1980s. The first comprehensive physical design for Irasville prepared in 1997 proposed a compact downtown characterized by an interconnected grid of streets and sidewalks, well defined streetscapes, two village greens and multi-story buildings housing a mix of commercial, civic and residential uses.

That planning effort was expanded and further refined in the 2002 Master Development Plan for the Irasville Growth Center: A Vision for a New Village. The 2002 plan illustrates many of the design concepts that should characterize future development in Irasville, although further refinement of the plan is still needed.

While no single master plan has been formerly endorsed by the town, several key design concepts and development issues have been identified during the various master planning efforts. These are consolidated into a conceptual plan as shown on Maps 10 and 12 in Appendix B. These concepts and issues are addressed in greater detail below.

**Settlement Patterns.** Much of Irasville's early development was designed to function as a more automobile oriented growth center, in contrast to Waitsfield Village. Thus, much of the development that occurred in the 1970s and early-1980s - Fiddlers Green, Mad River Green, Village Square, Shaw's, Winter Park - lacks pedestrian orientation and scale, and these complexes are poorly integrated with one another.

Following an approximately 15-year lull in development, pressure to construct new office, retail and residential space resumed in the late 1990s. The expansion of Mad River Green and the construction of the Northfield Savings Bank, along with the associated construction of a new road serving those uses, marked the first significant development since the early 1980s. That project also marked a shift away from automobile-oriented development to a denser, more pedestrian-oriented pattern reminiscent of traditional Vermont villages. That is the pattern that should continue to characterize new development in Irasville. Defining features of this desired settlement pattern include:

- ◆ An interconnected network of roads and pedestrian paths;
- ◆ Well defined streetscapes, defined by closely spaced buildings fronting close to the road, sidewalks, street trees and, where possible, on-street parking;
- ◆ Opportunities for rear-yard "in-fill" development where defined streetscapes are not present or practical;
- ◆ Formal and informal open spaces, including a village green(s) and greenway network, possibly encompassing "green infrastructure," such as storm water facilities;
- ◆ Multi-story buildings;
- ◆ A pedestrian scale of site and building design;
- ◆ A mix of uses, including upper-story dwellings where practical; and
- ◆ A density of development that is considerably higher than adjacent districts, especially the Agricultural-Residential District.

To achieve these development features, further refinement of the 2002 master plan will be required, and the town's development regulations will need to be updated to reflect desired pattern. In addition, key development constraints, most significantly the wet meadows between Mad River Green and the Carroll Road, may need to be developed, provided that the ecological function of the wetlands can be mitigated.

Not only are the scale, design, location and orientation of buildings critical to Irasville's emerging settlement pattern, but also the location and design of open space is critical as well. Future development should incorporate two key open space features into the overall design of the district—the establishment of a public green, or common, which can be used for community events, gatherings and recreation, as well as a less formal greenway and path network that would provide a natural contrast to developed areas.

**Land Use & Character.** As noted, Irasville encompasses a full range of land uses, including the Mad River Valley's principal commercial and service enterprises, a mix of single- and multi-family dwellings (including several upper-story apartments), office space for a range of professional and business enterprises, and a limited amount of light manufacturing space.

The focus of most past development activity has been along both sides of Route 100 from the intersection of Bragg Hill north to the Couples Club driveway. This area provides the greatest opportunity for new construction and infill development and should be developed as the area's downtown core with a full range of commercial services, civic and cultural facilities, offices and multi-family housing. Surrounding areas, including land to the west and south of Winter Park and adjacent to Bragg Hill, provide opportunities for new residential neighborhoods.

The Irasville Business Park (formerly Mad River Canoe manufacturing buildings) and adjacent land north to Allen Lumber raise specific challenges to the community. Currently, buildings in this area are large monolithic structures that create more an appearance of an industrial park than a traditional village. Future development or re-development in this area should occur in a manner that minimizes, or reverses, potentially adverse impacts of such structures on the surrounding area through building design that reduces the mass and scale of large buildings and extensive landscaping and screening. Industrial uses, including service industries that do not provide on-site services or products to customers, should be limited to the area along the Fayston boundary between Mad River Canoe and Allen Lumber, and should not be allowed to encroach further to the east toward Route 100.

A third distinct area or neighborhood in Irasville is located below the upper terrace on which Mad River Green and Village square are located. Fiddlers Green is a low-density commercial complex housing offices and service businesses such as a car wash and laundromat. To the north of Fiddlers Green is a predominately residential area in which approximately 50 dwellings are located. Additional infill development consisting of commercial, office and residential uses is appropriate on land with frontage on the Fiddlers Green Road, but in a manner that uses land more efficiently than past development. Land to the north, served by the Dugway and Butcher House Roads, provides another opportunity for residential neighborhood development.

A generalized land use plan for Irasville, identifying appropriate areas for residential, industrial, commercial and mixed use development, is included as Map 12 in Appendix B.

**Facilities & Infrastructure.** The lack of water and wastewater infrastructure has been identified as a critical barrier to development within Irasville since the 1980s. With much of the best land already developed, the provision of water and/or wastewater systems remains the most important infrastructure need.

Again, how wetlands mitigation and storm water management issues are resolved will shape how the district develops and evolves over time. The 2002 master plan envisioned that several wet meadows could be developed with mitigation to maintain and enhance their limited ecological values.

Roads and pathways are another key infrastructure consideration. One of the most significant shortcomings of the 2002 master plan is the absence of possible future roadway connections parallel to Route 100 from Bragg Hill to Waitsfield Village. Where and how these road connections are established should be considered before any specific development eliminates a desirable connection opportunity.

Another public amenity that is supported by a wide cross section of local residents is open space, including one or more formal village greens of a size and character sufficient to serve as a community focal point and gathering place for events such as the farmers' market. Additional locations for a formal green include a portion of the open field adjacent to the Skatium. A defining feature of a village green, however, are clear boundaries defined by an attractive collection of buildings.

Finally, Irasville is well served by broadband telecommunications infrastructure and three-phase power. In the future, new utility extensions should be located underground, and the feasibility of burying above ground utilities should be explored.

## 12.I INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

The Mad River (formerly "Fly-In") Industrial Park is located with direct access to Route 100 from the Airport Road. It was designed to accommodate industrial and other high intensity land uses in an area which would not adversely impact the quality of life found in more rural areas, and was located in an area which would not generate high traffic volumes in already congested areas, or detract from the historic character and pedestrian scale of Waitsfield Village and Irasville.

After several years with very limited development activity, the park changed ownership in the late 1990s and has seen a great deal of activity in the years since. In response to a realization that local zoning was inadequate to address recent development pressures, the Planning Commission worked with landowners and other local officials to revise the zoning standards and district boundaries in 2001. At its peak, an estimated 100 to 150 people were employed by businesses located in the park, though a large volume of the space remains unoccupied today.

**Land Uses.** Mad River Park is well suited for light industrial and manufacturing uses, and future development within the district should be primarily light industry and related uses. Commercial uses, especially those which generate high traffic volumes from customers or require frequent access to the general public, such as retail and some office uses, should be limited to enterprises that are intended to provide services and goods to on-site employees rather than the general public.

**Performance Standards.** The nature of many industrial uses often impact neighboring properties due to excessive noise, odors, vibration or similar results of industrial processes. To avoid such impacts, it is especially important that development in the Industrial District comply with well defined performance standards to address potential impacts which should be measured and enforced at the boundaries to the district.

**Master Planning.** Past development in the park has been the result of incremental subdivision of lots and subsequent development of single sites. While the building and site design have generally been of very high quality, the emerging development pattern does not reflect the most efficient use of the land. This is important as the district is comprised of a finite land area, and future expansion may pose conflicts with neighboring properties.

To ensure that the build-out of the park occurs in a logical, efficient manner, a master plan should be prepared prior to additional subdivision and site development. Such a plan should provide a conceptual build-out of the park, including lot and road configuration, which could be implemented over time and revised if needed.

## 12.J LIMITED BUSINESS ZONE

The Limited Business District is a small (45+ acres) area located east of Route 100, between Irasville and the Warren town boundary. The area was initially designated due to its central location within the Mad River Valley, although the intent was to limit development to commercial uses then in existence. Over the years, the area has grown to include a mix of uses that currently includes light industry, offices, a few residences and public facilities, including a VTrans maintenance facility and the Mad River Valley's only trash transfer station.

**Character & Land Use.** Due to past development, and state permit conditions associated with wetlands and deer yards located in the district, only limited land is available for future development. Existing uses may seek to expand over time, however, and some vacant and/or semi-developed land is available for additional development. Careful consideration should be given to site design, including:

- ◆ Landscaping and screening to avoid any adverse visual impacts along Route 100;
- ◆ The elimination of curb cuts where shared access with neighboring properties is possible;
- ◆ A restriction of retail sales and other traffic generators;
- ◆ Avoiding additional "frontage" lots which could reinforce a linear pattern of highway "strip development"; and
- ◆ Minimizing the impact on neighboring properties as a result of excessive or obnoxious odors, noise, or lighting.

In 2010, the Selectboard approved the addition of mixed-use development in order to support the inclusion of residential uses with other conditional uses in this district.

**District Boundaries.** Consideration was given to reducing the size of the district when zoning revisions were drafted in 2002. In response to landowner concerns, only minor changes to the existing boundaries were made to coincide with property boundaries. Future changes may be appropriate, although none should be undertaken that would increase the size of the district.

## 12.K HAZARD OVERLAY DISTRICTS

To minimize flooding (inundation) hazards, Flood Hazard Area regulations limit and regulate development within mapped floodplains that are susceptible to a 1% annual chance of flooding (i.e., 100-year floodplain). These regulations are required for town participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The town's regulations were updated in 2010 to meet NFIP requirements, in association with newly digitized flood maps.

At the same time flood hazard area regulations were updated, the town adopted fluvial erosion hazard area regulations for areas at risk from gradual or catastrophic stream bank failure. These regulations are intended to limit property loss and protect the public from hazards associated with stream channel movement.

Development in both overlay districts may be limited, subject to special design standards, or prohibited. Most development in these districts requires public hearing and conditional use approval from the Development Review Board, and documentation that applicable state permits or certifications have been obtained.

## 12.L GOALS

- 12.L-1 The preservation of Waitsfield's historic settlement pattern, defined by compact villages surrounded by rural countryside.
- 12.L-2 The regulation of land development in a manner which protects important cultural and natural resources while encouraging a range of land uses in appropriate locations.
- 12.L-3 Maintenance of a reasonable balance between community imposed limitations on land use and the rights of individual land owners.

## 12.M POLICIES

- 12.M-1 Maintain the town's historic settlement pattern of compact growth centers surrounded by rural countryside in accordance with the land use plan and associated land use districts described in this chapter and depicted on Map 11 in Appendix B.

- 12.M-2 Administer land use regulations, including zoning and subdivision regulations, in a fair and consistent manner, in accordance with all applicable development and land use policies of this plan.
- 12.M-3 Maintain the Forest Reserve District for the purpose of protecting significant forest resources and headwater streams and to limit development in areas with steep slopes, shallow soils, wildlife habitat, fragile features, scenic resources and poor access to town roads, facilities and services. To this end,
  - 12.M-3.a Land use and development shall be limited to forestry, outdoor recreation, small seasonal camps, and year-round residential dwellings below an elevation of 1,700 feet;
  - 12.M-3.b Roads and utilities shall not extend at or above elevations of 1,700 feet except to provide seasonal access to camps, forestry operations and for recreation;
  - 12.M-3.c Development shall be carefully controlled to avoid adverse visual impacts, degradation of water quality, and the large-scale fragmentation of wildlife habitat and productive forest;
  - 12.M-3.d When land is subdivided, provision should be made to ensure access for future forest management and to avoid potential conflicts between land uses;
  - 12.M-3.e Residential development shall occur at low densities (maximum of one unit per 25 acres), although house lots should remain small with the balance of the land being held in larger parcels, to avoid the fragmentation of forest land. PUDs are an appropriate means for clustering development in this manner.
  - 12.M-3.f Promote sustainable forest management to ensure the maintenance of water quality, the enhancement of wildlife habitat and the avoidance of adverse impacts on scenic resources, including upland areas in the Northfield Mountain range. (See "Acceptable Management Practices for Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont").

- 12.M-4 Maintain the Agricultural-Residential District for the purpose of supporting the continued operation and expansion of agricultural operations, forest management, the preservation of rural resources and natural features, and to accommodate low density residential development while encouraging moderate or high density clustered residential development in appropriate locations. To this end:**
- 12.M-4.a Limit land uses to agriculture, forestry, residences, land based uses (e.g., recreation, extraction) and very limited commercial or public facilities that are compatible with the rural, residential character of the district or support primary residential or agricultural uses;
  - 12.M-4.b Provide for the creation of clustered residential hamlets in appropriate locations, while balancing those higher-density developments with lower-density development and land conservation elsewhere in the district; and
  - 12.M-4.c Ensure that land subdivision and residential development is designed in a manner to protect the rural landscape (e.g., farmland, open meadows, forested ridge lines) and land characterized by fragile features (e.g., floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes), and to avoid the fragmentation and development of land containing significant areas of primary agricultural soils.
- 12.M-5 Land within the Adaptive Redevelopment Overlay District should continue to support agriculture, the preservation of rural resources and natural features, and accommodate moderate or high density clustered residential development and appropriate non-residential uses in appropriate locations. To this end:**
- 12.M-5.a In addition to agriculture, forestry, residential and land-based uses (e.g., recreation, extraction), allow for lodging and limited commercial uses as part of redevelopment as a PUD in order to promote mixed uses in former lodging properties;
  - 12.M-5.b Provide for the creation of clustered residential hamlets in appropriate locations, while balancing those higher-density developments with lower-density development and land conservation elsewhere in the district; and
  - 12.M-5.c Ensure that land subdivision and residential development is designed in a manner to protect land characterized by fragile features (e.g., floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes), and to avoid the fragmentation and development of land containing significant areas of primary agricultural soils.
- 12.M-6 Ensure that development within Waitsfield Village is compatible with the historic scale and pattern of development, and with historic architectural styles, and discourage the demolition or inappropriate alteration of historic structures.**
- 12.M-7 Maintain the Waitsfield Village Residential District for the purpose of allowing high density mixed use development, especially housing, in a classic village setting in a manner compatible with the historic character of the village. To this end:**
- 12.M-7.a Maintain a mix of residential, civic and commercial uses, while limiting retail and office uses to parcels adjacent to Route 100 and within mixed use buildings which contain residential dwelling(s);
  - 12.M-7.b Maintain the well defined village boundaries and sharp contrast between the compact village and surrounding rural countryside.
- 12.M-8 Maintain the Waitsfield Village Business District for the purpose of allowing a high density mix of uses, including retail, services and offices, in the historic village core, and consider expanding the district to the south to include adjacent properties with similar uses.**
- 12.M-9 Maintain the Irasville Village District to serve as the Mad River Valley's primary commercial center, and Waitsfield's principal growth center, by allowing high density mixed use development in a compact development pattern. To this end, a full mix of**

	commercial, civic and residential land uses in locations as generally described above, shall be allowed.		and bulk, to create visual interest, and to achieve an architectural scale that is pedestrian friendly. This may be accomplished through the use of a combination of the following elements:
<b>12.M-10</b>	<b>Development within the Irasville Village District shall reflect the general development concepts outlined on Maps 10 and 12 in Appendix B. The resulting development pattern shall be characterized by:</b>		
12.M-10.a	An interconnected network of roads, pedestrian paths and the multi-use Mad River Path;	12.M-12.a	Modulation (wall projections, recesses);
12.M-10.b	Well defined streetscapes, defined by closely spaced buildings fronting close to the road, where practical, sidewalks, street trees and, where possible, on-street parking;	12.M-12.b	Articulation (varying building facades, footprints);
12.M-10.c	Formal and informal open spaces, including a village green(s) and greenway network, possibly encompassing "green infrastructure," such as storm water facilities;	12.M-12.c	Variations in roof line (e.g., dormers, gables, cornices, decorative facings);
12.M-10.d	Multi-story buildings (except in instances involving small accessory structures or where a multistory addition to a single-story structure is not feasible);	12.M-12.d	Upper story setbacks;
12.M-10.e	Pedestrian scale of site and building design;	12.M-12.e	Fenestration (spacing of windows, entryways);
12.M-10.f	A mix of uses, including upper-story dwellings where practical; and	12.M-12.f	Smaller scale additions; and
12.M-10.g	A density of development that is considerably higher than adjacent districts, especially the Agricultural-Residential and the Adaptive Redevelopment Overlay Districts.	12.M-12.g	Avoidance of pre-fabricated metal structures.
<b>12.M-11</b>	<b>Notwithstanding the design guidelines set forth in #10 above, additional opportunities for residential in-fill development shall also be encouraged where well defined streetscapes are not present or practical. Such opportunities include the rear yards of existing buildings and on lots occupied by other uses.</b>	<b>12.M-13</b>	<b>Policies and tasks regarding sidewalk and road improvements, water and wastewater infrastructure, wetlands mitigation, housing, and economic development related to Irasville should be pursued in a coordinated manner.</b>
<b>12.M-12</b>	<b>Large buildings (in excess of 4,000 square feet) shall be designed to reduce their apparent mass</b>	<b>12.M-14</b>	<b>Integrate and encourage bicycle and pedestrian traffic within the Irasville Village District and adjacent districts, and the infrastructure to support it.</b>
		<b>12.M-15</b>	<b>Maintain the Limited Business District for the purpose of allowing residential, non-retail commercial businesses, light industry and public facilities in a central valley location, in a manner that minimizes visual impacts as viewed from Route 100 and avoids a linear pattern of strip development.</b>
		<b>12.M-16</b>	<b>Maintain the Industrial District as a non-retail commercial area and encourage a variety of light industries and compatible uses, separated from surrounding residential areas through screening, buffering and compliance with specific performance standards. A master plan should be developed to ensure the most efficient use of available land, and</b>

to ensure that development occurs in a logical, integrated manner.

- 12.M-17 Through an ongoing planning process, ensure that capital improvement planning is coordinated with land use planning to avoid conflict.
- 12.M-18 Ensure that local regulation does not deny the reasonable use of property and that restrictions imposed on land use are based on clearly defined community objectives.
- 12.M-19 Refer to the goals, objectives and strategies set forth in this Town Plan during all conditional use, PUD, subdivision reviews and all state and federal regulatory reviews.
- 12.M-20 Adopt an Official Map to identify future road and trail improvements and important open space.
- 12.M-21 Explore the use of tax abatement as a method of obtaining public use of private lands in order to extend the Mad River Path.
- 12.M-22 Explore the adoption of an Adaptive Redevelopment Overlay District ("AROD") similar to the current AROD district south of Irasville that would cover the area of Route 100 north of the Village Residential District that would offer increased flexibility for the redevelopment of existing commercial properties in that area while preserving the agricultural and scenic resources of this corridor to the town center.

## 12.N TASKS

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- 12.N-1 Inventory development capacity within the Agricultural-Residential District to determine appropriate sites or areas able to support rural hamlets (clusters), while simultaneously strengthening resource protection standards elsewhere in the district. Update zoning regulations as needed. [Planning Commission, Conservation Commission]
- 12.N-2 Prepare an Official Map for the Irasville Village District depicting future public improvements, including

roads, sidewalks, paths and park areas, and a town green/common. [Planning Commission]

- 12.N-3 Implement a revised master plan for Irasville, including the development of a decentralized wastewater system, to accommodate higher densities of residential and mixed-use development, that includes housing, in appropriate locations within Irasville. [Selectboard, Town Administrator, Planning Commission]
- 12.N-4 Revise the towns zoning regulations to establish clear site and building design standards to guide development in Irasville in accordance with the aforementioned master plan, as revised and modified by the Planning Commission. [Planning Commission]
- 12.N-5 Pursue mitigation analysis of wetlands in Irasville, as addressed elsewhere in this plan, in order to accommodate future development needs and reinforce a compact development pattern in Irasville. [Planning Commission]
- 12.N-6 Review current administration and enforcement practices related to the zoning and subdivision regulations and ensure that all standards and associated permit conditions are efficiently administered and strictly enforced. [Planning Commission, Administrative Officer]
- 12.N-7 Evaluate historic preservation standards for Waitsfield Village to determine whether they are adequate to maintain the historic character of the Village, and strengthen said standards in the event they determined to be inadequate. [Planning Commission, Waitsfield Historical Society\*]
- 12.N-8 Investigate future road connections and trail improvements in the Town Center.
- 12.N-9 Identify "visible" ancient roads before the 2015 deadline for the town to claim them.

## 13 | Implementation

In too many communities, town plans are set aside and ignored soon after adoption. This may be due to several factors, including ambiguous plan goals and policies, a lack of local support for long range planning, and/or a lack of resources and money, people, and time to accomplish everything called for in the plan. In Waitsfield, however, the Town Plan has traditionally been viewed as a living document which outlines a path for the community. This chapter summarizes many of the mechanisms that are available to make sure the plan remains current and relevant.

### 13.A PLANNING

**Plan Adoption.** Adoption by the Waitsfield Selectboard is the first step in putting the plan into action. Through adoption, the Selectboard accepts this document as the guide for future physical growth and change in the town.

**Regional Approval.** Approval by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) allows for greater regional planning and cooperation among towns in addressing mutual problems and challenges, maintains the town's eligibility for municipal planning funds as well as its authority to enact certain programs (e.g., impact fees). Once the plan is approved by the Selectboard, it should be submitted to CVRPC for regional approval.

**Ongoing Planning & Plan Amendments.** The plan automatically expires five years from adoption. Before the plan expires, it should be thoroughly reviewed,

and information on which the plan is based should be updated.

This plan incorporates the findings and conclusions of a wide range of special studies, public processes and related planning projects that have taken place over the past 20 years. Thus, rather than relying on a planning process that lies dormant for four years only to re-emerge for the purpose of updating the Town Plan, Waitsfield has been actively engaged in an ongoing planning process. Such an ongoing effort, which should involve periodic evaluation of the plan against changing community conditions and needs, is critical for keeping the plan current and relevant.

### 13.B STATE PERMIT PROCEDURES

Presently, any commercial development in Waitsfield involving 10 or more acres of land, and any residential development or subdivision resulting in the creation of 10 or more dwelling units or lots, requires Act 250 approval. One of the Act 250 criteria is that the development be in conformance with the town plan. In the case of Waitsfield, conformance should be determined by whether the proposed development is consistent with specific policies listed at the end of each chapter of this plan. If a project is not consistent with a specific policy, it should be determined to be not in conformance with the plan.



Both the Planning Commission and Selectboard have party status to participate in all Act 250 review processes. Both bodies should monitor project applications and participate in those processes whenever appropriate. Other state and federal regulatory processes, for example Section 248 (related to public energy facilities) and the National Environmental Policy Act (related to federally funded projects) also provide opportunity for local participation and review against the policies set forth in this plan.



### 13.C LOCAL REGULATIONS

This plan should serve as the blueprint and policy guide for future revisions to local land use regulations. Suggestions for revisions, or for additional study, are described throughout the plan. In addition, certain provisions of the existing regulations require that projects be consistent with the policies of this plan. To ensure that future development is consistent with the plan, the Development Review Board shall refer to it during the review process.

In addition to land use regulations, an Official Map is a regulatory implementation tool that the town may use to lay out future road and infrastructure improvements and provide a legal mechanism for the community to acquire necessary land for those improvements prior to its being lost to development. Waitsfield has or could adopt other ordinances to carry out policies and strategies described in this plan such as a road ordinance, water or wastewater ordinances, or a special events ordinance.

### 13.D MUNICIPAL POLICIES & PROGRAMS

Regulatory measures are not the only means with which Waitsfield can implement various sections of this plan.

**Property Tax Policy.** Although a municipality's authority to use local property tax dollars to implement a town plan was limited with the passage of the state-wide education tax, there are still opportunities to use the property tax to achieve several of the policies included in the preceding chapters.

Waitsfield maintains an agricultural property tax abatement program for eligible farmers, and has worked with local businesses to abate a portion of the property tax on new facilities and to help secure tax incentives available through the Vermont Economic Progress Council. In addition, there are opportunities to pursue special taxing districts, and to establish tax increment finance districts, to help fund local infrastructure improvements.

**Public Spending.** Waitsfield has a history of making strategic investments in the town's infrastructure, public services, and for special projects. Over the past 20 years, the town has:

- ◆ Acquired and developed parkland and assisted with the creation and maintenance of other recreation facilities;
- ◆ Supported private non-profits to expand needed facilities (e.g., Mad River Valley Ambulance);
- ◆ Acquired the General Wait House and created an information center and public rest rooms;
- ◆ Contributed toward the acquisition of development rights on scenic and productive land;
- ◆ Funded sidewalk improvements;
- ◆ Developed plans for municipal water and wastewater facilities to serve the Irasville and Waitsfield Village growth center;
- ◆ Secured funding, obtained permits, and began construction of the municipal water system;
- ◆ Secured funding to initiate a decentralized wastewater system pilot project in Irasville;
- ◆ Acquired grant funds to develop senior housing and to acquire the Verd-Mont Trailer Park to ensure perpetual affordability; and
- ◆ Maintained the local road network and public buildings in excellent condition.



Many of these projects were supported by state and federal grants. Consequently, local tax dollars have helped to leverage millions of dollars of supplemental revenue for the town. Through the capital budget and program and continued emphasis on securing state and federal grants, many of the policies of this plan may be directly supported.

**Land Conservation.** Land conservation is a common mechanism for implementing a variety of local policies related to farmland and forest preservation, natural resource protection, economic development and land use planning. One reason for the growing use of these tools is the availability of statewide funding sources and the presence of active land conservation organizations.

In the Mad River Valley, there is, in addition to statewide resources, a local partnership made up of state and regional organizations dedicated to protecting natural resources and open space within the Mad River Watershed. Coordination with these efforts could help the town achieve many of the policies described in the plan.

## 13.E TASKS

The matrix that follows identifies the specific tasks that should be undertaken to implement the goals and policies of this plan. The matrix lists the goals and policies related to each task by number. It also establishes a time frame for completion and a priority level for each task.

Short-range tasks should be undertaken during this five-year planning period. Medium-range tasks should be undertaken within the next five-year period. Long-range tasks have a time frame of more than 10 years. Ongoing and annual tasks should remain part of the regular activities of town government, while as needed tasks should be done as specific circumstances arise.

Within each of those time frames, the tasks have been further classified as a high, medium or low priority, which is intended to guide the order in which tasks are implemented. It should be recognized, however, that time frames and priorities may need to change between plan updates in response to current conditions or issues facing the town.

The matrix also identifies the town board or staff with responsibility for carrying out each task and potential partners outside town government.

	High Priority Tasks	Time Frame	Partners
4.I-1 5.L-1 12.N-3	Update the master plan for Irasville, including the development of a municipal wastewater system, to accommodate higher densities of residential and mixed-use development, which includes housing, in appropriate locations within Irasville.	Short-term	Selectboard Town Administrator Planning Commission
4.I-2 12.N-1	Inventory development capacity within the Agricultural-Residential District to determine appropriate sites or areas able to support rural hamlets (clusters), while simultaneously strengthening resource protection standards elsewhere in the district. Update zoning regulations as needed.	Short-term	Planning Commission Conservation Commission
7.L-3	Implement a decentralized, municipal-sponsored, privately-owned wastewater system framework to serve Irasville and Waitsfield Village.	Short-term	Town Administrator Selectboard Study Committee
7.L-7	Explore the creation of a municipal stormwater management utility to serve Waitsfield Village and the Irasville Village District in conjunction with the implementation of an Irasville Master Plan.	Short-term	Planning Commission Selectboard
7.L-8	Receive Town Office Task Force's recommendations on needs and potential locations for a new space in 2012 and prepare a strategy for meeting those needs within the next 5 years.	Short-term	Town Administrator Town Clerk Selectboard Study Committee
7.L-9	Evaluate space and facility needs of the Joslin Library in conjunction with the town office study, and prepare a strategy to address any changes to the Library resulting from changes to the town offices.	Short-term	Selectboard Library Trustees
7.L-14	Review ongoing financial support for the Mad River Valley Health Center in light of the presence of other health care professionals located in, and serving, the Mad River Valley.	Short-term	Town Administrator Selectboard
8.G-3	Complete the planned construction of the Route 100 sidewalk, and plan for the extension of the sidewalk and path network in Irasville and Waitsfield and connected to neighboring communities.	Short-term	Planning Commission MRVPD representatives Selectboard Mad River Path Association
9.J-1	Track municipal energy use and costs, and develop an overall energy budget to manage the town's energy consumption, which may include the addition of local generating capacity.	Short-term	Energy Coordinator Energy Commission
9.J-4	Identify and map those areas of town that are suitable for the siting and development of renewable energy facilities and resources in conformance with adopted plan policies and community standards.	Short-term	Planning Commission Energy Commission Conservation Commission
9.J-5	Promote community energy literacy, and provide information about available energy assistance and incentive programs, state energy codes and energy system permitting.	Short-term	Energy Coordinator Energy Commission

	High Priority Tasks	Time Frame	Partners
9.J-7	Implement the PACE program as approved by voters in 2011, and consider other available incentives (e.g., tax credits, property tax exemptions), to help finance or offset the cost of eligible efficiency, weatherization and renewable energy projects.	Short-term	Energy Commission Energy Coordinator Selectboard
9.J-8	Pursue local generation capacity and actively assist in the planning and development of a community-based, group net-metered solar facility that conforms to adopted plan policies and community facility siting and development standards.	Short-term	Energy Coordinator Energy Commission Conservation Commission Selectboard
9.J-11	Amend zoning and subdivision regulations to (1) include standards for small on-site renewable energy systems that are not regulated by the PSB; (2) promote more energy efficient types and patterns of development; (3) protect access to renewable energy (e.g., solar, wind); (4) provide for the incorporation of net-metered renewable energy systems in subdivision and site plan design, and (5) provide incentives for energy efficient construction that exceeds minimum state standards, that maximizes access to renewable energy resources (e.g., solar orientation), or that incorporates individual or group net-metered renewable energy systems in subdivision design.	Short-term	Planning Commission Energy Commission
11.M-3	Develop a revised master plan for Irasville that includes water, wastewater, and stormwater systems designed to correct and avoid contamination of surface and groundwaters.	Short-term	Selectboard Town Administrator Planning Commission
11.M-15	Review and compare the Agency of Natural Resource and Agency of Transportation's guidelines on transportation infrastructure maintenance and development. Determine which should be used in Waitsfield.	Short-term	Planning Commission Friends of the Mad River
4.I-3	Review and update current zoning and subdivision regulations as needed to accommodate higher densities of housing, including affordable housing and in-fill development, within designated village districts. Consider the adoption of inclusionary zoning provisions as appropriate.	Medium-term	Planning Commission
4.I-4	Review and update current zoning and subdivision regulations as needed to impose lower densities of housing outside designated village districts and rural hamlets. This review should examine the use of economic incentives and variable, lower density zoning, at a minimum, to deter housing development determined to be excessive or otherwise inappropriate for areas outside designated village districts and rural hamlets.	Medium-term	Planning Commission
4.I-5	Consider amending the Town's zoning regulations to allow up to four units of multi-family housing in a single building, on a single parcel, within Irasville and designated hamlets as a permitted (as opposed to conditional) use.	Medium-term	Planning Commission

	High Priority Tasks	Time Frame	Partners
5.L-4	Review all town assistance programs, including tax stabilization policies and administration of future revolving loan funds, and develop a funding policy that focuses assistance for sustainable economic development.	Medium-term	Selectboard Town Administrator Planning Commission
5.L-6	The town will seek alternative revenue sources, in addition to the property tax, to reduce the local tax burden and support the land use and sustainable development policies of this plan. Specifically, the town supports the establishment of a Tax Increment Financing District encompassing Irasville.	Medium-term	Selectboard Town Administrator
7.L-2	Consider establishing a special taxing district, or tax increment financing district, for one or more of the town's growth centers.	Medium-term	Town Administrator Selectboard Planning Commission
7.L-5	Revise the Waitsfield Subdivision Regulations to include updated facility and infrastructure standards, including those related to stormwater runoff, wastewater disposal, impact on community services and facilities, and trails, sidewalks and pathways.	Medium-term	Planning Commission
7.L-6 12.N-2	Prepare an Official Map for the Irasville Village District depicting future public improvements, including roads, sidewalks, paths and park areas, and a town green/common.	Medium-term	Planning Commission
9.J-3	Develop a strategic 5-year municipal energy action plan that more specifically guides energy efficiency investments/improvements and the development of renewable energy resources.	Medium-term	Energy Coordinator Energy Commission
12.N-9	Identify "visible" ancient roads before the 2015 deadline for the town to claim them.	Medium-term	Planning Commission
3.G-4	Exercise party status in the Act 250 development review process and other state regulatory proceedings, as appropriate, to ensure that the town's growth needs and limitations are properly addressed relative to this plan.	On-going	Selectboard Planning Commission
5.L-3	Actively support the vitality of a light manufacturing/ small business incubator facility in town, focusing on the Irasville Business Park (formerly Mad River Canoe) complex or other appropriate site, pursuing partnerships with private business interests and state or federal development agencies.	On-going	Selectboard Town Administrator Planning Commission
7.L-1	Continue to work cooperatively with neighboring towns and the region on issues of mutual concern, especially through participation in MRVPD, and explore additional opportunities to share facilities and services with neighboring towns.	On-going	Town Administrator Selectboard Town Boards & Commissions

	High Priority Tasks	Time Frame	Partners
7.L-4	Review proposals for development to identify potential impacts on the town's ability to provide adequate services and facilities without an undue burden on local tax payers, and place appropriate conditions on new development regarding the timing of construction and provision for services or facilities.	On-going	Zoning Administrator Planning Commission Development Review Board
8.G-6	Encourage, through the subdivision review process, the dedication of easements to permanently protect pathways and trail connections for non-motorized use.	On-going	Planning Commission
8.G-8	Review proposed road and highway improvement projects and encourage the incorporation of dedicated bicycle lanes wherever possible.	On-going	Planning Commission Selectboard
9.J-2	Evaluate existing and proposed municipal policies and programs for their effect on municipal energy use, and revise as needed to promote reduced energy consumption, increased energy efficiency, and the sustainable development and use of local renewable energy resources.	On-going	Energy Coordinator Energy Commission
9.J-6	Maintain the town's energy reserve fund, and incorporate planned efficiency improvements (e.g., facility retrofits, renovations, and equipment upgrades) in the town's capital budget and program.	On-going	Energy Commission Planning Commission Selectboard
11.M-4	Appoint representatives to participate, on behalf of the Town, with the Agency of Natural Resources in the preparation of TMDLs (total maximum daily load) for the Mad River and larger Winooski River watersheds.	On-going	Planning Commission Friends of the Mad River
11.M-6	Integrate fish and wildlife inventory data and information into strategies that encourage the preservation of these resources and wildlife corridors in the area.	On-going	Conservation Commission Planning Commission
11.M-7	Participate in the review and revision of the Camel's Hump State Forest (Dana Hill Forest) management plan to ensure that wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities and aesthetic resources are protected and enhanced.	On-going	Selectboard Town Administrator Conservation Commission
11.M-12	Maintain a reserve fund to support local land conservation efforts, with annual allocations included in the capital budget and program.	On-going	Selectboard Town Administrator
11.M-14	Develop and implement flood hazard mitigation plans when possible.	On-going	Planning Commission Development Review Board Selectboard

	<b>Medium Priority Tasks</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Partners</b>
7.L-11 10.J-7	Develop a plan for renovating the Wait House barns for public and cultural purposes.	Short-term	Selectboard Waitsfield Historic Society
8.G-5	Develop a clear class 4 road policy which identifies under what circumstances such roads may be upgraded, maintained and/or reclassified in accordance with the policies set forth above.	Short-term	Selectboard Planning Commission
9.J-10	Develop procedures for municipal participation in Public Service Board proceedings and the review of proposed projects for conformance with adopted community standards.	Short-term	Energy Coordinator Planning Commission Selectboard
12.N-4	Revise the towns zoning regulations to establish clear site and building design standards to guide development in Irasville in accordance with the aforementioned master plan, as revised and modified by the Planning Commission.	Short-term	Planning Commission
5.L-2	Explore forming an Economic Development Authority in conjunction with other Mad River Valley towns and the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce to take better advantage of state and federal economic development programs.	Medium-term	Selectboard Town Administrator Planning Commission Chamber of Commerce
7.L-12 11.M-8	Develop long range management plans for undeveloped town-owned parcels, including Scrag Forest, Wu Ledges, Lareau Swimhole and adjacent land, and the Brook Road parcel.	Medium-term	Conservation Commission Selectboard
7.L-13	Explore methods to obtain access to Scrag Forest from the Northfield side of the ridge.	Medium-term	Selectboard Conservation Commission
8.G-10	Conduct a parking study of Waitsfield Village and Irasville to evaluate improvements to parking management (e.g., directional signs, dedicated employee parking areas), the need for additional public parking, opportunities for on-street parking, and parking standards under zoning.	Medium-term	Planning Commission
8.G-11	Prepare and implement a traffic calming plan for Waitsfield Village and Irasville.	Medium-term	Planning Commission Selectboard Tree Board
9.J-9	Work collaboratively to establish the regional infrastructure needed to support alternative fuel vehicles (e.g., charging or fueling stations) to include one or more publicly-accessible, centrally-located sites in Waitsfield.	Medium-term	Energy Coordinator Energy Commission Selectboard

	Medium Priority Tasks	Time Frame	Partners
10.J-2	Update land use regulations as needed to further protect Waitsfield's historic and scenic resources, including the adoption of conservation and "residential hamlet" subdivision design standards, and consideration of adopting additional historic and/or design review overlay districts to protect the town's traditional settlement pattern, cultural resources, and scenic landscape (see Chapter 12).	Medium-term	Planning Commission Conservation Commission Selectboard
10.J-3	Adopt specific lighting standards under the town's zoning regulations and, at the same time, conduct public informational meetings to educate the public regarding strategies to avoid light pollution.	Medium-term	Planning Commission Selectboard
10.J-4	Update the town's tree planting and maintenance program, particularly as needed to re-establish tree canopies along public roads and rights-of-way. Implement the Waitsfield Street Tree Master Plan.	Medium-term	Tree Board Tree Warden Selectboard
10.J-9	Explore the establishment of a "Town Green" in Irasville to serve as a center for community events and outdoor gatherings (see Map 9).	Medium-term	Planning Commission
12.N-5	Pursue mitigation analysis of wetlands in Irasville, as addressed elsewhere in this Plan, in order to accommodate future development needs and reinforce a compact development pattern in Irasville.	Medium-term	Planning Commission
12.N-7	Evaluate historic preservation standards for Waitsfield Village to determine whether they are adequate to maintain the historic character of the Village, and strengthen said standards in the event they determined to be inadequate.	Medium-term	Planning Commission Waitsfield Historical Society
9.J-12	Explore incentives to local employers (e.g., reduce on-site parking requirements) in exchange for programs to reduce their employees' reliance on single occupancy vehicles for commuting (e.g., ride-share programs).	Long-term	Energy Commission Planning Commission
11.M-2	Form a committee, to include willing landowners, to develop a multi-property management and conservation plan for lands in the Forest Reserve District.	Long-term	Conservation Commission Planning Commission
11.M-9	Develop a criteria/ranking system with which the Town can evaluate proposed conservation projects for conformance with this plan.	Long-term	Conservation Commission
11.M-13	Explore ways to educate landowners, especially new arrivals to the community, about techniques for good land stewardship and natural resource conservation.	Long-term	Planning Commission Area real estate brokers
3.G-1	Monitor population and housing estimates, and annual permit data to identify correlation between housing development and population growth on an ongoing basis.	On-going	Planning Commission

	<b>Medium Priority Tasks</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Partners</b>
3.G-2	Consider appropriate mechanisms, including regulatory tools, to manage the rate of development in the event that population growth exceeds an average annual rate of 1.5 percent on a sustained basis (3 consecutive years).	On-going	Planning Commission
3.G-3	Periodically review and update birth rates and enrollment projections.	On-going	Planning Commission School Board
5.L-5	Review the town's land use regulations to determine whether revisions are needed to carry out the policies set forth above.	On-going	Planning Commission
6.I-1	Continue to monitor enrollment and population trends, and to make regular enrollment projections to ensure that the school system is prepared for significant changes in enrollment trends.	On-going	School Board Planning Commission
6.I-2	Consider appointing high school students as ex-officio (non-voting) members of local boards.	On-going	Selectboard
8.G-1	Continue regional transportation planning through the Mad River Valley Planning District and Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.	On-going	Planning Commission TAC representative Town MRVPD representatives Selectboard
8.G-2	In conjunction with Sugarbush Resort, review on an annual basis the need for traffic control officers and/ or devices during peak traffic periods at the Route 100/Route 17 intersections and the entrance to Mad River Green and Village Square shopping centers.	On-going	Planning Commission Selectboard
8.G-4	Work with other Mad River Valley towns, CVRPC, and VTrans to ensure that the function of Route 100 as a primary arterial is not diminished and that corridor issues are addressed in a cooperative manner.	On-going	Planning Commission Town TAC representative Selectboard
8.G-7	Work to ensure that the Mad River Valley transit system, initiated in 1999, is continued and expanded as needed. To this end, other policies and tasks which support the transit system, such as reinforcing compact growth centers, creating adequate parking areas (to serve as park and ride facilities) and improving pedestrian opportunities, should be pursued in an integrated manner.	On-going	Planning Commission Town TAC representative MRVPD Selectboard
10.J-1	Continue to inventory, catalogue and map Waitsfield's historic and scenic features.	On-going	Rural Resource Commission Waitsfield Historical Society
10.J-5	Seek funding as needed for the redevelopment of the town's historic properties, including Waitsfield's historic public buildings.	On-going	Rural Resource Commission Selectboard Library Commission Historical Society

Medium Priority Tasks		Time Frame	Partners
10.J-6	Seek funding as needed to conserve significant rural resources, through the purchase of land or interests in land (e.g., conservation easements, development rights).	On-going	Conservation Commission Selectboard Mad River Watershed Conservation Partnership
11.M-5	Consult with the Friends of the Mad River and local fishery groups on projects that may potentially impact the Mad River and tributaries.	On-going	Planning Commission Friends of the Mad River
11.M-11	Coordinate with land conservation organizations to ensure that conservation projects in Waitsfield are consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.	On-going	Selectboard Town Administrator Planning Commission Conservation Commission Mad River Watershed Conservation Partnership
12.N-6	Review current administration and enforcement practices related to the zoning and subdivision regulations and ensure that all standards and associated permit conditions are efficiently administered and strictly enforced.	On-going	Planning Commission Administrative Officer
Low Priority Tasks		Time Frame	Partners
7.L-10	Explore options for expanding existing town cemeteries or, if expansion is not practical, for the creation of a new cemetery located in close proximity to Irasville, Waitsfield Village or Waitsfield Common.	Long-term	Cemetery Commission
8.G-9	Evaluate truck circulation within the community and consider policies or actions to prevent or mitigate adverse impacts, including designated truck routes and regulating the use of Jake (engine) brakes.	Long-term	Road Commissioner Selectboard
11.M-10	Consider preparing and/or adopting best management practices (BMPs) to guide forest management activities in Waitsfield, and explore appropriate means with which to encourage or require local compliance with those BMPs.	Long-term	Tree Warden Planning Commission Conservation Commission
12.N-8	Investigate future road connections and trail improvements in the Town Center.	Long-term	Planning Commission
10.J-8	Promote private use of available historic preservation assistance programs (e.g., Historic Preservation Tax Credits, Barn Again grant program).	On-going	Rural Resource Commission Historical Society
11.M-1	Enact, through zoning and/or subdivision regulations, measures to preserve primary agricultural soils for continued and future agricultural use and prevent the fragmentation and development of these resources.	On-going	Planning Commission



# Waitsfield Town Plan Appendices

## A | REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

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## B | MAPS

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# 1 | References and Resources

## 1.A HISTORY & HISTORIC RESOURCES

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- ◆ 1882. The History of the Town of Waitsfield. Rev. Perrin B. Fiske.
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- ◆ 2004. Waitsfield History. Jan Pogue and Kevin Eurich.

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- ◆ 2006. Mad River Valley Housing Study. Central Vermont Community Land Trust.
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- ◆ 2009. Mad River Valley Energy Study. Valley Futures Network Energy Group.
- ◆ 2009. Renewable Energy in the Mad River Valley. Department of Community Development and Applied Economics at the University of Vermont.

## 1.E NATURAL RESOURCES

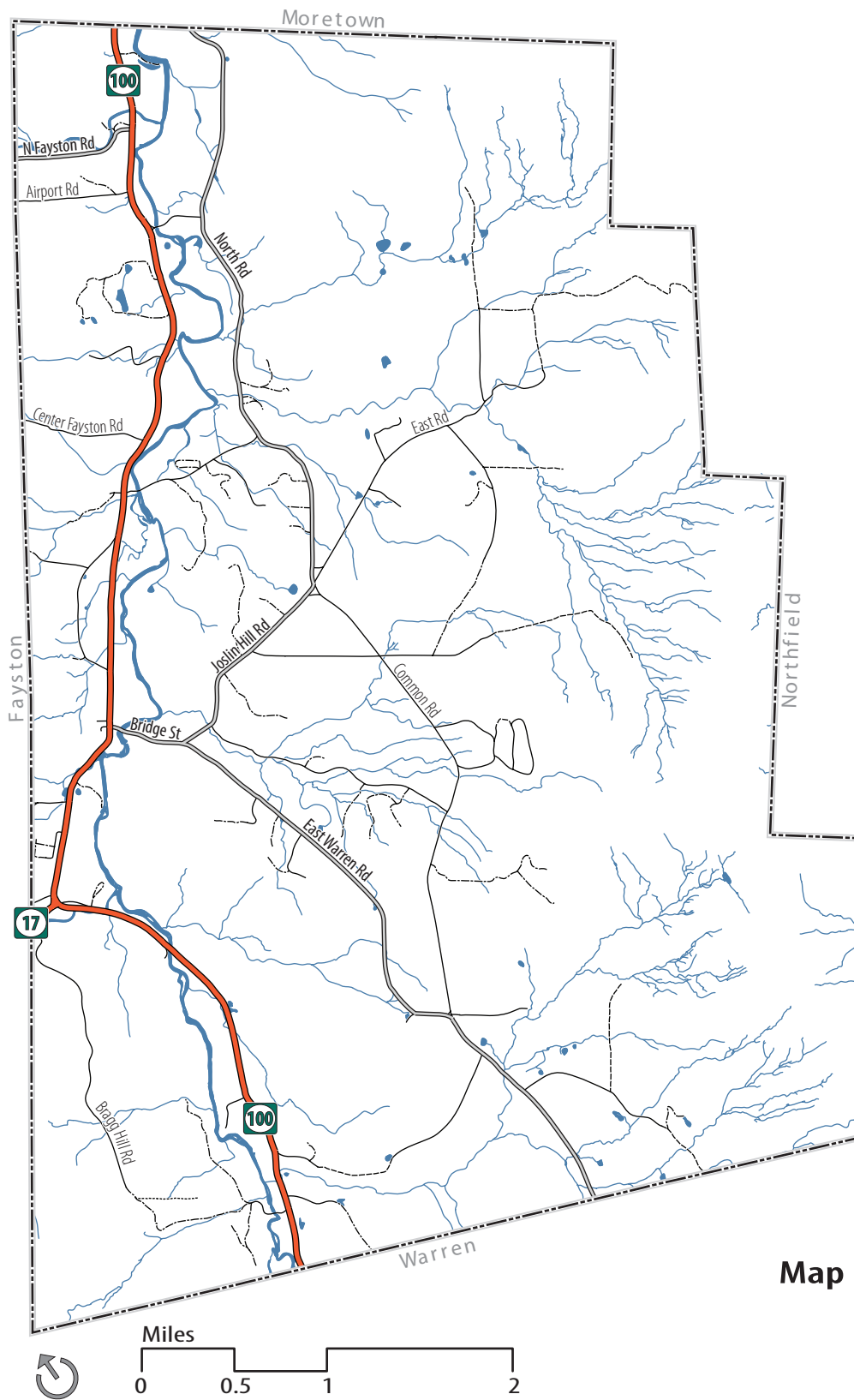
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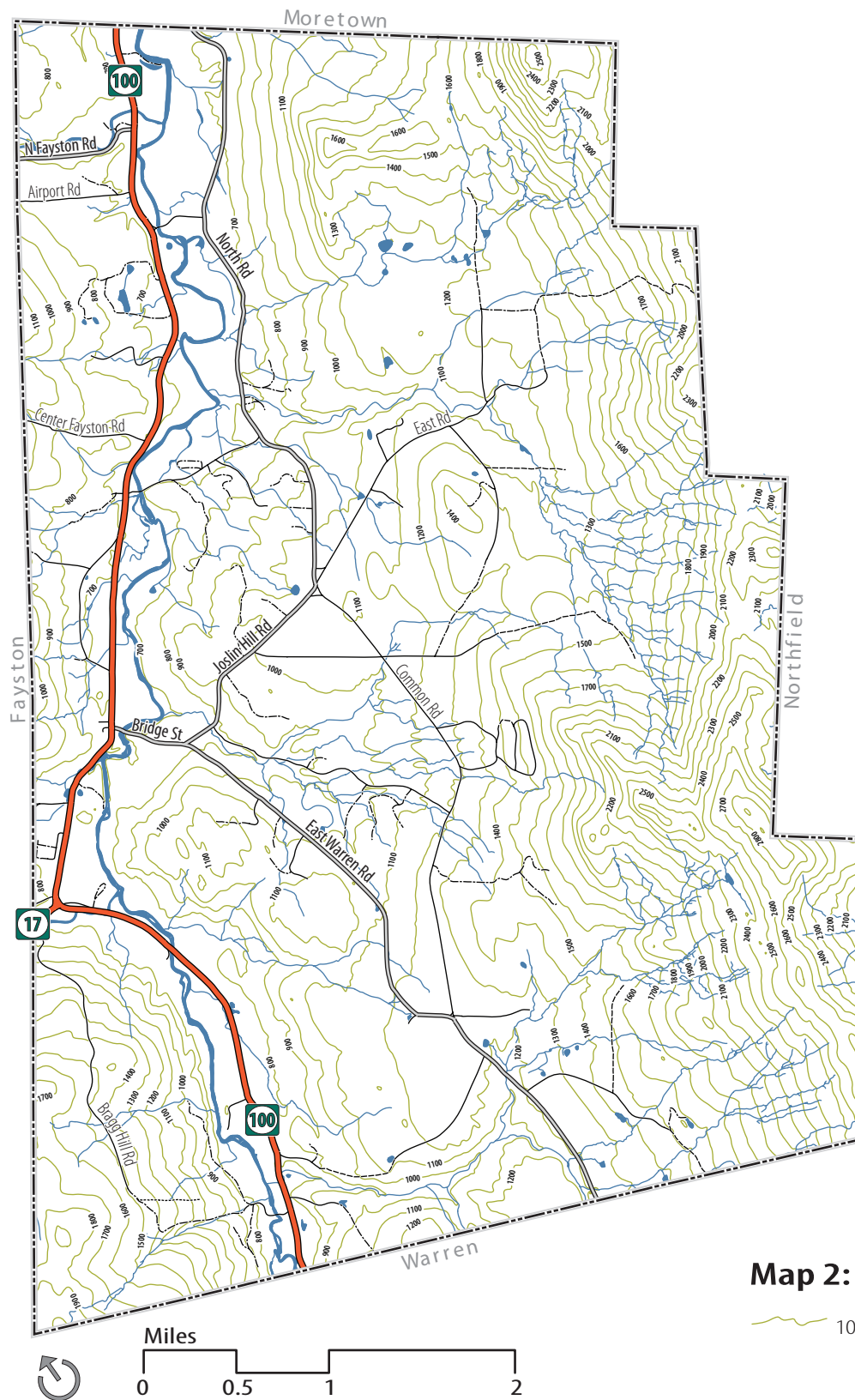
- ◆ 1995. The Best River Ever: A Conservation Plan to Protect and Restore Vermont's Beautiful Mad River Watershed. Friends of the Mad River.
- ◆ 2003. Assessment of Fluvial Geomorphology in Relation to Erosion and Landslides in the Mad River Watershed in Central Vermont. Step by Step and Friends of the Mad River.
- ◆ 2007. Natural Heritage Element Inventory and Assessment for Waitsfield and Fayston, Vermont. Arrowwood Environmental.
- ◆ 2007. Fluvial Geomorphology Assessment of the Mad River Watershed. Field Geology Services and Friends of the Mad River.

## 1.A WAITSFIELD VILLAGE & IRASVILLE

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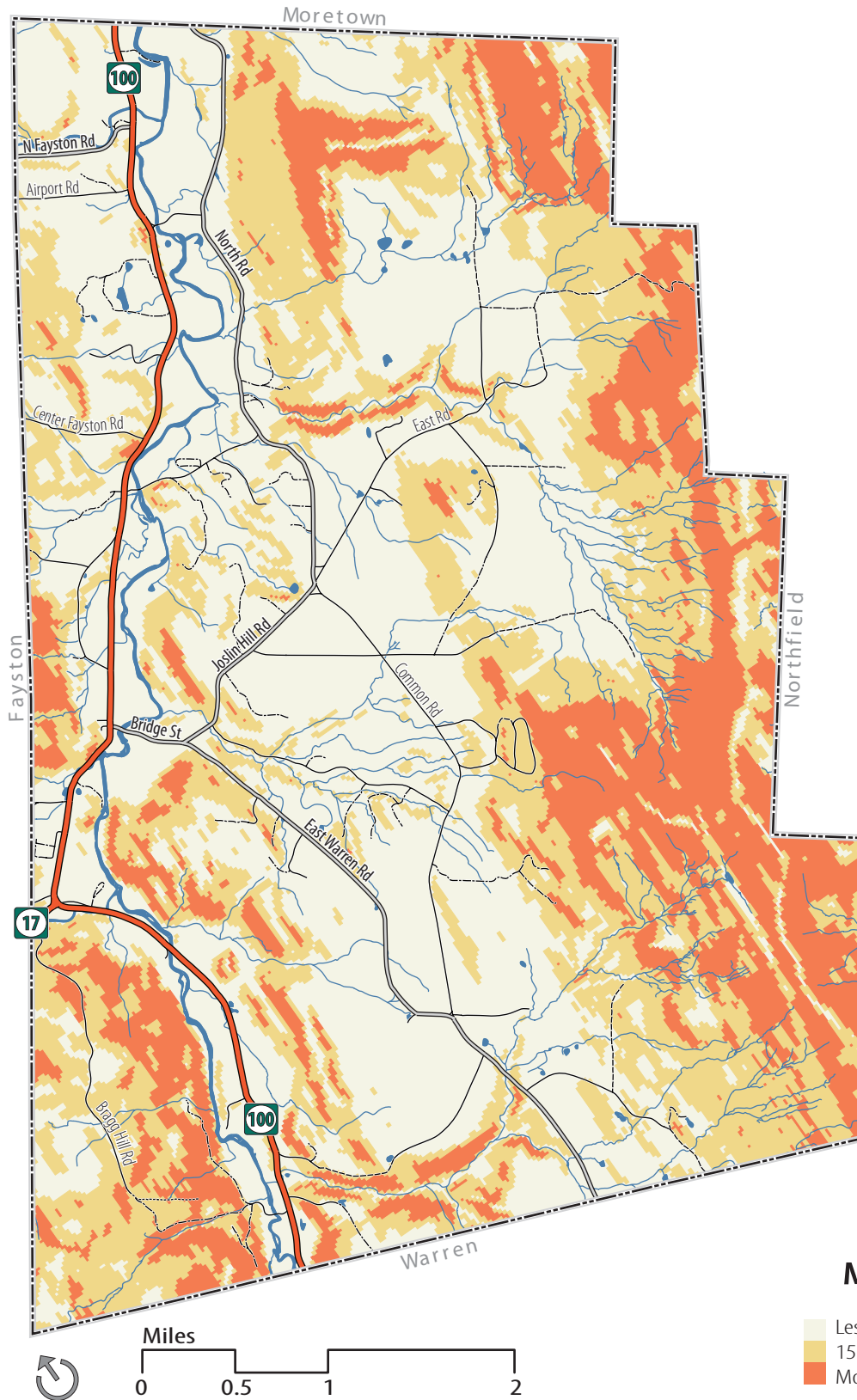
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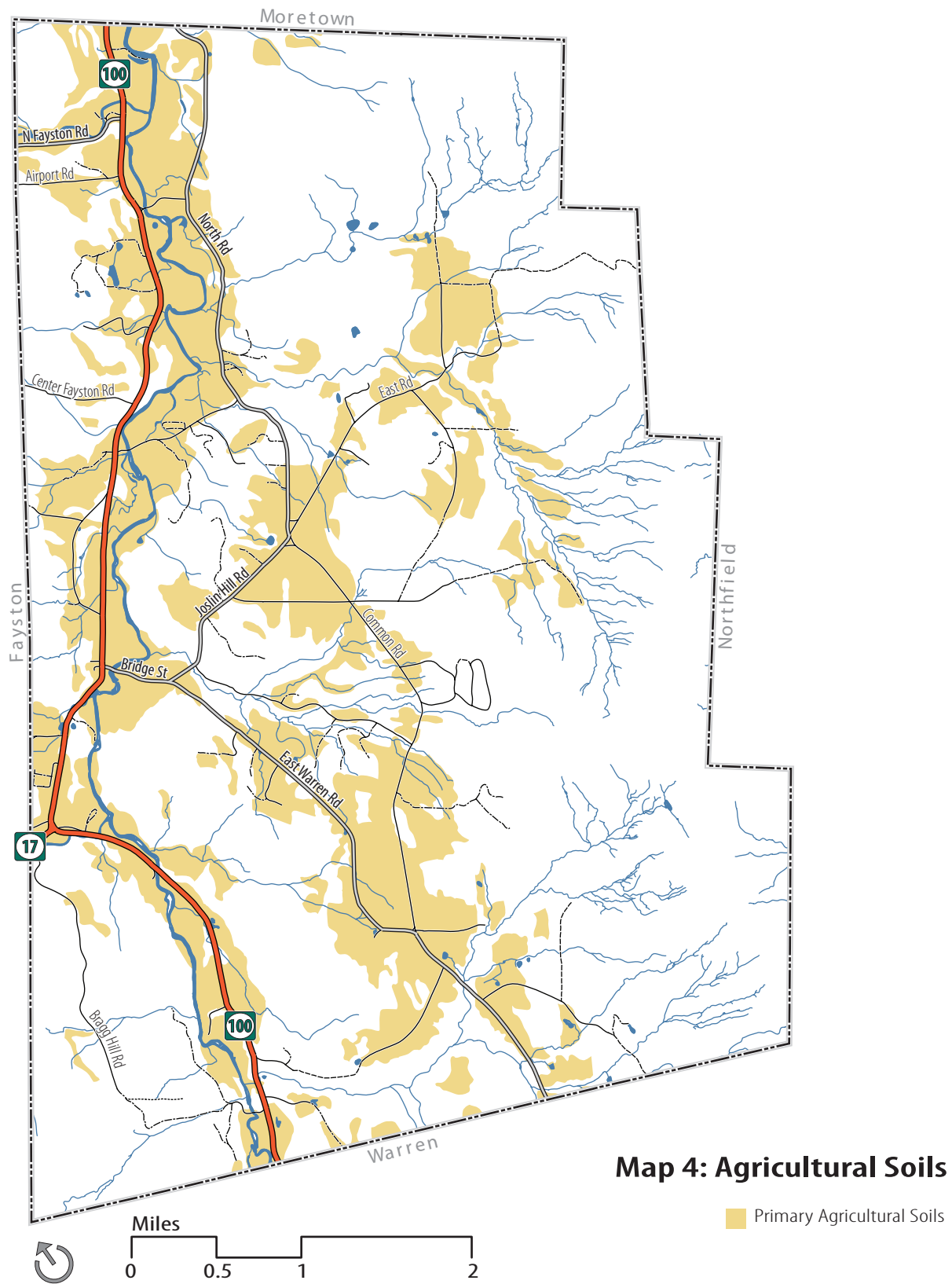




**Map 2: Topography**

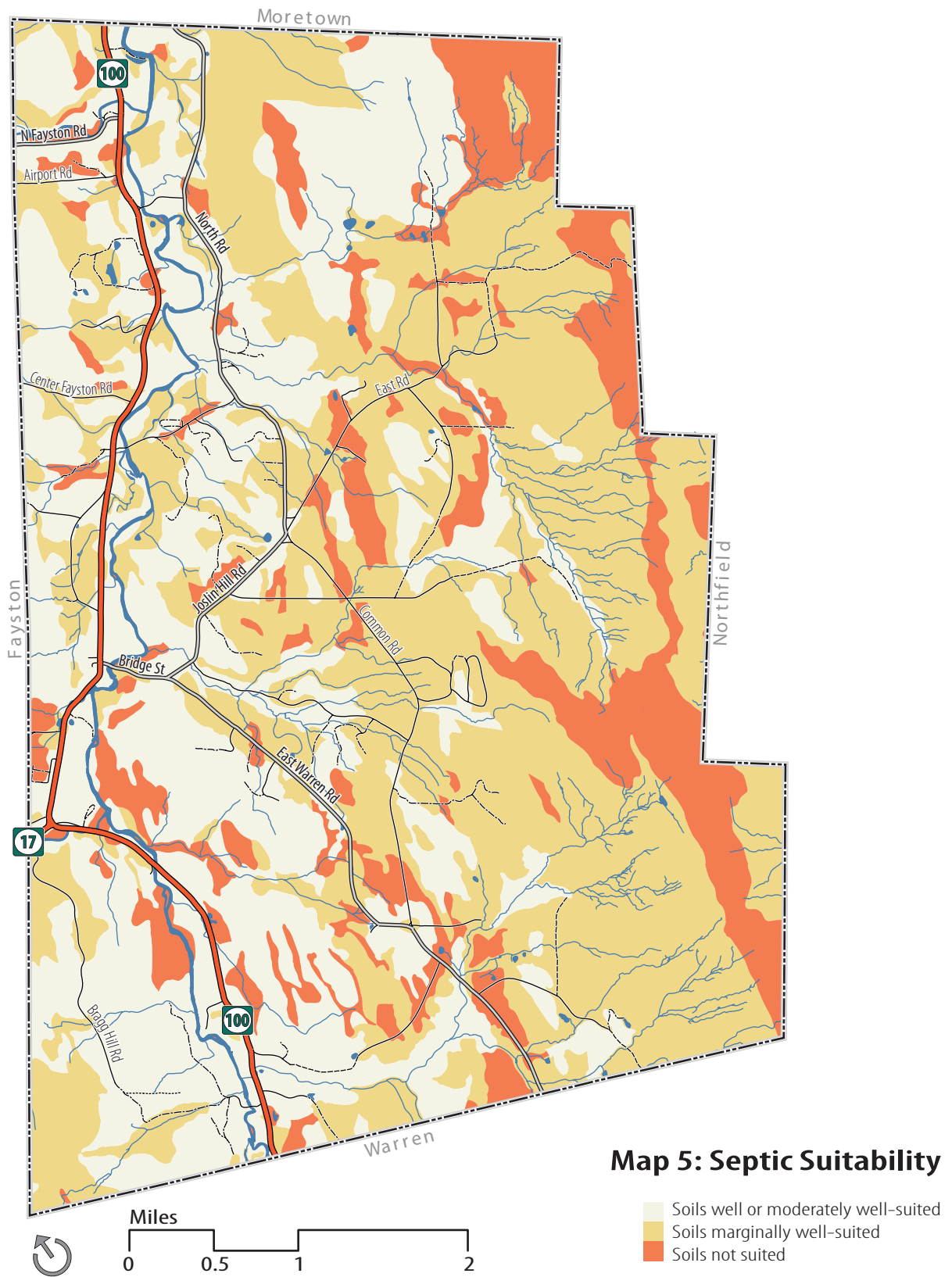
100-foot contours

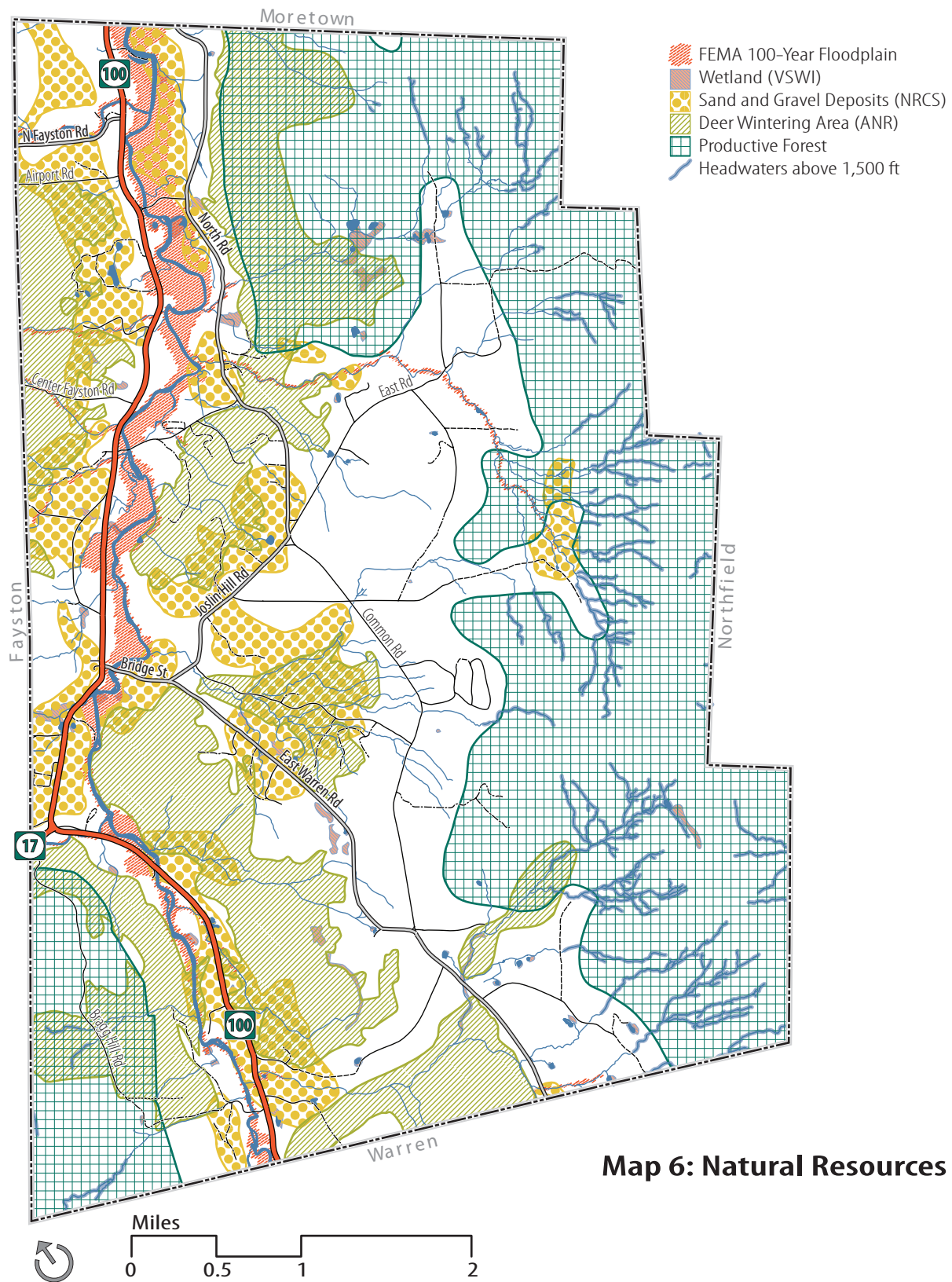


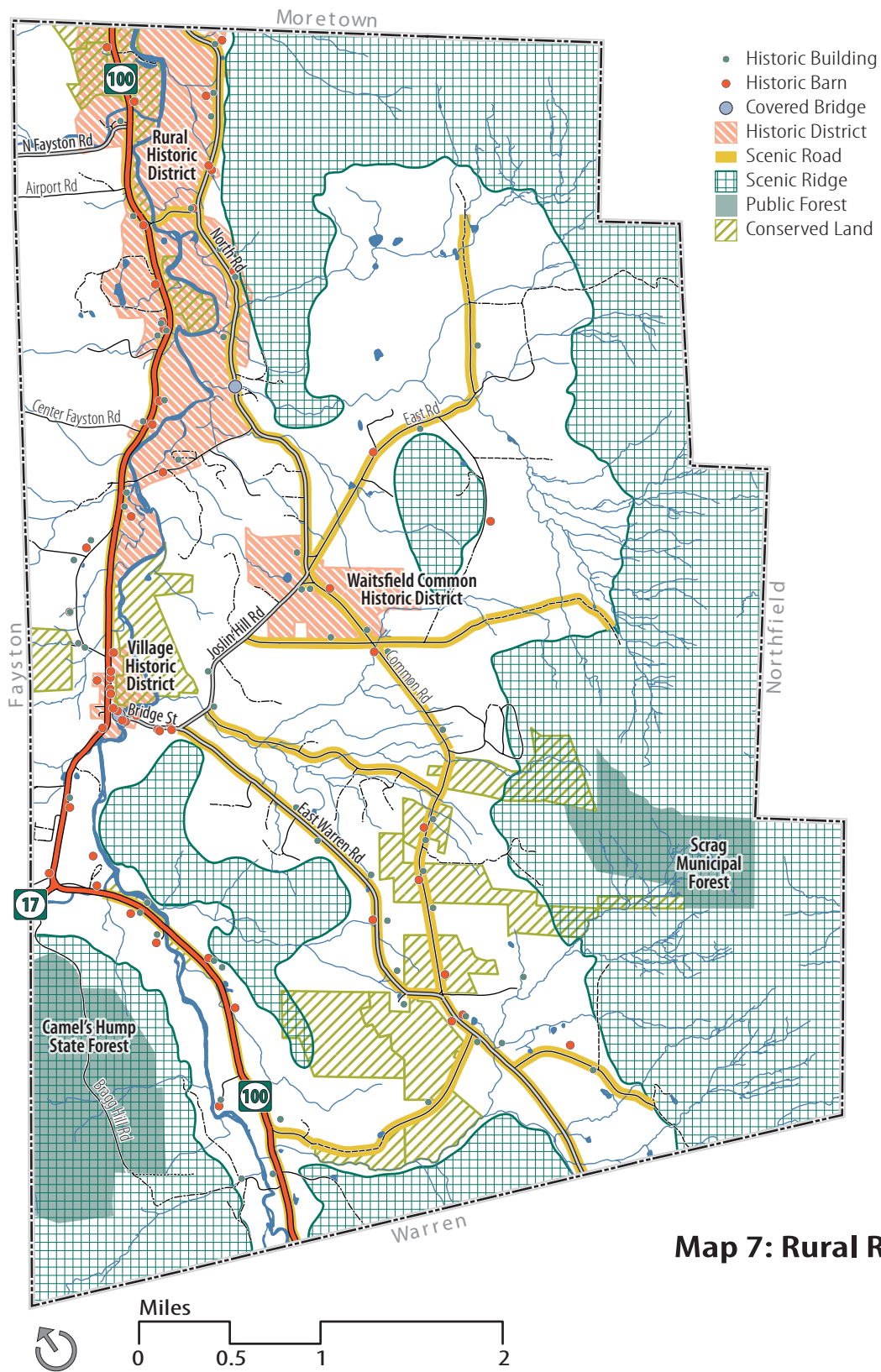


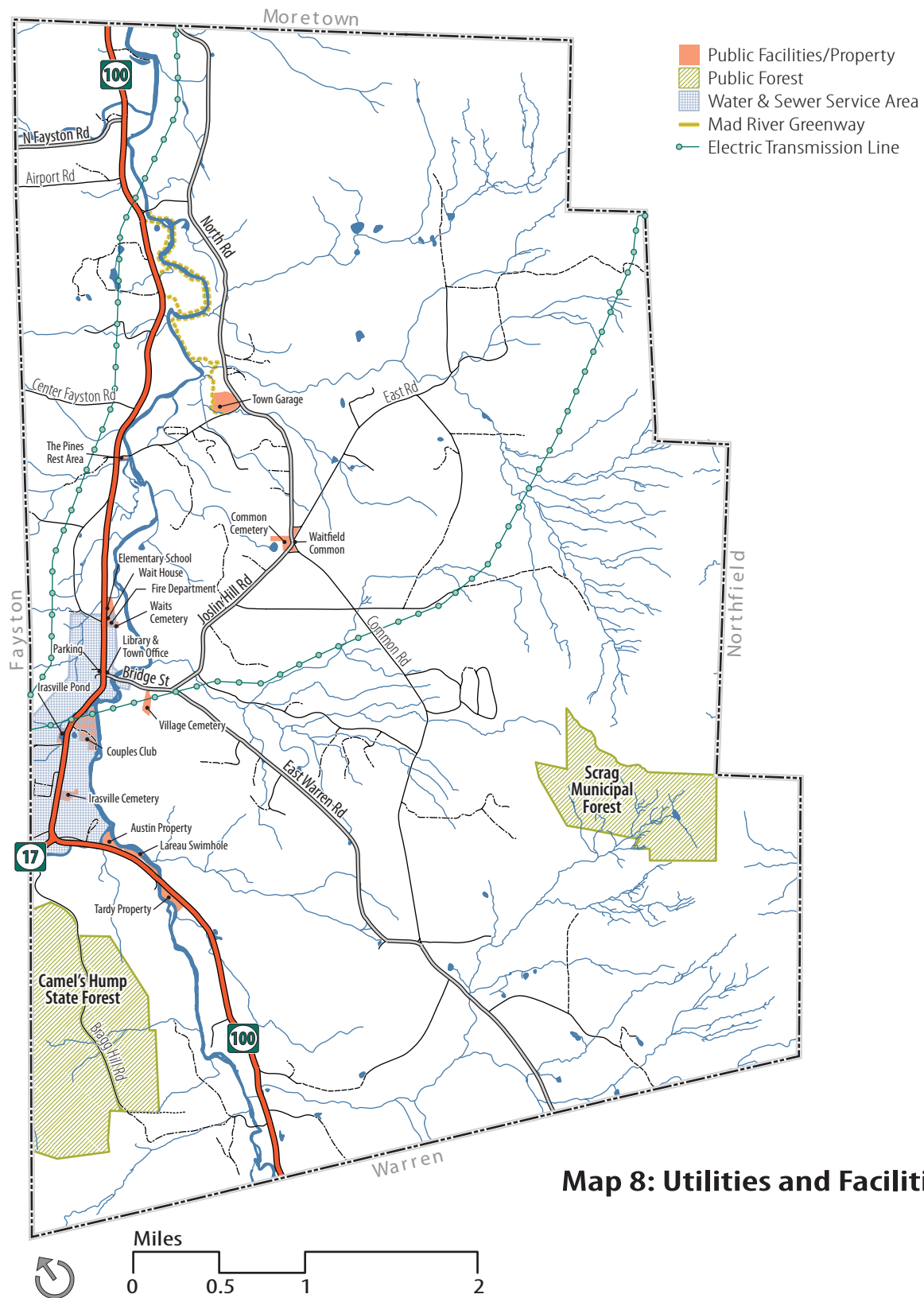
**Map 4: Agricultural Soils**

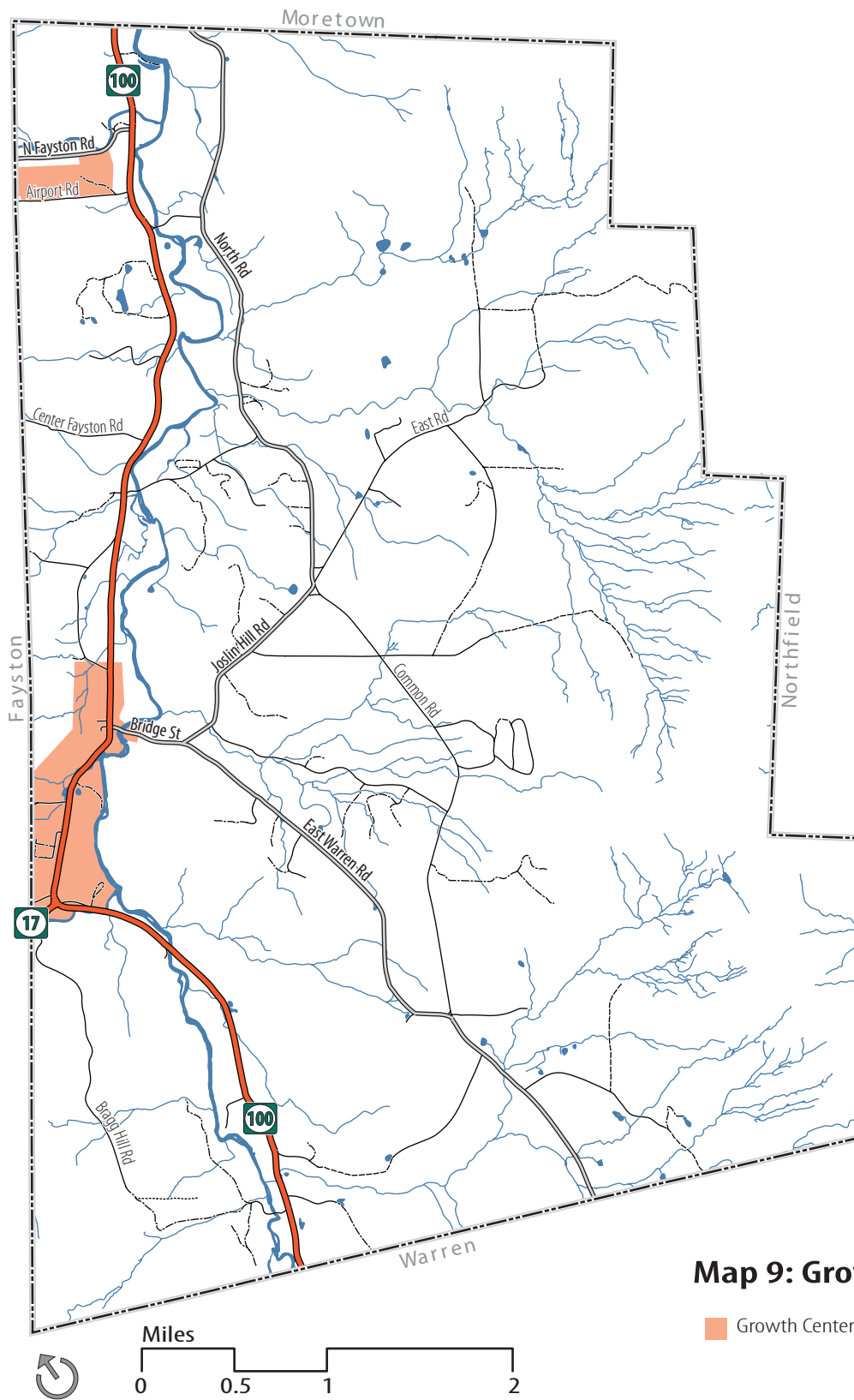
Primary Agricultural Soils









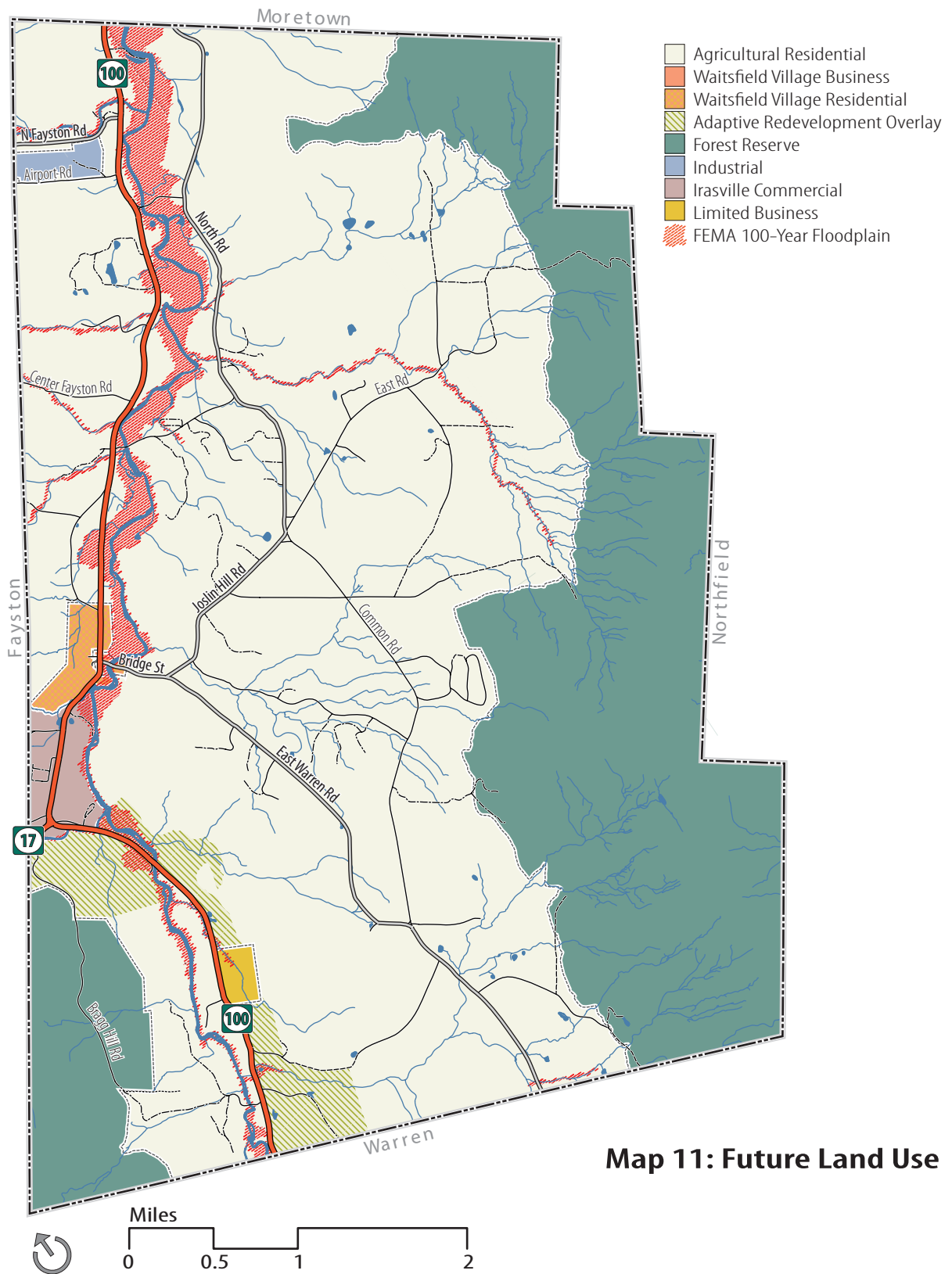


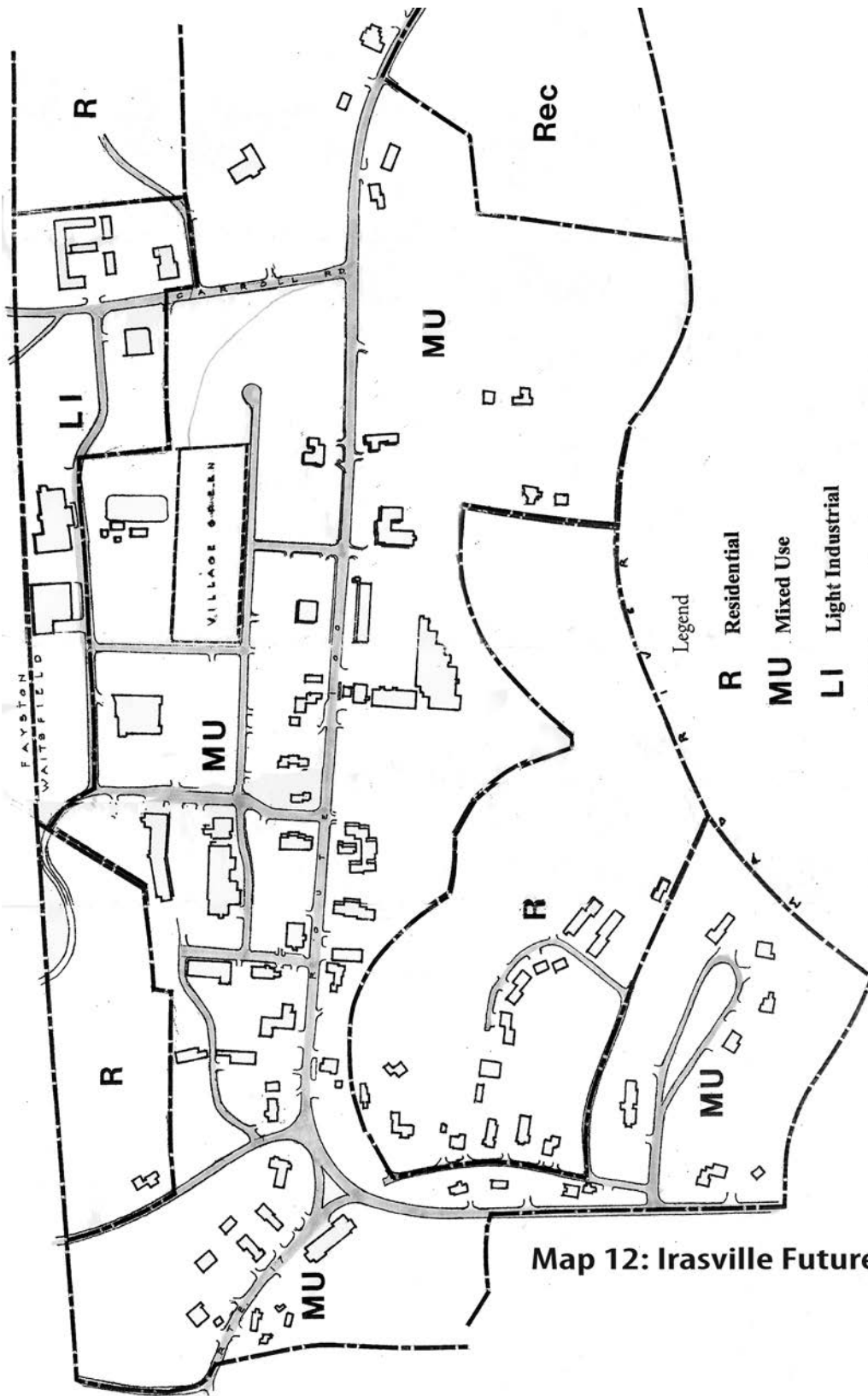
**Map 9: Growth Centers**

 Growth Center

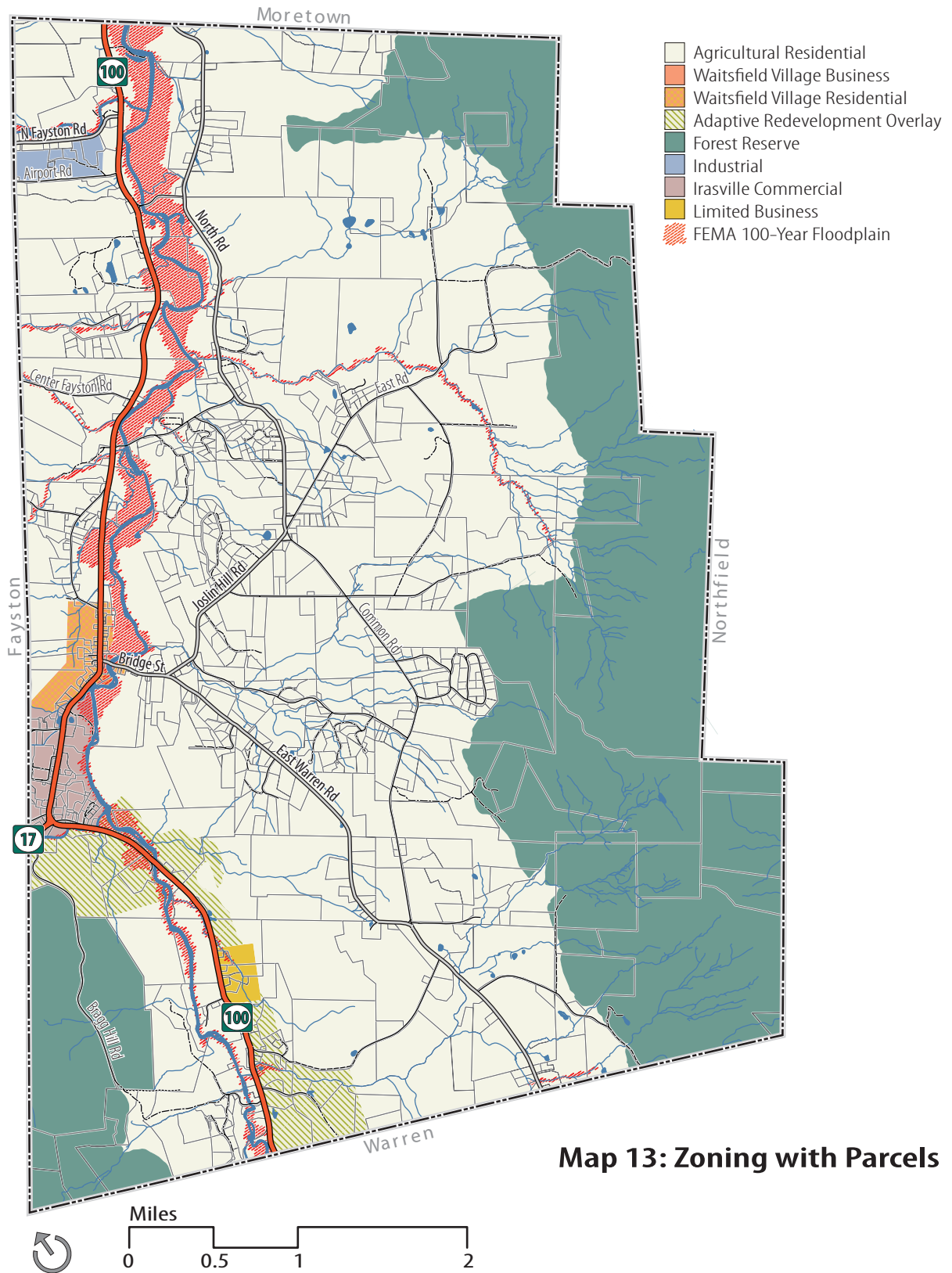


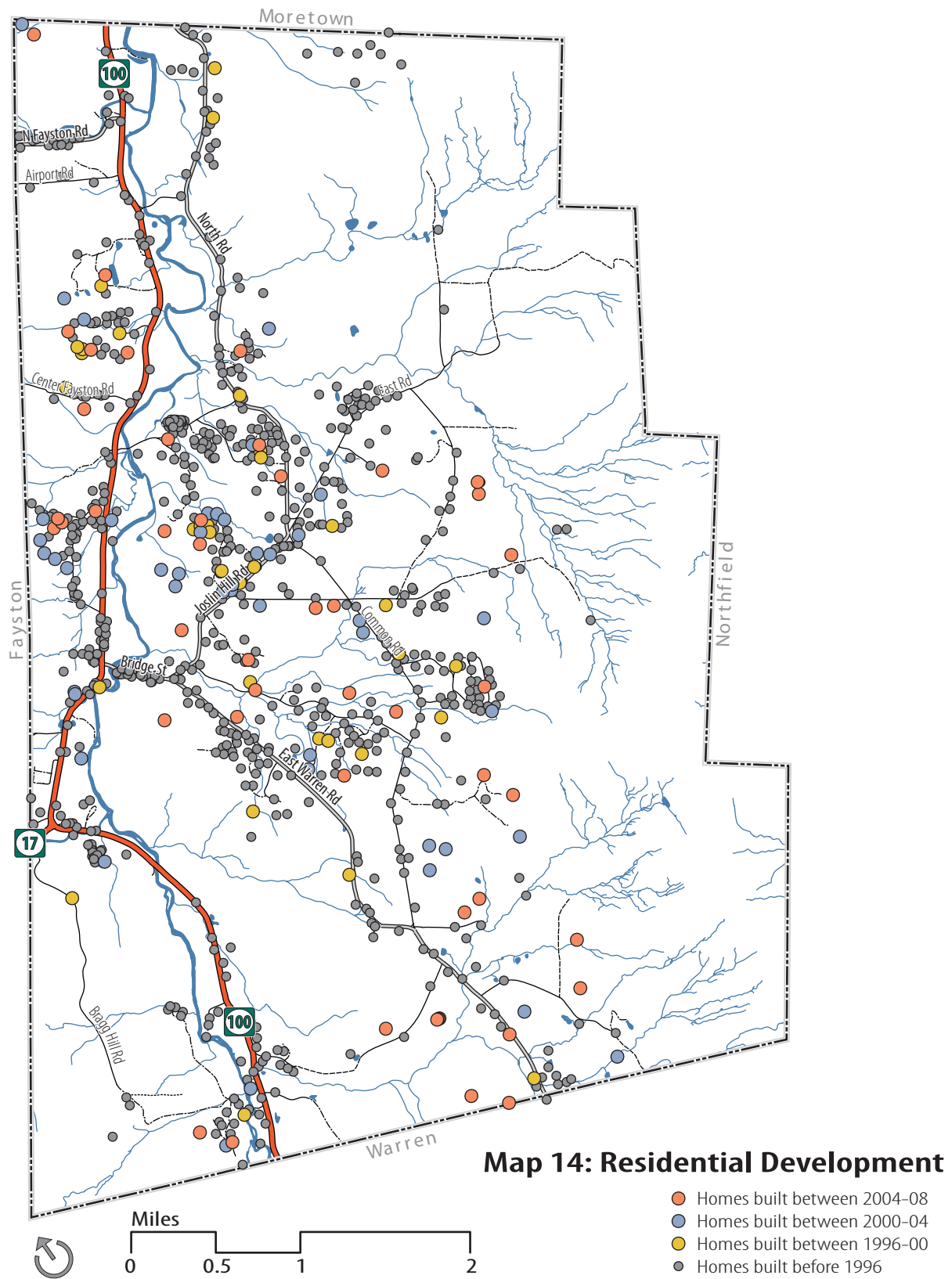
**Map 10: Irasville Growth Center Circulation Plan**





Map 12: Irasville Future Land Use





Legend

Vermont State Route

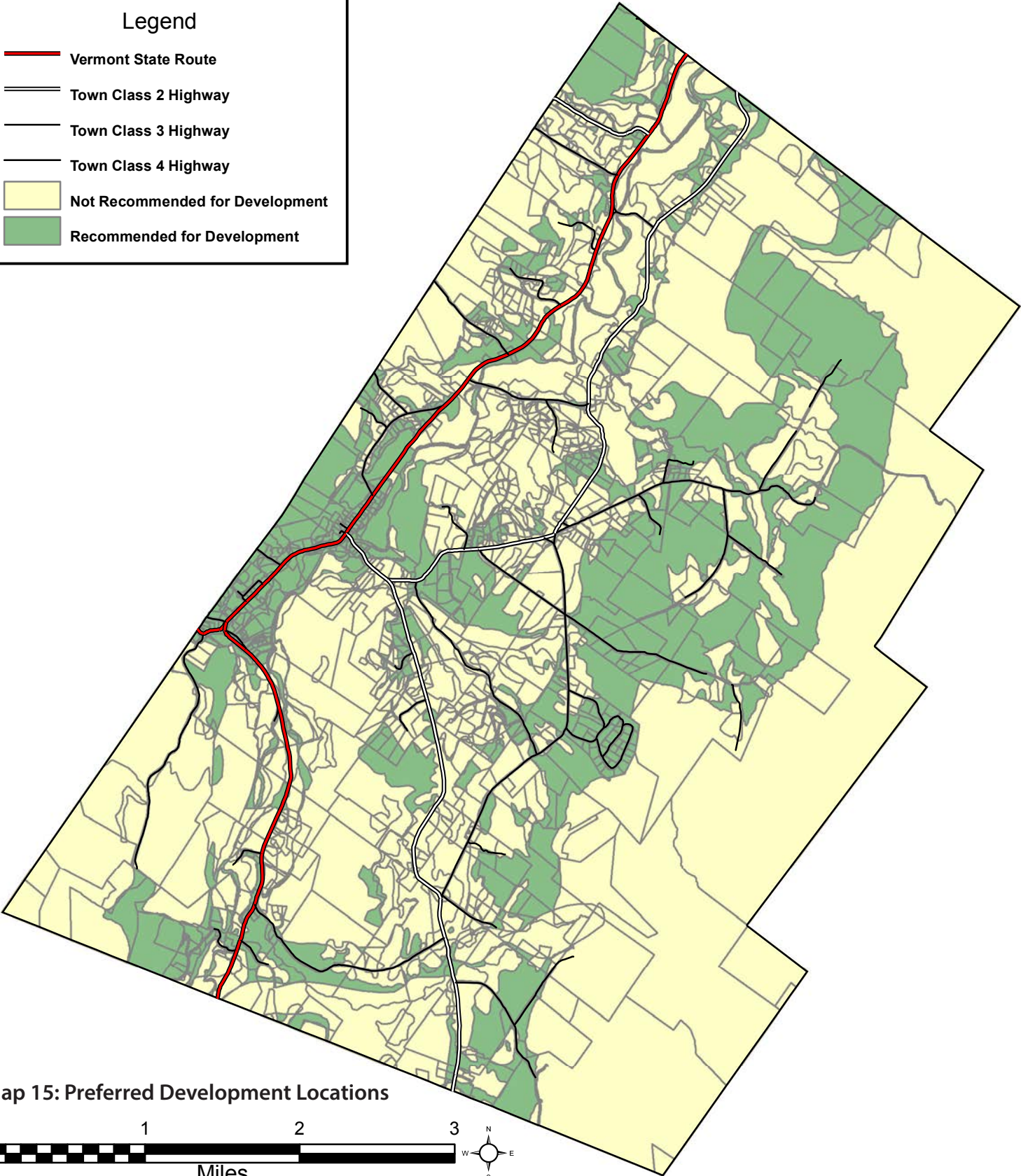
Town Class 2 Highway

Town Class 3 Highway

Town Class 4 Highway

Not Recommended for Development

Recommended for Development



Map 15: Preferred Development Locations





# Public Opinion Survey Results

## WAITSFIELD 09

### town plan update

As part of an update to the Waitsfield Town Plan, a public opinion survey was sent to approximately 1,200 voting households and non-resident property owners in October of 2009. The town received 238 responses (113 online and 125 paper returns). The results of the survey are summarized below. Complete results are provided beginning on page 5 of this report.

**Question 1** was a multi-part question to collect demographic data. A number of demographic questions were asked since the town plan will be need to be revised before there will be updated information from the 2010 Census. The Planning Commission was particularly interested in determining whether there have been significant changes to household size and composition, and where townspeople work and what type of work they are doing since 2000 (the last Census). Different questions were posed to town residents and non-resident property owners.

**Question 2** asked about the rate of economic development in town. 42% of respondents thought that it was too slow and 35% thought that it was just right. Written comments indicate that many people were surprised by the increase in jobs reported by the Vermont Department of Labor since the town has lost several of its larger employers in recent years. Available data indicates that the town's economy is healthier and more diverse than general perception would suggest.

**Question 3** was a two-part question that asked about commercial development in Irasville. The results show that there is strong support from respondents for continued commercial development in Irasville. However, responses to the second part of the question and the written comments show that there is less consensus about the type, scale and pattern of commercial development that would be most appropriate in Irasville. While a majority of respondents supported the idea of Irasville becoming more like a downtown as it continues to be developed, the written

comments reflect the diversity of opinions about changes in Irasville. A small number of respondents wrote strongly against current requirements for multi-story or mixed use construction. Others noted the environmental constraints that exist in Irasville, and expressed a desire to maintain the public open spaces and recreation facilities in this part of town. A number of respondents also expressed the sentiment that there is little need for further commercial development in this or any other part of Waitsfield.

**Question 4** asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with a series of statements about where and how new businesses should be accommodated in town. The statements that had the highest level of agreement were related to allowing existing businesses on Route 100 to expand. Many respondents also submitted comments expressing their concerns that the town's regulations were an impediment on the ability of existing businesses to grow and thrive in Waitsfield. Responses to most of the other statements show a fairly even division between those who agreed and those who disagreed. This, and the associated written comments, show a lack of consensus about the desirability/necessity for Waitsfield to accommodate new businesses in town. When asked to select a single option for where most commercial development should occur, the majority of respondents selected Irasville and Waitsfield Village despite the division between those who agreed or disagreed with whether new businesses should be located there. No other option received any significant support, further confirming the results of Question 3.

**Question 5** focused on home businesses and a majority of respondents expressed support for the town's current regulations. A substantial number supported allowing larger or more intensive home businesses, but very few called for greater restrictions on them. Given the large number of respondents reporting that one or more people in

their household work from home, this is clearly an important issue for town residents.

**Question 6** provided respondents with an opportunity to comment on specific actions the town should take to promote the economy. The comments represented a range of views from those who did not want the town to take any action, to those who thought there should be tax incentives or incubators for new businesses. A number of comments were made related to the need for greater flexibility and certainty with the town's regulations. Regulations related to business signage were mentioned several times as being too limiting for businesses and not very clear.

**Question 7** asked about the rate of residential development in town. Half of respondents thought that it was just right, and the numbers of those that thought it should be either faster or slower were evenly split.

**Question 8** again asked respondents for their level of agreement with a series of statements related to future residential development. The results show that there is little consensus about where and how new homes should be built in town. The two statements with the least support were related to new homes being located along Route 100 and to keeping new homes further away from each other. There was no strong preference for any of the remaining statements including residential development in Irasville/Waitsfield Village, cluster subdivisions, rural hamlets, or dispersed rural housing. The comments also reflected this range of views.

**Question 9** presented a series of actions the town could take to address the issue of affordable housing and asked respondents which they supported. Nearly half supported providing municipal wastewater to Irasville/Waitsfield Village or offering density bonuses for affordable housing. There was less support for providing municipal water to a larger area than currently planned, acquiring municipal land for affordable housing, or reducing lot sizes below one acre. There was little support for using local taxes or fees to subsidize housing.

**Question 10** provided respondents an opportunity to comment on what actions the town should take related to housing. Many of the ideas were related to higher-density housing, particularly in Irasville

or locations with access to transportation/services. A number of respondents expressed interest in the town discouraging especially large houses, while others cited high taxes as a disincentive for housing, particularly affordable housing.

**Question 11** was a two-part question related to the town's conservation fund. Nearly two-thirds of respondents support the town contributing to such a fund for the purpose of land conservation. However, only 10% support using money raised through property taxes. The majority of respondents agreed that funds should be raised through donations and/or through an impact fee on new development. A significant number supported a transfer tax, but there was little support for other tax sources like sales or rooms and meals. Written comments to this question, and throughout the survey, indicate that most respondents feel that property taxes are already too high and nothing should be done that would increase them.

**Question 12** asked whether respondents would support a series of actions to address the issue of water quality in the Mad River. There was majority support for all the ideas presented. There were several written comments related to use of salt on town roads and the plowing of snow into the river during the winter months.

**Question 13** asked respondents whether the town needs to do more to prevent impacts from development to a list of natural and cultural resources. There was general agreement that all the resources listed needed more protection and little distinction between the 13 listed items. Written comments suggested that many respondents were not certain what the town is currently doing with regard to resource protection and simply thought it was a generally important issue.

**Question 14** provided respondents an opportunity to comment on any specific actions Waitsfield should be taking to protect natural and historic resources. A number responded that the town's regulations were already too restrictive in regards to resource protection. Another theme that emerged from the comments to this and other questions was concern over the maintenance and up-keep of historic buildings, particularly in Waitsfield Village. Most of the ideas expressed were general

in nature, many related to land conservation or maintaining large areas of undeveloped land.

**Question 15** was seeking information about how many people in town are engaged in agricultural activities. The percentage of respondents “farming” was for the most part very low. The most popular agricultural activities were keeping poultry and gardening.

**Question 16** asked about expanding opportunities for agriculturally-related businesses in the rural parts of town. The majority of respondents supported this.

**Question 17** focused on support for large-scale wind power. A majority of respondents thought they would probably support a wind farm project and only a very few rejected the idea entirely.

**Question 18** presented a list of actions the town could take to address energy issues. Most of the ideas were supported by around half of respondents. The idea that garnered the least support was providing density bonuses for more energy efficient construction. Generating renewable power on town buildings or properties had the greatest support. There were several written comments expressing concern about timber harvesting in the town forest, most would support selective cutting but not clear cutting.

**Question 19** focused on the idea of a “Clean Energy Assessment District.” As this is an idea that is difficult to fully describe in a single sentence, there was some confusion about the concept. Still, a majority of respondents supported the town establishing such a district.

**Question 20** was an opportunity for respondents to comment on actions the town should take to address energy and sustainability issues. Quite a few respondents offered their ideas, indicating the widespread interest in the topic. There were comments on transportation alternatives, renewable power, higher efficiency standards and many other topics.

**Question 21** was related to the Mad River Path. Respondents indicated strong support for the path as not only a recreation resource, but as a bike-pedestrian transportation route. Respondents also supported the town becoming more

directly involved in maintaining, designing and constructing the path.

**Question 22** was a two-part question that also asked about the Mad River Path. 85% of respondents supported efforts to extend and connect the path - the strongest level of consensus expressed on any issue in the survey. Respondents generally agreed with offering owners tax reductions or rebates if they allowed the path to use their land. About half of respondents supported using town employees and equipment to maintain the path, and using funds from non-property taxes or fees for the path. Fewer residents supported using property tax dollars on the path and only a small number supported using eminent domain to acquire land or rights-of-way for the path. Many of the written comments were related to one of those issues. There were also comments both for and against paving the path.

**Question 23** was another two-part question and was focused on the idea of a valley-wide trail network that would attract users year-round. Most respondents supported the general idea. However, there was not significant support for a trail network designed for motorized (snowmobile or ATV) riders.

**Question 24** asked whether new development should be required to provide sidewalks, paths, trails, etc. There was moderate support for most of the ideas presented with the exception of requiring sidewalks in rural subdivisions.

**Question 25** focused on alternative modes of transportation. Again, there was moderate support for most of the ideas. The most popular were providing bike lanes, building sidewalks and creating park-and-ride lots. The least popular were paying for GMTA bus service and building off-road multi-use paths. The written comments show a general consensus that there should be bike lanes or paved shoulders on Route 100 through the entire town. The Joslin Hill/East Warren Road area was also mentioned by a number of respondents as a route that needs a bike lane. There were a lot of comments related to the sidewalk project, both in response to this and other questions. Many respondents do not understand why the proposed sidewalk project from the school to Irasville has not been completed, even though it has been

planned for so long. There was a general consensus that sidewalks are needed in this corridor. Many respondents also suggested park-and-ride locations - the Pines rest area being one of the most frequently cited.

**Question 26** provided respondents with an opportunity to comment on transportation issues. In addition to the comments described above, there were a number related to bus service - both the need for it and the uncertainty with whether there would be enough ridership. Several respondents pointed out how few children are riding school buses and are instead being dropped-off by parents.

**Question 27** asked about the best way for the town to communicate with residents. The Valley Reporter was the most popular and MRVTV was the least popular. Nearly half supported use of the town website or email.

**Question 28** focused on the issue of a municipal wastewater treatment system. The results and written comments show the lack of consensus and confusion that exists on this topic. More respondents disagreed than agreed with the idea that municipal wastewater is needed to support economic development. Yet in response to Question 9, a larger number supported providing municipal water and wastewater to support affordable housing. Somewhat more people agreed than disagreed that wastewater should serve a larger area than currently proposed, that wastewater in Irasville/Waitsfield Village would benefit the town as a whole, and that wastewater would result in too much development. The statement that the fewest respondents disagreed with was that the system should be paid for by those who would use it. Many of the written comments on the wastewater issue expanded on that theme. A number of respondents feel that the town taxpayers are being asked to pay for infrastructure that will greatly increase the value and development potential of land owned by a relatively small number of individuals/entities, and therefore those benefiting the most should pay the most. Other comments expressed an exasperation with the issue not being decided in a timely and efficient manner. Those expressing support for the wastewater system generally cited the desirability of compact, higher-density development.

**Question 29** asked respondents how the town is doing with a list of services. Respondents were most satisfied with road maintenance and emergency services. They were least satisfied with planning, economic development, and budgeting and taxes.

**Question 30** provided an opportunity for respondents to comment on actions the town should take to improve public infrastructure or municipal services. Most comments related to the wastewater/water projects. Other topics mentioned by multiple respondents included dissatisfaction with the sheriff department's speed enforcement effort and a need for more law enforcement patrols to reduce petty and property crime. A number of respondents commented on the need for a larger and more inviting town library.

**Question 31** offered respondents a final opportunity to comment on any topic. There was a diversity of comments on many topics.

1. Is your primary residence in Waitsfield?

197 83% Yes

41 17% No

A. How many years have you lived in Waitsfield?

31 16% Less than 5  
44 22% 5 to 9  
44 22% 10 to 19  
73 37% 20 or more  
5 3% No response

B. Where did you move to Waitsfield from?

53 27% Another Vermont town  
28 14% Massachusetts  
22 11% New York  
13 7% Connecticut  
61 31% Other  
20 10% No response

C. How many people live in your household?

21 16% 1 person  
83 42% 2 people  
80 41% 3 or more people  
1 1% No response

D. How many are age 18 or younger?

16 8% 1 person  
64 33% 2 or more people  
116 59% None / No response

E. How many are age 65 or older?

25 13% 1 person  
24 13% 2 or more people  
146 74% None / No response

F. How many are currently employed full-time?

84 43% 1 person  
59 30% 2 or more people  
53 27% None / No response

G. How many are currently employed part-time?

62 32% 1 person  
8 4% 2 or more people  
126 64% None / No response

H. How many households include at least 1 person who is ...?

47 24% a. Self-employed, working from home  
36 18% b. Self-employed, working outside home  
63 32% c. Working for someone else from home  
65 33% d. Working for someone else outside home  
37 19% e. Stay at home parent/caregiver/homemaker  
110 56% f. Retired  
27 14% g. In school  
49 25% h. Unemployed

I. How many households include at least 1 person working in ...?

95 48% a. Waitsfield  
38 19% b. Warren  
33 17% c. Montpelier/Berlin  
36 18% d. Waterbury  
39 20% e. Chittenden County  
95 48% f. Other community

Non-Resident Property Owners

L. Do you own...?

16 39% a. A second home in Waitsfield  
1 2% b. Residential rental property in Waitsfield  
7 17% c. Commercial property in Waitsfield  
6 15% d. Undeveloped land in Waitsfield  
7 17% e. Other

M. How many years have you owned property in Waitsfield?

4 10% Less than 5  
5 12% 5 to 9  
8 20% 10 to 19  
16 39% 20 or more  
8 20% No response

2. Do you think the rate of economic development in Waitsfield is...?

101	42%	a. Too slow
82	35%	b. Just right
5	2%	c. Too fast
41	17%	d. No opinion
9	4%	No response

3. Do you support continued commercial development in Irasville?

191	80%	a. Yes
23	9%	b. No, town doesn't need more commercial
9	4%	c. No, commercial should go somewhere else
6	3%	d. No opinion
9	4%	No response

3.A. Would you rather see Irasville ...?

40	17%	a. Continue to develop as it has in previous decades - a primarily commercial and light industrial area where most people drive from place-to-place, most buildings are single-story and few people live.
154	65%	b. Develop more like a downtown, where people are likely to walk between destinations, there are multi-story buildings, and there is a mix of business and residential uses
12	5%	c. Other
4	2%	d. No opinion
27	11%	No response

4. What is your level of agreement with the following?

4.A. Of options a-h, which most closely expresses your preference for where/how the majority of Waitsfield's commercial dev. should occur?

(1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree, NR=no response, PREF=selected as top preference)

	1	2	3	4	5	NR	PREF	
a. New businesses should be located in Waitsfield Village and Irasville.	61	45	32	45	50	5	61%	
b. New businesses should be located on Route 100 south of Irasville.	18	67	70	43	28	12	3%	
c. New businesses should be located on Route 100 north of the village.	21	64	63	46	33	11	2%	
d. Existing businesses on Route 100 south should be allowed to expand.	54	98	50	18	11	7	0%	
e. Existing businesses on Route 100 north should be allowed to expand.	50	105	42	17	17	7	1%	
f. New businesses should locate near existing businesses on Rt. 100 north.	24	56	56	56	35	11	2%	
g. New businesses should locate near existing businesses on Rt. 100 south.	26	61	62	49	30	10	3%	
h. Businesses should be allowed to locate anywhere in town.	53	65	31	16	61	12	8%	

5. Regarding home businesses, do you think the town should...?

132	56%	a. Continue with its current regulations
12	5%	b. Further limit the size or impacts of home businesses (employees, traffic, parking, storage, etc.)
65	27%	c. Allow for larger or more intensive home businesses (more space, more employees, etc.)
16	7%	d. No opinion
13	5%	No response








7. Do you think the rate of residential development in Waitsfield is...?

31	13%	a. Too slow
118	50%	b. Just right
29	12%	c. Too fast
39	16%	d. No opinion
21	9%	No response

8. What is your level of agreement with the following?

8.A. Of options a-g, which most closely expresses your preference for where/how the majority of Waitsfield's residential dev. should occur?

(1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree, NR=no response, PREF=selected as top preference)

	1	2	3	4	5	NR	PREF	
a. New homes should be built in the Waitsfield Village / Irasville area.	30	50	58	50	34	16	13%	
b. New homes should be built along Route 100.	21	39	59	58	43	18	1%	
c. New homes should be built in small clusters of homes scattered throughout Waitsfield's rural areas.	32	56	61	47	26	16	16%	
d. New homes should be built in a limited number of new, higher-density settlements in Waitsfield's rural areas.	24	48	64	53	33	16	13%	
e. New homes should not be concentrated in any one area, but should be spread around town.	38	69	56	47	16	12	13%	
f. New homes should not be built close together.	26	37	69	62	30	14	2%	
g. New homes should be built wherever the land is suitable.	43	72	52	38	21	12	18%	

9. Would you support Waitsfield doing the following to address the issue of affordable housing?

65	27%	a. Reducing the minimum lot size below 1 acre
112	47%	b. Allowing higher-density development in exchange for creation of affordable units
80	34%	c. Providing municipal water to a larger area of town than currently planned
114	48%	d. Providing municipal wastewater to the Waitsfield Village/Irasville area
80	34%	e. Acquiring town land for affordable housing
34	14%	f. Using local taxes or fees to subsidize affordable housing

11. Should the town contribute to its conservation fund for the purpose of purchasing or conserving open space and agricultural land?

174	73%	a. Yes
30	13%	b. No
18	8%	c. No opinion
16	7%	No response

11. A. How should money be raised for the conservation fund?

157	90%	a. Donations.
125	72%	b. An impact fee on new development.
76	44%	c. A transfer tax levied on property sales.
17	10%	d. A local sales tax.
27	16%	e. A local rooms & meals tax.
18	10%	f. An increase in the property tax.

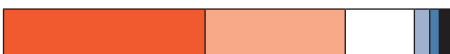












12. Would you support Waitsfield doing the following to address the issue of water quality in the Mad River?

124	52%	a. Offering education on pollution prevention
158	66%	b. Changing road maintenance practices in order to reduce stormwater run-off and erosion
147	62%	c. Requiring new development to manage stormwater on-site through retention and infiltration
145	61%	d. Planning for a coordinated stormwater management system for the Irasville/Waitsfield Village area
120	50%	e. Increasing the width of the buffers required along Waitsfield's streams

13. Do you agree that Waitsfield needs to do more to prevent impacts to the following resources from development?

13.A. Of options a through m, which resource do you think is most at risk due to development?

(1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree, NR=no response, RISK=selected as most at risk)

	1	2	3	4	5	NR	RISK	
a. Large areas of contiguous forest	105	73	36	8	4	12	11%	
b. Wildlife habitat	74	93	47	10	4	10	9%	
c. Wildlife travel corridors	99	76	40	8	4	10	3%	
d. Land being actively farmed	116	70	30	9	4	8	12%	
e. Open land not actively farmed	80	83	42	13	10	9	17%	
f. Mad River	115	74	31	5	3	9	10%	
g. Small tributaries and streams	82	98	37	6	5	9	0%	
h. Wetlands	74	84	55	9	4	11	1%	
i. Flood and erosion hazard areas	83	96	34	8	3	13	2%	
j. Visible ridgelines and hillsides	86	85	44	8	6	9	7%	
k. Scenic vistas	68	87	58	10	5	10	4%	
l. Scenic roads	66	89	50	18	7	8	2%	
m. Historic buildings	79	84	51	9	6	9	2%	

15. Are you engaged in the following?

1	0%	a. Farming as a primary income source
9	4%	b. Farming as a supplemental income source
1	0%	c. Raising dairy cows
5	2%	d. Raising cattle, pigs, sheep, other livestock
5	2%	e. Growing field crops
13	5%	f. Growing hay
7	3%	g. Keeping horses
21	9%	h. Keeping poultry
7	3%	i. Producing maple syrup
6	3%	j. Growing produce for sale
92	39%	k. Growing produce for home consumption

18. Would you support Waitsfield doing the following to address energy issues?

109	46%	a. Requiring a higher standard of energy efficiency for newly constructed single-family homes than currently required by state law
118	50%	b. Requiring a higher standard of energy efficiency for newly constructed buildings other than single-family homes than currently required by state law
76	32%	c. Allowing higher-density development in exchange for more energy efficient buildings
102	43%	d. Allowing higher-density development in exchange for on-site generation of renewable energy
113	47%	e. Providing alternative transportation options
92	39%	f. Harvesting wood for biomass energy use from the town forest
120	50%	g. Promoting higher-density, mixed-use development in the Waitsfield Village/Irasville area
121	51%	h. Increasing the maximum allowed height for off-grid wind turbines from 50 to 100 feet.
163	68%	i. Generating renewable energy on town buildings or properties.

16. Would you support expanding opportunities for agriculturally-related businesses in the rural parts of town?

178	75%	a. Yes
15	6%	b. No
20	8%	c. No opinion
25	11%	No response

17. What statement comes closest to your position regarding construction of a wind farm in Waitsfield?

56	24%	a. I would support any wind farm project.
123	52%	b. I probably would support such a project, but I would need to know the details.
27	11%	c. I doubt that I would support such a project, but I would not want to reject the idea without knowing the details.
9	4%	d. I would not support any such project.
0	0%	e. No opinion
23	9%	No response

19. Would you support efforts to establish a Clean Energy Assessment district in Waitsfield?

130	55%	a. Yes
36	15%	b. No
44	18%	c. No opinion
28	12%	No response

21. What is your level of agreement with the following?

(1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree, NR=no response)

	1	2	3	4	5	NR	
a. The Mad River Path should be designed primarily for recreation	86	81	44	14	2	11	
b. The Mad River Path should be designed to allow people to commute from home to work/school or to travel to destinations like shopping or services	94	75	40	5	13	11	
c. The town should be more actively involved in maintaining, designing and constructing the Mad River Path	59	82	45	24	16	12	

22. Do you support efforts to extend and connect the existing segments of the Mad River Path?

203	85%	a. Yes
5	2%	b. No
8	3%	c. No opinion
22	10%	No response

22.A. Would you support Waitsfield taking any of the following actions in support of the path?

130	55%	a. Using town employees and equipment to maintain the Mad River Path
96	40%	b. Using funds raised from property taxes to acquire land or rights-of-way for the path
118	50%	c. Using funds raised from fees or non-property taxes to acquire land or rights-of-way for the path
173	73%	d. Offering landowners who donate land and/or rights-of-way for the Mad River Path a reduction or rebate on their property taxes
33	14%	e. Using eminent domain to acquire land and/or rights-of-way for the Mad River Path if owners are unwilling to donate or sell

23. Should the town work with partners to develop an interconnected system of off-road paths and trails to attract visitors to the valley year-round?

169	71%	a. Yes
26	11%	b. No
21	9%	c. No opinion
22	9%	No response

23.A. What type of trail users should the valley attract?

190	80%	a. Non-motorized (hikers, bicyclists, skiers)
51	21%	b. Snowmobilers
13	5%	c. ATV riders
98	41%	d. Horseback riders

24. Should the town require new development to...?

137	58%	a. Provide sidewalks in Waitsfield Vil. / Irasville
118	50%	b. Provide paths/trails in Waitsfield Vil./Irasville
19	8%	c. Provide sidewalks in rural subdivisions
97	41%	d. Provide paths/trails in rural subdivisions
135	57%	e. Maintain access to existing trails on the property
98	41%	f. Connect to trails on neighboring properties

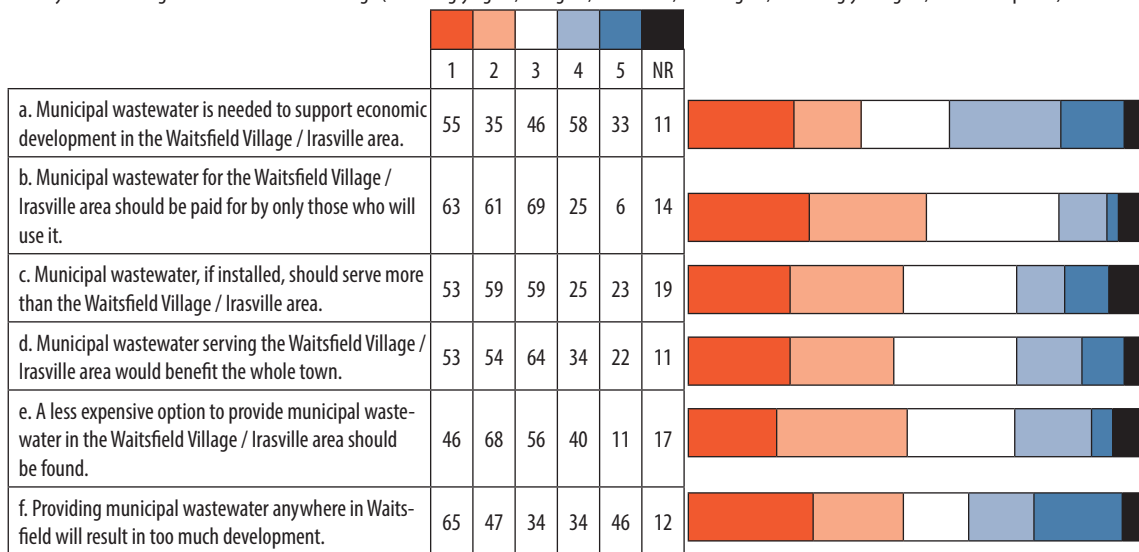
25. Would you support the town doing the following to support alternative modes of transportation?

102	43%	a. Creating one or more park-and-ride lots.
57	24%	b. Paying around \$20,000 per year for GMTA bus service between Waitsfield & Montpelier.
89	37%	c. Expanding service provided by the Mad Bus.
114	48%	d. Building sidewalks.
127	53%	e. Widening roads to provide bike lanes.
69	29%	f. Building off-road multi-use paths.
87	37%	g. Promoting higher-density, mixed-use development in the Waitsfield Village/Irasville area

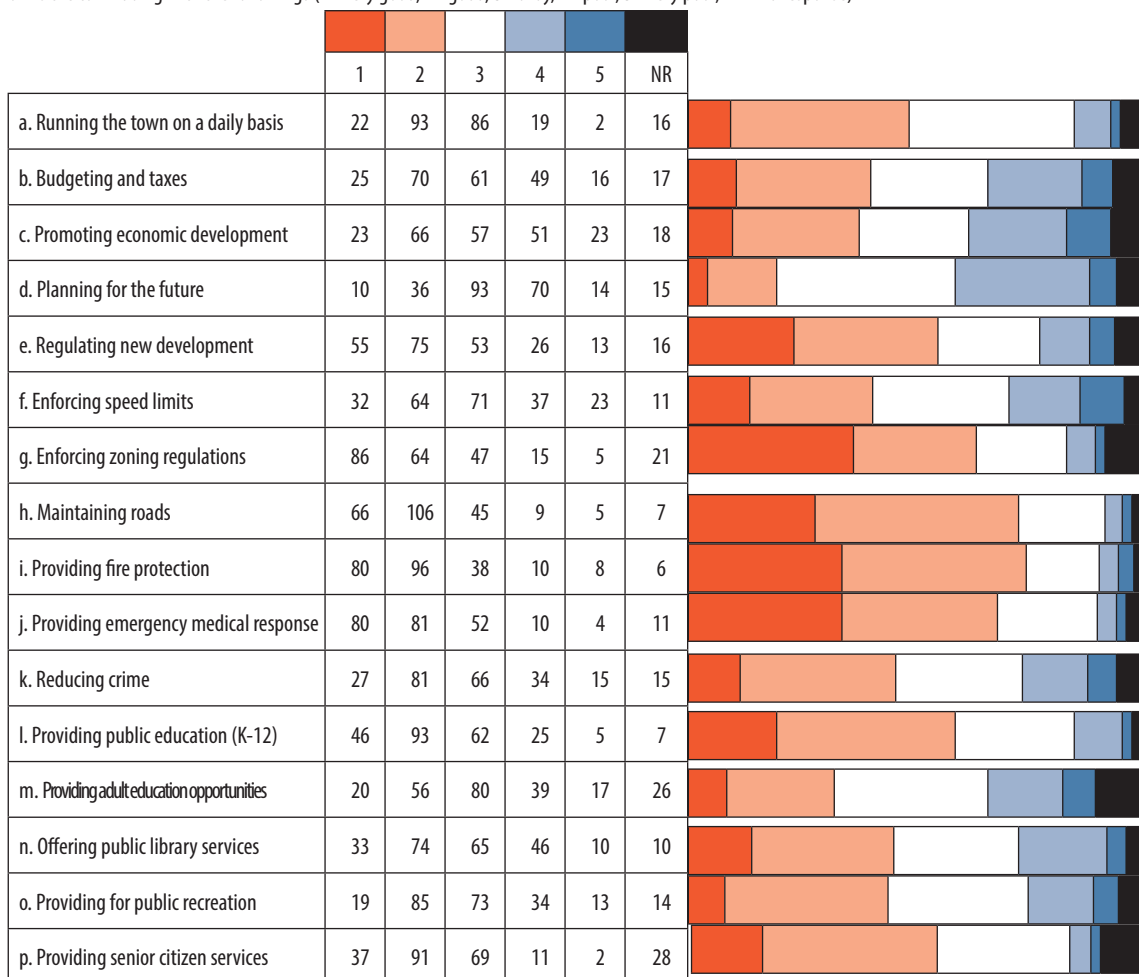
27. What ways would you like the town to share information with you?

75	32%	a. U.S. Postal Service
111	47%	b. Email
67	28%	c. Town newsletter
115	48%	d. Town website
160	67%	e. Valley Reporter
65	27%	f. MRVTV cable access channel
93	39%	g. Public meetings

28. What is your level of agreement with the following? (1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree, NR=no response)



29. How is the town doing with the following? (1=very good, 2=good, 3=okay, 4=poor, 5=very poor, NR=no response)



## WRITTEN COMMENTS

### Question 1B

- 6. CT to VT to CO to WA to VT
- 16. VT, NC & GA
- 25. VT & WA
- 39. Abroad
- 68. Born here, but lived in NY & VT
- 71. MD & PA
- 81. NY & UK

### Question 1I

- 8. Duxbury
- 15. Moretown
- 17. Moretown
- 20. Duxbury
- 26. Middlebury
- 29. Moretown
- 31. Fayston
- 36. Burlington, Boston, NYC
- 44. Stowe
- 49. Fayston
- 74. Fayston, VT
- 80. All over VT
- 205. Northfield
- 207. Valley
- 213. Goes to job sites everywhere.
- 220. Stowe
- 227. Self-employed working from home and out.
- 231. Varies depending on the job site.
- 233. Stowe

### Question 1J

- 1. Consultant
- 3. Dental hygienist in Waitsfield. Chef at Sugar-bush.
- 5. Administrative [illegible]
- 7. Nonprofit director and college professor
- 10. Teachers
- 12. Real estate

- 15. Librarian. Custodian.
- 17. Self-employed tin smith. Teacher.
- 19. Speech pathologist. Insurance agent.
- 22. Financial services.
- 24. Attorney. Housewife.
- 26. Minister. Teacher.
- 28. Seasonal ski.
- 30. Massage therapist. Baker.
- 32. Contractor. Banker.
- 36. Interior designer.
- 38. Business manager. Retail.
- 40. Librarian.
- 42. Ski tickets.
- 44. Senior manager.
- 46. IT manager. Physical therapist.
- 49. Teacher. Seasonal lift op.
- 52. Cosmetologist. Heavy equipment operator. Mental health care.
- 54. Piano teacher. Electrical engineer for MD company.
- 58. Self-employed construction.
- 60. Graphic designer. Academic advisor.
- 66. Cleaning.
- 70. Server. Bartender.
- 74. Teacher. Ski coach.
- 77. Inventor. Marine biologist.
- 79. Electrical engineer.
- 81. CFO. Massage therapist.
- 84. Real Estate Consultant and appraiser
- 87. Entrepreneur/Sales Retired Architect/part-time consultant
- 90. My husband is a self-employed cabinetmaker who works from our home but his jobs take him to all the areas in I. I am an educational administrator for the State of Vermont.
- 93. Educator and Hospital Finance
- 95. Real estate sales.
- 97. Non profit CEO consultant
- 99. Local Media Teacher/Consultant
- 101. Jim works part-time at tempest Book shop, Waitsfield and is a freelance graphic designer and

writer. Judy is retired and Curator of the Waitsfield Historical Society

104. Interior designer

106. Marketing. Public Relations.

108. Energy-Information Technology Project Manager Homestead Manager

110. Project Manager, Energy Efficiency

112. Electrical Engineer, Mechanical Engineering Manager

114. Planner Caregiver for pre-school child.

116. Publisher, trade newsletter

118. Engineer, and freelance marketing/copy writer.

120. Corporate strategy

122. State Employee; Company president.

124. My wife and I co-own a small business.

126. Accounting, office management

128. Accountant, Office Manager

130. Town zoning administrator book editor (part time)

133. Local government, planning

135. Physical Therapist Hospital EMR Designer

138. Educator Ski Racing coach Camp Director

140. Contractor, Banker

142. Web Developer, part-time substitute school bus driver

144. Part time real estate management

147. Education field

150. Both are energy analysts

152. Investment Operations Manager Forester

156. Planner

158. Senior Project Manager Consultant

161. Builders

163. Business owners

165. Lawyer; medical technologist

168. Teacher Dept. of Education

172. Publisher of local Guidebook, coordinator for local arts festival

177. Emergency management/hazard mitigation specialist

179. Forester

181. Owner of company with 15 employees

183. Self-employed grant writer; bookkeeper. Self-employed carpenter

185. Teacher and lawyer

188. School administrator

190. Medical Practice Management Implementation

193. Biologist at Fish and Wildlife and an engineer for a small consulting firm.

195. Real Estate Consultant and appraiser

197. Graphic designer - owner small business. Physical therapist.

199. Partner. Sales.

203. Carpenter. Painter.

205. Plumber. Architect.

208. Graphic designer. Retail sales.

210. Consultants.

212. Farming.

215. Carpentry. Health care.

218. Program director. Realtor.

220. Special educator. Builder.

222. Real estate manager.

225. Business owner. Teacher.

227. Chef, owner-operator.

229. Construction.

231. Administrative assistant. Electrical contractor.

233. Landlord. Fitness instructor.

238. Bookkeeper/receptionist. Artist.

#### Question 1K

4. Mattapoisett, MA

37. Warren, VT

48. Shelburne, VT

57. Stamford, CT

61. Haddam, CT

63. Fayston, VT

85. Fayston, VT

89. Moretown, VT

92. Wyckoff, NJ

102. Weston, MA  
 127. Warren, VT  
 132. St. Johns, FL  
 134. Glastonbury, CT  
 149. Fayston, VT  
 157. Fayston, VT  
 159. Old Greenwich, CT  
 162. Warren, VT  
 167. Fayston, VT (on the line)  
 170. Granville, VT  
 174. Moretown, VT  
 182. Fayston, VT  
 187. Fayston, VT  
 191. Warren, VT  
 201. York, PA  
 206. Moretown, VT  
 216. Springfield, MA  
 224. Boston, MA  
 235. Weston, MA  
 237. Norwich, VT

### Question 2

16. In between too slow and just right.  
 37. We have lost several great businesses - MR Canoe, CEC, Northern Power.  
 77. I don't believe it! As Waitsfield lost 84 employees when Mad River Canoe pulled out!  
 227. Statistics??  
 234. Natural progression given the nature of the valley economy.

### Question 3

1. People are making purchases via internet and there is still room in business park up the road.  
 4. Irasville more like a downtown but not with multi-story buildings.  
 6. More walking, less car dependent!  
 16. Yes, but only to a certain degree. Irasville should develop as a variation on a downtown where agriculture and eco-zones are embraced.

23. Commercial should go north or south on Route 100.  
 25. Irasville more like a downtown but with a heavy emphasis on being business development friendly.  
 32. Commercial should go north of town.  
 49. But where?  
 51. Commercial should go on Route 100 from Kenyon's to Haps.  
 55. Mix of A & B.  
 58. We have to grow. We can't afford what we pay now.  
 67. No multi-story or box stores.  
 77. More industry.  
 89. On Rt 100 north of town.  
 91. It should not be in Irasville because the previous plan was created so long ago. Irasville is a wetland and cannot support any denser development. Why not use the spaces available such as around the Valley Professional Center or at the old North Wind space. Waitsfield is incapable of supporting large commercial development due to its geographical location and poor services.  
 172. I said no, because I think the entire plan needs to be revamped. The shopping centers are still extremely automobile-centered, and new developments only exacerbate the problem. Take a look at the last 3 renovations in Mad River Green!!! And the Village Square design is beyond hopeless. We need: 1) A town green. Mad River Green--where the Farmers Market is--could work if it wasn't backed up to the trashy back doors of the shopping center's existing businesses. 2) A town hall. The Waitsfield School doesn't cut it. The Valley Players could work? 3) A better visitors center, next to/in the town hall, set on the town green. The Wait House is too removed from Irasville to be effective (or is it visa versa). 4) A walkable streetscape. 5) Sidewalks. Sidewalks. Did I say sidewalks. 6) A better sense of 'here you are in THE MAD RIVER VALLEY (issue of the 4 towns' identities with MRV and Sugarbush--needs to get fixed!!!  
 191. Some in the Bridge Street area and some in the RT 17 area and just south of there as an extension of Irasville

- 206. Downtown-type development should be allowed, but not necessarily required.
- 211. Develop within village framework.
- 213. Downtown-type development but no multi-story.
- 219. Location depends on what kind of commercial. Have trouble sustaining small businesses that are here.
- 223. 1-story shops.
- 227. Need to fill existing commercial space first.
- 229. More like “a” than “b” but with 1 1/2 and 2 story buildings, many clustered around shared (off-street) parking.
- 233. Commercial should go to a place which can handle construction/building associated with commercialization.
- 237. Leave it alone.

#### Question 4

- 6. b. That would sprawl development. c. More sprawl! d/e. If you can’t mindfully expand in your current location why wouldn’t you move to Waterbury or Montpelier, etc.! f/g. This is ideal but not all small businesses can afford rent of “downtown” properties. h. We should encourage small businesses of all kinds and even from private homes too!
- 25. Existing and new business ventures should not be thwarted and should all be considered.
- 31. b/c - No land available! Prefer f, but there is limited space!
- 37. a. Strongly agree with new businesses in Irasville but not really in Waitsfield Village.
- 45. This is just a push poll. It’s wasting my time. It’s already fully developed.
- 49. But where?
- 208. This is a hard question. Business should be located in business zone except home businesses.
- 211. Prefer a, b & c.
- 219. This is too vague. It totally depends on kind of business. Tricky and unfair question.
- 233. New = small, not big.
- 237. There is enough development.

#### Question 6

- 2. Help support existing businesses by marketing collectively the valley.
- 5. Incentives for livable wage and above new jobs - tax breaks. Infrastructure in Irasville for new jobs - [illegible] current use.
- 7. Coordinate Chamber activity to market the Valley more thoughtfully.
- 12. Change the difficult process of doing business here. Study successful models and adapt.
- 14. Create public rest rooms.
- 16. Fill in existing business spaces. Provide incentives for folks with creative, progressive, community-enhancing ideas.
- 18. Waitsfield economy fits the Valley very well.
- 20. Town Boards must be business friendly. They have the appearance of not being friendly.
- 22. Sidewalks. Bikeway. Expand connection of towns and ski resorts. Business Council.
- 25. Support and work w/ businesses at the ski area especially.
- 27. Encourage green/non-polluting businesses that provide needed products/services. Protect the environment and beautiful landscape.
- 29. Reduce the taxes on new businesses. Be more friendly to new businesses.
- 31. Waitsfield looks the same as when I first lived here 36 years ago. It may be quaint for tourist for a day or two, but it has many faults - septic, water, unsightly sidewalks, curbs, roads with no space for bikers, etc.
- 34. Don’t hassle every permit application. Work with (not versus) applicants!!
- 36. Septic/sewers.
- 38. Lighten up on existing businesses. We are lucky they are here. Apply this great planning to new businesses.
- 43. Advertising that there are jobs in Waitsfield.
- 45. Zero - businesses can take care of themselves. No more promotion, no more tax breaks, no more bailouts.
- 49. Better infrastructure! Sidewalks, curbs, water, sewage. Bury utilities on Route 100 (very unsightly for beautiful town).

51. Encourage the Chamber or other agency or individual to market our town.

53. Increase number of progressive members of the Selectboard.

55. Develop sewer and water. Paved sidewalks throughout town center. Require businesses to improve their appearance.

58. Change zoning to encourage new growth.

61. Adjust zoning to allow flexibility on specific situations without establishing a precedent.

64. People friendly. Business friendly. Positive public advertisement. Maintain attractive and clean environment.

66. Advertise events and not just in the paper. A banner at either end of town, just a thought.

68. Allow expansion north on Route 100.

71. Create a marketing group.

73. Encourage more in tourism.

75. Tax incentives.

77. Be more friendly!! Let us work.

79. Lower taxes.

81. Septic and water system. Rezone Irasville.

83. Tax incentives and tax breaks

85. Make the permitting easier.

87. We feel strongly that all discussions about what should be done to promote Waitsfield's economy should be Valley wide. It is Irasville that is the hub of our community business, not to mention that almost every business in the Valley is for the community of the Valley. There should be regular open discussions that are open to all in the four towns. The requirement that all new construction in the commercial zones be two-story is an excellent ordinance, however, it should take into consideration what kind of business will be in the first floor. There are businesses where placing an apartment over it is not appropriate (i.e. an auto repair garage, a manufacturing industry that makes noise with its machines, etc.) There should be a tax advantage to the person who wishes to build a two-story building to house their business on the first floor and provide affordable housing on the second floor. There should be programs to encourage both the new and existing businesses to communicate to each other what works and what doesn't work

based on their experiences. The signage ordinance needs to encourage design and creativity, not mundane signs where all the fonts are the same for all the businesses. Each font should express the type of business it is. The listing of businesses all in the same font is eyewash - very few people read them as they are whizzing by in a car. Sandwich signs should be permitted, period.

90. Make the physical infrastructure of the town better -- roads, sidewalks, water and septic.

92. Repave Rt 100, add sidewalks

94. Allowing SLIGHTLY larger home businesses, and encouraging home businesses altogether would lessen the impact of new construction. We don't need anymore enormous buildings such as the medical center that seems so out of place where it is. That is simply not consistent with the town. Too many more huge businesses and creating a 'huge' Irasville center is the start of another Tafts Corner. Or Stowe. We don't have the road structure for this!

97. Water project sidewalks bike lanes proactive vision for Irasville development

99. Clean and paint buildings along RT 100

101. Promote home businesses within the above specifications and invite new businesses who can conform to very carefully thought out green specifications

103. Tax incentives for businesses that invest in renewables, low impact transportation , etc

105. Go green! Promote renewable energy, cottage industries; local agriculture hub

107. Local agriculture Farmer's market year round Renewable energy

111. Allowing successful businesses to expand within the town, and not have to move jobs elsewhere. This may mean relocating from a private residence, as mentioned in question 5, but would still enable/support the business to stay in the valley.

113. I'm not familiar enough with the issue to know what jobs people in Waitsfield are needing, but I would look to match our employable people with jobs they can do. I'd love to see Waitsfield have businesses which are green- either designing or manufacturing green technology- or businesses which work for a better

world- non-profits, schools, arts communities, etc. I'd also love to see us focus on agriculture-keeping the working landscape and increasing the local food supply. Artisanal food producers? Small scale alternative energy companies?

115. Encourage people to "spend-locally" as the first option in any commercial transaction

117. Save the Village! Encourage and assist businesses in Waitsfield Village. Promote pedestrian and bicycle access to all areas.

119. I feel that it would be important to develop business outside the tourism sector by supporting businesses that exists in that niche such as Small Dog, Baked Beads, Vt. Canoe, Verilux etc. By supporting these businesses it would communicate a more business friendly environment. I think tax incentives for keeping businesses in the Valley and attracting others would be beneficial.

121. Over the past several years, Waitsfield has developed a reputation for being intransigent towards existing business, new business, and conservation. We have seen numerous established business depart, and few new business arise, and a town plan that seems more driven by a desire to promote 'development' (e.g., construction) rather than sustainable local commerce. Headlines and public debate have been focused on the water project, the Turner cow underpass, the fiasco involving the town pond, and meanwhile we see Mad River Canoe and Northern Power (businesses we should have been proud of) leave, Small Dog thwarted in their efforts to develop, and very few new enterprises emerge (the Yaks and 1% are notable exceptions). If we want successful and sustainable economic development, we need sidewalks and at least one crosswalk, slower speed limits, a bike/walking path which is actually contiguous safe and attractive... in short, a village that feels like a Village rather than a strip mall along the highway. That will create a place where people with portable business will want to move, live and work; where merchants can attract visitors to a vibrant village/shopping district; and where local residents can safely get around our very small town without having to drive all the time. What we don't need is local contractors to make shed loads of money building more fancy vacation homes for out of staters at the expense of our natural resources.

125. I do not believe it is the government's job to promote the economy anymore than it is its job to suppress the economy. Tax incentives ARE NOT the answer - we have already been burned by that once... The entire Town votes on local tax stabilization for farmers. I suppose one could argue that it is still the gov't that initiates the vote at Town Meeting.

127. Better downtown area for walking

129. Upgrade the infrastructure including the roads, sidewalks, and septic in the Village area.

131. Increased effort to make Irasville more of a downtown and increase residential & commercial businesses located there.

133. Develop water and wastewater infrastructure. Improve pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, crosswalks, benches, wayfinding signs) Improve cell phone coverage. Develop a local gift certificate program 'Mad Money' that can be spent at any participating business.

135. Use common sense. An example of NO common sense is ... the barriers the town of Waitsfield has made for Troy Kingsbury @ the VG to build a roof over his gas pumps .. WHAT a joke, the expense he has gone thru with designs has be enormous. His presentation to the DRB was very impressive and he still can't start construction. The DRB has to interrupt the law, using the 'intent' of the law, if they only follow the exact word of the law/ordinance, why not use a computer, at least one would get their decision within seconds.

138. Better sidewalks and bike lanes and generally better road maintenance, allowing people easy access between shops. Encourages bike tours and bike races and other seasonal income making projects. Also municipal water/septic to allow existing business to continue to grow and keep the town center active.

140. There seem to be so many loop-holes and regulations to navigate in order to run a business. Taxes are a deterrent. Chamber fees are incredibly high for the small/average business.

142. Business Incubators, bring in businesses that support agriculture - i.e. milk processing - but limit size, encourage high-tech low environmental/foot print businesses, support entrepreneurs by encourage buy local and/or highlighting local

business-to-business, encourage entrepreneurship in local schools with community support.

144. There is a perception that the Town is anti business. e.g. the problems that Small Dog among others has encountered.

147. Allow small businesses to develop with fewer restrictions, offer small business loans. Encourage small business development. Have functioning sidewalks for walking and road lanes for bicycling and roller blading so people can get around car-free. Have bus service to Montpelier and Barre, Waterbury, Stowe, then to Burlington, so people can get to work and appointments car-free. Also so people can visit the valley from these places easily. Promote the localvore/car free aspect of the area. Have fresh, safe water and sewer under those sidewalks.

149. 1. Concentrate on the town's traditional strengths, recreation, lodging, fine dining and tourism. 2. Encourage more mixed use and home-based small businesses with strict limits to discourage sprawl. 3. Find some way to make Irasville look and feel more like small town Vermont. 4. Make Irasville more accessible to foot traffic (a tall order I know). 5. Encourage (and help if possible) residents and businesses maintain the character of the historic district. 6. Don't spoil the valley. The beauty of either route 100 approach to is unparalleled and irretrievable if lost. We don't need another Stowe. I firmly believe that preservation of the scenic beauty and historic feel of the Mad River Valley are the key to economic development. The people who saw that years ago weren't wrong, they were just a little ahead of the curve.

151. Build the municipal water and wastewater systems as proposed. Promote affordable housing so that Waitsfield workers can afford to live in Waitsfield.

160. Lower property taxes

163. Make the most of the business landscape that already exists which offers more shops and retail and other businesses than so many other towns of similar population. Waitsfield operates rather ideally and needs not more business but rather better systems for cooperation and self promotion among its businesses to maximize their effectiveness. New businesses that promote community services (e.g. a doctors office,

butcher, fish market) make the place work better for locals, decreasing their carbon footprint and simultaneously make Waitsfield more attractive to visitors, and should thus be encouraged and incentivized.

165. Support and advance more public events with Sugarbush and other entities, such as summer concerts, festivals, and theater. Foster creation of a state-renowned mountain biking center by creating more trails and advertising their availability.

167. Stop causing major businesses to leave the area. Allow them to expand, billed up a tax base, that is not solely reliant on the ski industry.

169. Reduce restrictions on permitting and conditional use approvals.

174. Revisit the limitations in the Commercial Park with an eye to expand the potential uses allowed. Develop additional central parking and sidewalks within Waitsfield to encourage parking once and walking for errands.

177. The select board should make a concerted effort to become more 'business friendly' & more accommodating, encouraging both existing businesses and those considering moving to the area. Also, the town should make incentives available for new small businesses to relocate to Waitsfield village/Irasville.

179. Provide water & septic

181. Be more business friendly for all business in the area

183. While I think that growth should occur in the village and Irasville, I'm not really interested in that much more development. I like Bristol -- small, contained, walkable, compact. Montpelier is also great. I don't mind the village of Stowe, but the streets leading everywhere in and out of it are no longer attractive as they are too commercial. If Waitsfield feels that it needs to promote job development in the town, I'm more supportive of non-retail small businesses that employ 5 to 25 people than retail trade. I'm fine with the existing businesses in and out of Waitsfield on Route 100. It seems like a good mix of farm, house and business. I'd hate to see it tip towards business so that more folks don't want to live along Route 100.

185. Marketing through the Chamber, etc. Get water and sewer hooked up. Create incentives for growth in the Village and Irasville.

189. More moderate rental units

191. Make infrastructure to attract Tourism and also light industry, focusing on alt energy technology. For tourism we need more walking and X country ski paths and minivan bus service to trail heads. More things for tourists to do beyond skiing in the winter (more ecology walks, more interesting shops and activities like concerts during main tourist seasons.

193. Develop water and sewer within the village and Irasville areas.

195. The town should retain a professional marketing firm to market the towns objectives, that of course is after the town decides what it wants to be.

196. Tax incentives and tax breaks.

197. Develop a community center (open to public) with indoor pool and a space for club sports, etc. - non Sugarbush related space! Give folks something to do and stay!

199. A business needs good signage placement to survive. I feel the sign regulations are not clear nor currently supportive of local businesses.

201. Think and consider the time we are currently living. It is 2000 not 1900.

204. Water/sewer. Sidewalks. Protect working landscape and rural character. Coordinate with other valley towns.

208. Wish I knew!

211. Promote affordable housing. Discourage McMansions.

213. Cut down on traffic tickets. Taxi cabs. Public transportation. Cut property tax. Create incentives for 2nd home buyers.

217. Have viable cell phone service in the valley. I could leave MA and work in VT if there was cell phone service.

219. Depends - Do you want to be Stowe? If so, then they need to heavily market new growth and capitalize on tourist market/destination spot. If not, then help and continue to encourage and promote small, local, existing business.

222. Attempt to change perception of town being anti-business. Treatment of Small Dog is an example of anti-business bias.

225. Be more flexible with existing businesses desires to expand.

227. To create a goal with the Town of Waitsfield. In unity with all that [illegible] effort towards. Communication. Open minded, charge, "This is difficult and take many years."

232. Tax incentives. Less stringent zoning rules. Encourage small businesses.

234. Allow people to earn a livelihood any way that they can within reason. Waitsfield town officials are way too involved in decision making for private businesses.

236. Lower taxes on non-residents. I'd be more likely to spend money in the valley. Now I feel really pinched.

238. A job is a job in this economy. How do you expect to know what a home business needs. You could be more flexible about events, promotions. Why do you ([illegible] town) seem to be against business doing business. Where is the village grocery canopy!! I think it is four years now, really!

#### Question 7

5. [illegible] new homes should be clustered.

25. Should correspond to demand.

44. Need for affordable housing.

229. Between b & c.

#### Question 8

3. Not too close together.

6. Preference A & B.

16. b. Who wants to live on a busy road? Maybe someone does, but I sure don't. Prefer a or d.

22. Prefer F & G.

25. Irasville OK. Village not unless it is replacing.

37. b. Strongly disagree with new homes along Route 100 unless infill. Mix residential and business use.

45. Again, a push pull question. There's plenty of space to be rehabbed.

211. Prefer e & f.  
 219. Another tricky, vague question. Very hard to answer within reason.  
 237. No more large scale or medium scale development. Development should be individual homes.

#### Question 9

1. Habitat for Humanity homes  
 9. f. Fees - yes, taxes - no  
 12. First study how much we need.  
 16. Eco-housing.  
 20. Build in the Irasville district.  
 22. None of the above.  
 25. E - with the exception of affordable housing projects.  
 36. Transfer tax on property sales.  
 45. Nothing - leave it alone.  
 61. No easy solution.  
 63. Allow higher density only for affordable housing.  
 66. Fill existing dwellings (empty).  
 68. Explore fed/state funding.  
 78. Develop "in town" housing.  
 84. In statute transferable development rights like Warren. Swap meadowland for development rights  
 92. None of the above  
 94. Limited a & b  
 123. Define affordable  
 135. Use the private sector to build housing, caretaker house.... but not be taxed on its real value, tax reduction, incentive  
 144. I can't answer this question without a definition of affordable housing.  
 151. Tax abatement for developing affordable housing  
 208. Possibly town acquiring land for affordable housing.  
 213. Nothing.  
 217. Job growth and creation. Housing is affordable.

219. This is a bullshit question. What is your definition of affordable housing? Businesses should pay higher taxes and subsidize affordable housing.

223. We have enough.  
 233. Nothing.  
 235. Let the market dictate.  
 237. Mandate inclusionary zoning.

#### Question 10

3. Do not cramp people too close together in "affordable housing" style. Too much frustration, crime and negativity.  
 5. Transfer of development rights to save ag land and develop denser housing clusters. Density bonuses for mixed housing development that includes affordable.  
 7. "Incentivize" renewable energy options for both residential and commercial properties [illegible].  
 11. Duplex housing.  
 14. Opinion already stated in questions 8 and 9.  
 16. I support affordable housing, but I also believe that if the government subsidizes housing that a certain amount of accountability should be required of recipients.  
 18. See f above.  
 22. No action. Let the market take care of itself. The town is not a real estate company/regulator.  
 27. More affordable housing. Encourage housing that is energy efficient, fits landscape.  
 30. Should encourage high density housing downtown to reduce new roads that meed maintaining and preserve rural feel; it's a balance between development and agriculture, even downtown.  
 32. Nothing. Let it happen with no town interference.  
 36. Implement all the items in #9 above.  
 40. Consider use of manufactured housing in one area.  
 45. Nothing.  
 48. Build affordable housing near town center and transportation routes.

54. Look at housing above commercial - 2-story buildings.
56. Encourage new business and offer ability to generate lower cost housing.
58. State needs to lower education tax so people can come to the valley.
61. Provide transportation system to more affordable areas outside valley.
64. Form a committee from existing home owners to explore this important issue. Many questions need to be asked. The pros and cons are important.
67. Slow development!
71. Have plans for housing areas.
73. Encourage more middle class rentals like the one's over Bisbee's carpet store. Some people would stay here if there were nicer apartments.
76. The town should be a partner in the acquisition of suitable land for affordable housing.
79. Lower taxes.
81. Rezoning Irasville - reduce lot size. Residential mix commercial. Septic and water.
84. What is the meaning of the question?
87. A town-housing complex with row houses should be built in Irasville once the municipal wastewater is provided to provide more walking residents to our commercial district. This should be upscale housing, not necessarily 'affordable'. Additional 'affordable' housing should be provided with additional businesses that have apartments or co-ops on the second floor.
90. Mostly I don't have a problem with building of new housing throughout the Valley. However, I strongly object to building of McMansions in meadows which destroy the wide vistas and open spaces. Zoning regulations to control the citing of a huge house further from the road and in more secluded areas would be good.
94. Here's what one town did for its citizens: Haarlem, in The Netherlands, was being bought up by Amsterdam residents looking at 'cheap' property 10 minutes away. As the housing prices shot up, the locals couldn't afford to live in their town. In response, the town passed a law requiring anyone wanting to purchase a home in Haarlem to be or do one of three things: 1. Have been a previous resident, or grown up there; 2. had family still there; or 3. rent for 3 years before purchasing property. As a result, prices dropped down to normal, resulting in continuing affordable housing for the locals. It stopped the land-grab by out-of-towners.
97. Promote mixed development of Irasville help citizens picture future landscape given different development trajectories
101. Flexibility in allowing current homeowners to renovate. Not allowing high density cookie cutter developments. Requiring high cost developments to contribute to and support affordable housing.
103. I would like to see the creation of clustered small energy efficient single & multi-units that are placed along traffic routes to minimize travel and maximize community -- Incentives to do so or land reserved/reduced so feasible-
109. Allow for and promote granny flats as rental apartments. Mixed use in Irasville is good.
111. I support building housing in a walkable town center and making sure that affordable housing is integrated and not off in a trailer park-type location.
114. Follow the recommendations in the 2006 Mad River Valley Housing Study. Some of these strategies have been/are being implemented, but others need support and leadership from the town. Examples are establishment of a land bank, employer assisted housing initiatives, allow/encourage creation of new units through adaptive use of existing structures and rehab of larger in-town homes for shared housing or smaller apartments, promote economic development activities that increase local wages, transfer of development rights for properties that are below the 25 acre minimum for Current Use, create development regs and process that creates predictability and straightforwardness, minimum densities in the villages, sewer and water!, secure legislative authority to create a local property transfer tax to finance affordable housing, adopt inclusionary zoning, increase the sq. ft. and % limits on accessory apartments, make it easier for existing accessory apartments to come into compliance (waive fees, designate town staff to assist owner through the process, etc), and waive permit fees for affordable housing.
116. No McMansions

119. In terms of building...I have an issue of telling landowners where they can or how they should build a home. Of course as in any case, there should be some general guidelines in terms new development not negatively impacting existing neighbors and homes....but this can all be incredibly subjective in terms of who should build what, when and where. As long as public infrastructure or natural resources are not significantly impacted in negative ways (the river, traffic flow, wildlife habitat, etc) landowners who pay taxes should be able to build homes and not be forced into specific community clusters, etc. We have to keep a guarded balance between individual land rights and the community good, the latter being difficult to define and incredibly subjective.

125. Continue to look for areas that the land is able to support PUD's, without the added tax burden of a wastewater system. I there are none, then I guess we are at capacity.

128. Revise setback requirements on smaller lots(less than 2 acres).

132. Continue to preserve the charm of the Waitsfield area by not allowing high density development.

135. See above

139. If someone who has money wants to build a house in town let them! Rather than frustrate the hell out of them so they never come back.

144. The town should concentrate on safety and healthy concerns.

147. Make it more affordable to own and to rent here. It's over my ability to afford on my wages here, working full time. I lose money every month and that can't be sustained - I'll have to leave if I can't find a solution.

149. I'm inclined to think we will be best served by integrating low income housing into the town as a whole. Accessory apartments and multi-family buildings that match the Vermont aesthetic strike me as entirely reasonable ways to attract lower income families without significantly encouraging sprawl. I also favor higher density settlements in limited areas.

151. Create tax or zoning disincentives directed at McMansions. Enhance and promote PRD zoning and tax regs that encourage affordable

development and creates a critical mass for public transit.

160. Provide contextually designed infill housing within the village of Waitsfield. Housing units could be provided over ground floor businesses and PUDs that infill the gaps in the streetscape. Create a pedestrian density in the Village with hardscape walkways. Conveniences should be within walkable distances decreasing transportation costs.

163. Make affordable options within a reasonable understanding of what population town can support.

166. I'm not sure, but it would be nice to see less HUGE houses being built and more reasonably sized houses.

170. Do not do low end condos. It will create the "company house" effect.

175. Continue the two story height requirement in the commercial area to encourage affordable housing units with minimal environmental impact, proximity to transportation, and walkability.

177. The town should encourage developers/builders to build new affordable housing by providing tax incentives and other pro-active measures.

179. No opinion

183. This is a tricky one. What is odd about our town is that there are so many second homes. We have lots of housing here -- we just don't have people living in all of it. I am in favor of the town limiting or "dis-incentivizing" second homes. Especially large second homes. Tax them at a higher rate. Make the fees to build or sell them higher. Tax houses for anyone that are over 2500 sq. ft or some such number. Use this income to subsidize affordable rental housing. I like the town's current plant to have mixed housing and commercial development down town. I would be in favor of tearing down some of what is already there and rebuilding w/ commercial on the first floor and residential above.

185. Create incentives for clustering, especially in rural areas. Regulate to prohibit unnecessary fragmentation of rural resource lands, farmland, forestland, etc. Promote affordable housing in designated growth areas.

189. Encourage development of apartments in Irasville and Waitsfield
191. We need affordable seasonal housing for winter workforce and year round residents. Sugarbush should take the lead on building such housing around the valley.
193. Develop sewer and water in town and possibly to areas in rural areas where high-density housing is being proposed within town plan.
195. What is the meaning of the question?
197. Maintain a level of up-keep for dwellings and businesses visible from Route 100 and Bridge Street. Keep historic Waitsfield simple, but promote business to improve signage and appearance.
199. Build small clusters of affordable modular homes and provide municipal wastewater.
201. Not sure.
204. Place cap on the size of new homes to discourage McMansions. Work with CVCLT. Focus on under developed land for redevelopment.
206. Get rid of requirements regarding second stories and percentage of use for residential, and instead add incentives for voluntarily creating more housing.
209. Little.
211. Discourage McMansions.
213. None.
216. Let the market prevail.
219. High density resort building, new business should offset the cost of affordable housing if affordable housing is really affordable and needed. Have they filled Wheeler Brook yet?
222. Any health or traffic concerns should be addressed.
224. Be sure to maintain the small town farming community feel for the valley. Require tasteful and sensible development.
227. Possibly and town program supply - housing for town [illegible]. Work in exchange for % of housing.
229. Require all new commercial first floor construction to have residential apartments above.
232. Encourage more [illegible] housing developments as well as less stringent housing rules.
234. Address the NIMBY attitude on town boards. Decide what needs to be done vis-à-vis housing - then do it. Stop trying to shoulder development costs for Irasville on those who will not benefit from the development.
236. Non-resident taxes are ridiculously high. I pay [illegible] in MA on a value work 3x. We have a great school system and very little commercial [illegible]. Makes sense.
- Question 11**
3. No rooms & meals tax. Don't bite the hand that feeds you.
6. c. Transfer tax, especially w/ ownership under 5+ years.
12. No. We have a high %.
16. Small transfer tax.
28. Raise money through zoning permit fees.
32. No new taxes!
56. None of the above.
58. We are taxed enough.
68. Donations only!
71. Purchase no property.
82. Line item in budget.
90. Could a transfer tax be levied based on square footage so that larger houses or houses on bigger lots had to pay more?
93. Not sure...
97. Voluntary 1% for Mad River Valley initiative
134. Provide accelerated tax credits and/or property tax relief for land donations granted now but assigned to the town in future years.
151. Local income tax
197. Grants/federal/state.
213. Cigarette and alcohol tax.
217. No increase in property tax.
219. Rooms & meals tax is already high! Grants. Fund raising. Tax new business.
225. Do not know.
233. Grants.
236. Increase in property tax - no!
238. Again, no more property tax please.

### Question 12

- 6. Possibly increase width of required buffers.
- 11. [illegible]
- 31. b. Be more consistent with the culverts along roads. Maintenance is also needed. They dig huge trenches and then leave them alone - poor for roads - too deep drops and causes erosion.
- 70. Limited dredging.
- 85. Use state guidelines
- 183. Don't really know enough.
- 204. Support Friends of Mad River.
- 211. Allow buffers to go back to trees.
- 219. Perhaps require on-site stormwater retention and increase buffer widths. Average citizen does not have information to really answer this.
- 223. Did not know there is a problem.
- 233. Reduce road salt use.
- 238. All of the Bridge Street snow. Every winter the town plows all the snow and junk over the embankment next to the bridge into the river. Pushes [illegible] the bridge [illegible] every winter!!

### Question 13

- 6. j. Unless for wind or renewable
- 12. Doing enough already.
- 30. I should say I think these are all important. I don't know what the town is doing now to protect these things, so I don't know if they should be doing more. I do think they are important.
- 37. Protect Route 100 from the AOT.
- 45. H, A, I are most at risk.
- 197. E & J most at risk.
- 200. Done already is present plan.
- 206. None. You're already over-regulating.
- 219. This has to do with quality of life, which is why we all choose to live here!!!
- 227. All of them in large doses.
- 234. Scenic vistas - screw this.
- 238. We voted years and years ago to not develop over 1500'. Why is this still an issue?

### Question 14

- 5. Change zoning to allow denser development in nodes or receiving areas to take development rights off ag land and transfer to nodes.
- 7. A more aggressive/coordinated plan among various town agencies.
- 15. Take better care of them.
- 18. Very tight zoning.
- 20. Encourage land trusts.
- 22. Bylaws protecting our natural resources. That's why we're here.
- 27. Keep the above in mind when zoning applications come in.
- 32. Not much. Regulations are already draconian. Leave private property alone.
- 37. Town roads - especially Route 100 - are the face of Waitsfield's community. Keep the road narrow, slow, trees, sidewalks, on-street parking! Keep the AOT away. Imagine Woodstock upgraded to 50 MPH.
- 45. Disallow development.
- 49. Teach respect of natural areas.
- 51. Enforce rules and regs already in place!!
- 54. We need to balance cost and reality in historic buildings.
- 56. Preserve historic structures.
- 59. Follow state law.
- 62. Historic landmarking to preserve old houses. Save old barns!
- 64. Clearer identifications of these areas. Posted fines for violators. Strict enforcement of rules and regs.
- 66. Slow down growth.
- 75. Encourage preservation and support efforts with town conservation funds.
- 77. Common sense.
- 79. Limit development of these areas.
- 82. Education. Incentives (property tax breaks for land conservation). Municipal investment (buy land, contribute \$ for land conservation). 25-50 acre minimum in significant wildlife habitat areas.
- 85. Tax breaks for any landowners willing to protect either without being regulated.

90. Pass zoning laws prohibiting the citing of a huge house right in the middle of a large meadow.

94. Limit the impact of new housing -- ENFORCE THE ZONING! Our zoning regs are a sham and every contractor knows it. The wrong people have gotten away with violating every regulation they can -- it won't stop them, or any other contractor from trying -- and succeeding in the future.

97. Help citizens understand likely future impacts given different scenarios for development

101. Impact fees to help fund conservation are a good idea. Total prevention of wind farms on ridgelines are a good idea. The few extra percent of efficiency are not worth the impact.

103. Maybe print money?? Waitsfield Wampum? Documented conservation could be traded for tax credits.....Not one to one, but some motivating fraction.....I know it's tough

105. Consider floodplain protection

107. Enact similar zoning to Warren that prevents housing development in the middle of open meadows and fields.

111. I'd like to see our community welcome more farmers and make it feasible for them to live and work here. If we are to be sustainable in a future/transition economy, we will need more farms.

114. Seek a multi-town wildlife habitat overlay zone based on the Arrowwood studies and community input. The Forest Wildlife Communities Project is working on this initiative. Seek a Transfer of Development Rights project, or seek legislative approval to create a tax to pay for development rights for properties that don't fit under the 25 acre minimum required for the current use program. Many smaller landholdings along rural routes are being further fragmented, impacting vistas, habitat, farming, etc.

120. - Stop development in areas with large contiguous forest acreage - encourage minimum lot size of 5 or more acres - implement a knotweed control program. knotweed contributes to soil erosion and degradation - create a larger buffer zone around wetlands

125. Move the covered bridge north of Bridge Street to make it a non-travelled structure

128. Allow commercial development of historic buildings in residential areas, providing the external character/style of the building is preserved.

131. Make it easier to develop residential and commercial suitable areas so that development takes place where it is best suited. This extends to allowing more dense development and making it easier, faster, and less expensive to get permitting in the acceptable areas

135. Tax incentives to individuals "not" to subdivide or develop. Everyone enjoys looking at it but the individual land owner pays for it and more and more of these land owners are getting tired of it and are thinking of selling or at least subdividing.

139. BURY THE POWER LINES

143. Can't answer 13-A. Most annoying to me are the homes built above ridgeline, but I believe focus should be more about protecting farm land, wildlife habitat, and wetlands before protecting scenic/vistas. Need to know more before I can offer suggestions for specific actions that should be taken.

145. Create a land bank of open land not currently being farmed, classify it by ownership (conserved, privately owned, etc.), availability for use (i.e. the land owner would be willing to offer to lease it for farming purposes, recreation purposes, etc.), the quality of the soils and the most appropriate farming use for the land (i.e. vegetable production, hill/sheep farming, etc.).

147. Plan for large areas of non-built space and generate ideas on how to acquire --NOT NEW TAXES. Prevent developers from making profit without giving back via funds or swapped conservation land, etc. Provide places for dogs to run without leashes or complaining dog-haters - we support their kids in school without being asked if it is okay. Dogs were here first.

150. Engage the community at all levels. Don't talk at residents.

158. Purchase and conserve forested areas, open space, and high elevation land. Promote use of historic buildings.

160. Insist on legitimate and effective screening of buildings from scenic roads. Much of the recent screening is insufficient along route 100.

Increase and maintain setbacks along scenic routes. Enforce no build redlines along the ridgelines. Protection of the Mad River and the Friends of the Mad River should be funded by the Village in some manner (if not already).

163. Mindfulness.

165. Revise zoning to prevent development on farm and open lands to the extent possible.

171. Update the town plan to include priorities and develop and implement policies to protect those priorities.

175. Continue to encourage cooperation among groups already active in these areas.

177. The town should collaborate and cooperate with the many local, state and national organizations dedicated to natural resource and wildlife preservation, e.g. VT Land Trust, Audobon society, Sierra Club, inter alia.

179. No opinion

182. Limit # of subdivisions. Preference to continue "current use".

185. Have strong regulatory policies to review impacts to natural resources. Require subdivision developments and new homes to minimize or mitigate impacts in sensitive areas. Utilize ecological inventory in planning and development review process.

187. Support local farmers on Rt 100 to keep the open vista and working landscape, especially north of town

191. Very important as our future is largely tourism. Look at Switzerland, they have been a tourist destination for 400 years. We need to figure out how to make all ages of tourists love the beauty of the environment so we must protect all of the above. We should better protect streams, views, everything with comprehensive planning. They ran out of land in Switzerland long ago, so it must be maintained and recycled for new users and uses without allowing it to get run down.

193. We should have a more aggressive conservation fund which is accrued through a tax rather than a line item and better zoning (like overlay districts) to address specific conservation priorities.

197. Tax the folks who build or own new property/buildings above 1500 feet - they can afford it!

199. Preserve them. Sale of such properties should come with specific contingencies to keep up historic qualities.

202. Contribute financially to these causes. Encourage TDRs. Enhance markets for farmed products. Educate.

204. Acquire land and conservation easements. Wildlife habitat overlay district. Zoning.

208. I think we are doing the best we can with our resources. Maybe get more grants?

211. Encourage conservation easements. Assist farmers. Protect wetlands.

213. Designate the area.

217. Enforce no dumping! The area near Tremblay Rd and North St is a dumping ground. Gross!

219. All actions necessary including moratoriums on development and building. These natural resources make us a huge draw for tourism.

223. It is too restrictive now.

226. Allow development but enforce strict waste regulations (e.g. recycling, proper disposal, minimal waste, etc.)

232. Encourage with incentives to landowners (i.e., less tax).

234. Tailor development to both provide housing and businesses and reasonably conform to a realistic town development plan.

238. Let those of us who choose to live and work in the village do so. This is not colonial Williamsburg. This is a living village in the 21st century. So [illegible] solar panels yes.

#### Question 15

3. Buy from local farmers.

19. Honey production.

28. None of the above.

35. No, but I wish I were.

54. Buying from local farmers - we are [illegible]!

61. None.

63. Service company.

77. Hunting for meat.

131. None

147. Buying and canning local produce

- 159. None of the above
- 183. Keep bees
- 204. Beekeeping.
- 221. Wildlife sanctuary.
- 225. None.
- 231. Woodlot management.

#### Question 16

- 19. Badly written question.
- 51. They need some regulation! Have you seen Maple [illegible] Farm!!?
- 54. Yes, if local.
- 204. Yes, but no exemption.
- 217. Yes, as long as it is not a pseudo agri-busi-ness.
- 219. Depends on business.

#### Question 17

- 31. Has many benefits to a town.
- 46. If I have to see it, Waitsfield should benefit \$\$\$.
- 219. Probably would support, as long as we di-rectly benefitted from such a project through tax breaks and deals on energy.

#### Question 18

- 6. f. Selective harvesting
- 16. Maybe small-scale wood harvesting. Maybe increase height for wind turbines. Solar-powered school.
- 23. e. Transportation options. To where?
- 30. a/b - I don't know what the state law is.
- 55. None of the above.
- 62. No increase in height of wind turbines!
- 70. Private solar and wind power.
- 129. Maybe a and b too. I'm not sure yet.
- 147. Give tax incentives for conversion to greener/more efficient practices
- 202. Examine significant energy generation project(s).
- 204. Sustainable harvesting of wood.
- 211. Encourage alternative energy.

- 219. Another hard and confusing question.
- 234. Selective cutting in town forest. Look ahead to the future - renewable energy is not a trend but necessary.

#### Question 19

- 16. Need more info.
- 46. Deferred cost? What's in it for me? Don't understand?
- 201. Don't have enough info.
- 203. Don't understand.
- 210. Not big enough to do it!
- 219. I would need to know the details before sup-ported.
- 223. Maybe.
- 225. Wind turbines. Continuous bike path.

## Question 20

1. Don't overbuild which will cause congestion on Route 100 and the need to circle about looking for parking spots. Personally I think the town is at a good size now and creating a bit of Williston in Irasville will have a negative impact.
5. Energy audits of existing building [illegible]. Install photovoltaic on school roof.
7. Aggressively incentivize residential and commercial renewable energy activity/options.
15. ?
18. We should all get used to wind turbines on the Northfield Ridgeline and come to see them as a positive asset.
24. Require good insulation and timing devices for heating. Tax credits for solar.
27. Encourage education and retrofitting older houses to reduce energy consumption.
31. Wind turbines could be constructed on ridgelines - carefully. No difference than chair lift towers.
38. Sidewalks & paths - we all drive because we have to.
40. Promote ridesharing and public transportation.
42. Bike lanes on every new or repaved road.
45. Not the town's business.
49. Wind power!
51. Educate!!
53. Incentives to property owners to install alternative energy sources.
55. None.
61. Not a town issue.
64. Research other communities and in other states as to what has worked successfully.
67. Common sense = conserve
71. None.
73. Year-round bus service.
76. Find a way to an MRV energy coordinator in partnership with Warren, Fayston and Moretown to come up with a sustainable energy plan and apply for grants to support this effort.

78. Provide some incentive (tax write off for energy efficient updating, i.e., windows and insulation)

80. Allow wind power.

85. I think the town needs to figure out the water and sewer issues first. Homeowners will make their properties as energy efficient as they can afford, but with the tax basis being what it is, regulations could cause problems.

90. I would need to know more before making a decision on 19. Outfit all public buildings with energy efficient equipment as much as possible. Offer tax incentives to "clean" businesses to locate here.

94. Work with Efficiency Vermont and the local groups working on sustainability within the Valley. Encourage the use of renewable energy.

97. Help citizens make more informed decisions

101. No wind turbines on ridgelines, ever. Solar hot water boosters wherever possible.

105. Improve efficiency of all lighting and appliances, insulation of all town buildings, concentrate development in village/Irasville

109. I think I support the above, the survey cuts off the sentences, and I have to guess or project what you might be asking. Very frustrating. I like the idea of rolling energy efficiency requirements into permits. Generally if no one informs the applicant, they will build. The last stop is for a permit, it should be informational.

111. We/I need to understand what our footprint is like, how efficiently we are using the energy we draw, and what our resources are - biomass, solar, wind etc. I would like to address low hanging fruit immediately and have our long term focus be on a post-oil model.

114. Create a fund specific for energy projects. There are a multitude of grant projects, but they require match. For instance, the Solar4RSchools program (<http://www.b-e-f.org/solar4rschools/>), is helping schools put up \$250,000 solar arrays with \$40,000 matches. This is in addition to numerous state and federal programs. The Achilles heel is always matching money. This needs to be budgeted for. Develop a biomass heating system for Waitsfield Village.

119. Create the educational opportunities to learn about federal and state incentives so that

individual businesses, organizations, and home owners can make the best and most educated decisions to reach toward great renewable energy goals.

121. Please note that question 16 is so fraught with peril that I almost didn't answer it. We can promote responsible, locally owned organic agriculture and significantly improve everyone's quality of life. However, great care is needed in defining 'agri-business' to be sure that we do not decimate our beautiful and irreplaceable natural resources

133. Policies that promote more compact development patterns and inhibit sprawl.

135. Lets start with a water turbine placed on the pipe just before the planned holding tank designed in our Water Project. Every time I suggest this I get shot down.

140. Enable a process whereby solar and wind energy can be rewarded.

145. Take advantage of the expertise right here in the Valley to develop a Valley-wide energy plan.

147. Reduce waste, look for grants and other non-tax ways to support residents in becoming more efficient.

149. Many of the suggestions in the "would you support" section sound reasonable but this is a complicated area and it is too simplistic to say I support any of them without understanding the benefits and consequences. I am so far unconvinced that placing large wind turbines atop our ridge lines is a good idea.

151. Open regulatory pathways to wind power. Advance the town plan for growth districts and higher-density development areas to preserve woodlands and open land.

158. If requirements for a higher standard of energy efficiency were imposed on new construction, provide education on potential funding sources to help new home owners and businesses offset the costs.

160. Create a walkable Village Center. Reward LEED certified construction with local tax incentives.

163. None

165. Revise zoning to require higher energy efficiency standards in new construction, and

require energy audit for any property transfer. Use Berkeley property tax assessment approach to allow residents to finance renewable energy systems.

171. The clean energy assessment district might be interesting, depends on the details. Encourage pedestrian friendly downtown, including residential facilities.

175. Let the market work. Educate. Many current 'green' technologies are ridiculously expensive and have long pay backs with no guarantee of long life or reasonable maintenance costs. I can see local government supporting proven efficient technology, but not funding experimentation. A healthy economy promotes a healthy and efficient market. With our economy so dependent on natural beauty and recreation therein, our ridgelines and vistas should be protected from buildings and turbines. I am not opposed to wind turbines, but there are better places for them than where people are paying to see some of the world's most natural beauty in a lightly developed rural economy.

177. Encourage the use of alternative and renewable energies in Waitsfield: e.g. wind, solar, etc. This can be done by tax rebates/incentives, change in zoning if needed, pilot projects, etc.

179. No opinion

183. Establish a park and ride to encourage ride sharing. I do this now -- if many more of us do it, where will we be able to park? I like the idea of incentivizing greater energy efficiency standards.

185. Explore wind on locations other than Northfield range at appropriate scale. Promote biomass, but only if done according to model sustainability guidelines and utilizing combined power and heat. Promote community scale renewable energy projects over commercial scale.

191. The town should help residents and businesses become more efficient by providing 20 year loans (perhaps paid for by a bond as initial capital) for efficiency and alternative energy. This strategy makes it possible to do these things now and reap the benefit for 20 years while the town gets its money back with a little interest and the owner gets the savings starting now and the environment gets the lowered impacts and the business community gets to sell and install the

alt energy and efficiency equipment and labor.  
Win Win Win Win

197. Utilize local businesses that develop energy plans. Invite or give tax breaks to new businesses that relocate to MRV that give back to the community. Be selective!

199. You're headed down the right path with beta testing of residence. The more information given, the more likely the support.

201. This issue far exceeds the reach and influence of the town.

203. Town hall meetings with "experts."

206. Education only.

211. Alternative energy. Encourage local buying. Assist residents in using alternative energy.

213. No new taxes. Windmills. Solar Power. Water wheels.

217. Wind turbines.

220. Wind energy!

222. The town does not have the expertise to this. State or federal government should be in charge of these projects.

226. Enforce stricter guidelines for energy efficiency on new buildings, push sustainable energy, modify existing buildings for better energy efficiency.

231. Conservation.

233. Support community education - in-depth knowledge of pros & cons regarding issues.

235. I am all for alternative energy as long as the price of fossil fuel justify it. Using the tax code to incentivize behavior is stupid.

238. I have no idea.

#### Question 21

45. Nice push.

210. b. Depends.

219. Perhaps the town should be more actively involved. People are already doing this who want to live this lifestyle. You are never going to get tourists to do this overall. This is a kind of lifestyle.

229. Walk or bike only.

#### Question 22

6. We are in favor of using some tax \$ toward the Path. It is something we can all use and gain from.

16. Acquire rights-of-way rather than land. The town should explore alternatives to eminent domain first.

32. No eminent domain or taxes.

45. None.

54. Limited use of town employees/equipment. Limited use of funds from fees or non-property taxes to acquire ROW.

62. No use of eminent domain!

81. Leave it to path association.

198. Absolutely no eminent domain. Buy the land from the homeowner.

202. Private donations program.

204. MRV Recreation District.

210. d. They should have gotten federal tax deduction.

213. Fund raisers.

217. Eminent domain - no way!!

219. May support efforts to extend and connect the path - depends on where and why. Use of eminent domain - absolutely not.

223. All donated.

225. Eminent domain - absolutely no.

234. Acquire rights-of-way only.

238. This is a property issue. I am thinking of the Warren resident Sue [illegible]. I hope Waitsfield never uses such tactics!!

#### Question 23

9. Safe walking

16. VAST trails are sufficient.

32. Not town's business.

45. My god no - none!

58. Great if we could register bicycles.

65. Limited snowmobiles.

77. Motorized wheelchairs for handicapped.

90. I like the paths natural. If commuting in 21. Required that the path be paved, then I would

strongly object. Also, I believe snowmobiles should only be allowed on VAST trails. The MR Path and others like it should be for non-motorized travel and recreation.

129. Snowmobilers should only be allowed on VAST trails. And the path should not be paved!

213. Walkers.

217. Put in a sidewalk! No snowmobilers/ATV riders.

219. Maybe.

223. All of the above.

225. Horseback riders - No, they don't clean up their horse shit.

234. Snowmobiles on snowmobile trails only, not Mad River Path.

238. It will be [illegible]. Ask Moretown residents.

#### Question 24

3. No sidewalks in rural subdivisions. Maintenance too high.

16. Maybe require trail connections.

37. Town should provide sidewalks in Waitsfield Village / Irasville.

45. None - no development.

62. No sidewalks!

238. Sidewalks in village - Waitsfield not even do this after 18 years.

#### Question 25

2. Sidewalks from Waitsfield School to Irasville. Bike lanes from Waitsfield School to Irasville.

5. Park-n-ride on Bridge Street and in Irasville. Build sidewalks [illegible] Waitsfield Irasville. Bike lanes on Route 100.

7. Park-n-ride at Small Dog and WWSU office. Sidewalks and bike lanes from WES to Local Folks.

9. Park-n-ride north of village. Sidewalks from Bridge to Joslin Hill. Bike lanes and safe walking on Joslin Hill.

12. Build sidewalks in the villages.

16. Park-n-ride not like Warren's. Build sidewalks and off-road multi-use paths from Harts-horn's to town.

18. Bike lanes on all paved roads in the Valley.

21. Bike lanes on Route 100.

25. Sidewalks starting w/in town/village. Bike lanes anywhere along Route 100.

27. Park-n-ride lot north of town.

30. Build sidewalks downtown. Bike lanes along Route 100.

34. Bike lanes on Route 100.

36. Bike lanes on East Warren Road and Route 100.

38. Park-n-ride lot off Route 100 near intersection with 100B. Bike lanes and off-road paths on Joslin Hill, North Road.

40. Park-n-ride lot somewhere near a bus stop!

42. Bike lanes along Route 100.

44. Park-n-ride north around Airport Road. Sidewalks on Bridge Street from bridge to junction.

46. Park-n-ride on Tremblay Road. Sidewalks in Waitsfield Village and Irasville. Bike lanes on Route 100 and East Warren.

49. Sidewalks from Waitsfield school to Route 17. Bike lanes on Route 100.

53. Sidewalks along Route 100 from school to the Den. Bike lanes on Route 100 and Route 17.

55. Sidewalks downtown. Bike lanes throughout.

58. Bike lanes if bicyclists had to pay something.

60. Park-n-ride near Route 100/100B junction. Sidewalks downtown. Bike lanes on Route 100.

62. Gad! No sidewalks.

65. What would be the demand for the Mad Bus? Bike lanes on Route 100.

68. Park-n-rides in Irasville and Bridge St. Sidewalks in Irasville and on Bridge St.

72. Bike lanes on Route 100 N & S.

74. Sidewalks along Route 100.

76. Park-n-ride at Pines/Tremblay Bridge area. Bike lanes from Waitsfield to Warren.

78. Bike lanes on Route 100.

80. Park-n-ride north on Route 100. Sidewalks on Loop Road, Tremblay, Route 100 Kenyans to Easy St. Bike lanes on Route 100 to 17.

82. Sidewalks Irasville to Lareau swim hole. Off-road paths perhaps where sidewalks won't be possible.

183. Encourage cycling; but not by widening roads

197. Park-n-ride near 100 & 100B intersection. Sidewalks from historic downtown to Irasville. Bike lanes Route 100 south to Warren. Paths wherever appropriate.

199. Bike lanes all along Route 100 and Route 17.

201. Not sure!!

203. Park-n-ride in Irasville.

205. Sidewalks along Route 100 at least from Route 17 to elementary school. Bike lanes along Route 100.

207. Park-n-ride at town shed.

209. Sidewalks and bike lanes along Route 100.

211. Sidewalks village and Irasville.

213. Sidewalks Waitsfield to Irasville village. Bike lanes everywhere.

215. Park-n-ride at the Pines.

217. Sidewalks from Route 100/17 to Valley Medical Center. Bike lanes on Route 100 from Warren to Moretown.

219. Park-n-ride at Tremblay and Route 100. No sidewalks - paths only.

221. Park-n-ride along Route 100.

223. Bike lanes on Route 100.

225. Park-n-ride at Pines rest area.

228. Bike lanes on East Warren Road.

231. Park-n-ride lots and sidewalks as needed. Bike lanes everywhere.

233. Sidewalks from medical center to Irasville. Bike lanes on Route 100 and East Warren Road.

238. Bike lanes - no.

#### Question 26

1. Widen Route 100 and add bike lanes. Put in a crosswalk by the elementary school. Put a crosswalk in on 100 across from Meuhrens.

5. Get involved in management of bus system. Provide bus stop parking lots for park and ride.

7. Aggressive creation of park-and-ride lots. Subsidizing Montpelier/Waterbury shuttle!

15. Make sure laws are respected.

18. Make valley bicycle friendly - paths, free bikes, racks. We should promote biking of all sorts up and down Route 100.

23. I don't see where the general population is large enough to support (or need) public transportation. Not too many people take advantage of the school buses for their children. Look at all the cars dropping children off every day!

25. Put sidewalks in village. You have to crawl before you can walk and we need high quality walking access in the village/Irasville before all else.

28. Better bike lanes - wider and paving in good condition.

31. (1) Widen roads for bikers. Makes no sense to promote bike races and recreation with no place for them to ride! (2) Sidewalks are long overdue! (3) Mad River Path could be a great place for tourists and locals to pride from one end to the other. Lengthen and attach to town. Pave!

37. Route 100 in the village should have on-street parking, sidewalk and trees. Narrow the street. Use school buses for commuting.

40. I would live to ride the bus to work. Now that I've moved to VerdMont it will be very difficult to do so - drag.

45. Nothing. Outlaw motorcycles.

49. (1) Widen Route 100 for better bike route. (2) Pave MR Path like Stowe Bike Path. It's pretty pathetic now and sometimes too wet to be usable.

54. 4-way stop at Bridge Street and Route 100 - I know light is a dirty word.

56. Expand Mad Bus.

59. Waiting 15 years for sidewalks in Irasville area. Lost a lot of state and federal funds and grants.

61. Understand what the people who would use it need - i.e., service to Waterbury and Burlington in addition to Montpelier.

64. Form a residence committee to explore the issue (feasibility, cost and effectiveness).

67. Enforce speed limit.

73. Make safe bike lanes wherever possible.

75. Park and rides. Extend walking and biking paths. Improve sidewalks.

77. A and E - I don't see people riding the bus. Better walking and bicycling.

79. Do further research on its needs.

82. More crosswalks. Improve pedestrian safety/access in Irasville.

87. Place a park and ride lot near Mad River Park - or the Tremblay Road park. Sidewalks should be provided along Tremblay Road for the kids at Verd-Mont to walk/ride to school.

90. I don't think we need an official commuter lot. If necessary, local businesses could be contracted with to allow parking for commuters. I support paying for expansion of GMTA bus service to Waitsfield IF the service is conveniently scheduled for commuters and reliable. I think bike paths should be created or widened on 100 (this is more of a problem in Moretown actually). The most important thing that I would like to see the town do is to create a safe walking and biking path from the Common to the Village. Joslin Hill is narrow, has blind curves, and cars travel too fast for walkers/bikers to be safe. Perhaps the road could be widened to add a walking/bike lane where widening is possible. And where it is not possible to widen the road, such as around the big bend, a path could be cleared through the woods along the road and maintained by the town. The path could connect to the road so walkers/bikers could avoid the most dangerous parts of the road when walking/biking into town.

92. Rt 100

95. Bike lanes throughout Waitsfield. Sidewalks through Irasville and Waitsfield Village.

97. Get the path done

101. Sidewalk and bike lanes north and south of Rt. 17/Rt. 100 intersection

104. Finish the planned sidewalks

109. When the sidewalks... when the sidewalks,, when the sidewalks are pedestrian friendly other than in sunny warm weather, (maintained - properly constructed so they don't become pools

or ice skating rinks) making connections from the school through to route 17 at a minimum.

111. Safe routes to school is important and dovetails with other values shared by the mad path etc. Slowing traffic on Rt 100 through the Village, making it a walkable/bikable community is key.

114. Park & Ride: Purchase property currently for sale along Meadow Rd near the Path parking lot. At the bottom of Center Fayston and North Fayston Rds. Sidewalks: Provide up a bit of the Loop Road near the health center Bike Lanes: All along Rt. 100

116. A walkable (in winter) sidewalk from the Chamber to town. Paths where bikes/walkers can get off the road especially at night.

119. A lot of residents who are located outside the Irasville/downtown Waitsfield epicenter are still close enough to walk or bike into town but don't due to traffic and safety issues. If there was a paved bike/walking path along the route 100 corridor from Moretown to Warren it would significantly promote that type of activity and increase tourism and commerce. I realize that this would be a costly major infrastructure upgrade but it would pay out in dividends...I would make the same argument or an expanded shoulder for the Joslin, north, rd communities.

121. As stated in an earlier comment, we desperately need decent sidewalks and crosswalks in Waitsfield and Irasville from Bridge street to the village green at a minimum (and to Rt 17 even better), combined with a contiguous path (such as Mad river Path) for walk, bike, blade, commute, etc from at least Kenyons to Lareau, and ideally even farther. I don't feel the Mad River Path's current layout, with non-connected segments on varying sides of Rt 100 will do anything to improve local residents lives or attract visitors. We have a beautiful and world famous riverfront that is almost completely unused - how about a walk/bike path along the east bank with strategically placed pedestrian bridges to key commercial districts? Stowe has done an outstanding job of linking wilderness and commercial zones with a beautiful path - every Waitsfield resident I know who wants to go for a peaceful family bike ride, do a little shopping and grab a bite to eat goes to Stowe. We shouldn't have to drive 45 minutes and give our \$\$ to another

community. I also respect the snowmobile and ATV rider's interests to have corridors for their use, but they are largely covered by existing VAST terrain, and they are simply incompatible with any non-motorized for of transport (safety, noise, smell).

125. Park and Ride lots on each of the Planning Commissioners lawns

128. Expanded bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides of route 100, from the Waitsfield school to the junction of 17/100. Extend walk way to the small business park that includes the laundromat/auto parts store. Bike lane or paved bike path from route 17 junction south on 100 to town line(or further with Warren partnership).

130. Sidewalks connecting Irasville and Waitsfield Village

133. This survey did not ask anyone about whether they currently carpool or would if they knew of others who did. The survey missed an opportunity to ask if people would take advantage of a commuter van or bus service if it was available and under what circumstances/cost range.

142. Within and between the two villages.

145. Park-and-ride on north side of town on Route 100. Sidewalks and bike paths along Route 100.

147. We need service to Montpelier and back. Mad Bus is too limit in time of year and where it goes, perhaps too frequent WHEN it goes, as it is often empty. We need bike lanes throughout the town and well paved roads to support roller blading as well, as this is a mode of transportation we can't use now. Park and ride is only needed if there is a central ride organization or transportation out, so not needed now. Side paths are okay to me, not sidewalks, so I was wrong in the other sections. Bikes on sidewalks are not a good idea.

149. I'm on the fence about park-and-ride. Great idea but I think most people who carpool are finding ways to do it today without the added expense of a new town-maintained lot. The existing sidewalks are crumbling and unsightly. I lean toward replacing them with a new sidewalks and curbs that fit the rural nature of the town.

Bike lanes would be wonderful but I wonder about the cost of engineering and maintenance.

151. a. Park & Ride: Rt. 17 around Bonjiorno's/ Mill Brook Inn; Mad River Park. b. Coordinate bus service with existing Montpelier and Waterbury routes, and Burlington link at Middlesex Park & Ride. e. Bike & ped lanes: E. Warren Rd., North Rd., Joslin Hill Rd., Tremblay Rd., Rt. 17.

153. Park and ride - somewhere in Waitsfield Village; The Pines?; Mad River Industrial Park? Sidewalk - from the covered bridge to Joslin Hill Rd. (or at least to the cemetery) Bike lanes - Rt. 100 (push the state to do it in the pending upgrade through the village and south to Warren)

157. Park & Ride....near Shaw's. Sidewalks from Irasville to Fiddler's Green, Irasville to Health Center - biggest issue with sidewalks now is winter maintenance....it's terrible. Bike lanes throughout the town, especially between Irasville and the Village Grocery...biking the hill near Back to Action and the garage is hazardous.

160. See above

163. Many

165. Establish paved sidewalks throughout the Waitsfield/Irasville District.

167. Get the ones planned completed and start working on area along Bridge Street, up to the Joslin Hill turn; along Route 100 North to Tremblay Road and along Loop Road and South along Route 17 and Route 100 South to the Munn Property.

170. Sidewalks in Irasville

174. Sidewalks are need from Fiddler's Green to Waitsfield Elementary. Widened bike lanes are needed from Waterbury to /Waitsfield

177. Sidewalks could be developed to link Waitsfield village to the Irasville shopping areas along route 100.

180. Sidewalks through the high density areas. Bike lanes on all roads where possible. Park and ride behind Small Dog?

182. Park & Ride: 1 @ Northend (Chamber, Elementary School); 1 @ Southend (church/) Thought repaving w/ bicycle lanes was mandatory...(thanks to Lixi) Widen to safe width wherever inadequate and possible to do.

185. Have safe bike routes along Route 100 in the valley

187. All valley paved roads should have bike shoulder. I don't bike, but I do drive.

190. Full bike lanes from Waitsfield Elementary school to Warren village. Build sidewalks from elementary school to Fiddlers Green

192. a) Tremblay Road & Route 100 d) Irasville to Route 17 e) along Route 100 increase number of pedestrian crossings across Route 100, offer bus service to Waterbury.

196. Bus service between Valley towns and Waterbury.

197. Love the bike program (Take a Bike/Leave a Bike). Fix rough roads and crosswalks. Evening town taxi service for hire. More public transportation.

199. Encourage bike riding and green bike use.

202. Build pedestrian friendly means. Paths rather than roads. Non-motorized is key. Accept challenge of mass transit for a small town.

205. Crosswalks and sidewalks.

213. Support taxi business start up. Evening transportation routes all over the valley.

217. A local bus service would be nice. Stop parents from driving their kids to school.

219. Don't develop - logically development will cause more traffic and transportation issues, streets and traffic lights, and finally a 20-minute commute through Waitsfield similar to Stowe's issues.

226. Encourage bicycling by expanding bike lanes, encourage walking by expanding the Mad River Path.

232. Expand bus routes. More sidewalks, crosswalks. Town path system.

234. Encourage pedestrian and non-motorized transportation. Encourage low fuel vehicles - motorcycles, hybrids, small cars, etc.

238. I would need to know how many people would use the bus. I see very empty Mad Buses when they were running.

#### Question 27

28. Town website - at specified times.

31. Keep costs down.

57. Providing address violated privacy of this questionnaire response.

61. Valley Reporter - visible to other valley towns.

91. Not everyone has expensive Waitsfield cable MRVTV

145. Facebook

#### Question 28

6. Those who use it directly should pay more but we would all benefit from it. Serve larger area if cost effective. Find a less expensive option if possible!

35. Less expensive wastewater option. How?

44. A less expensive wastewater option should be researched.

197. Municipal wastewater would benefit the river too.

219. Municipal wastewater would only benefit some in town.

#### Question 29

1. What is with the green trailer in historic downtown?

44. Good effort with enforcing speed limits. Could use more.

46. Ease up on the speed patrols. Incessant!! Pay the police to fight crime.

75. Enforcing speed limits has negative impact on tourists.

210. m. Adult education - not applicable - why is this here?

#### Question 30

1. In my opinion Waitsfield has reached its comfortable carrying capacity and bringing in water and sewer will result in over development and a huge tax burden.

7. Finish/support the Mad River Path!

12. More negotiations around regulations, much less litigation.

16. We must do something about all of the businesses that are closing. How depressing it is to see all of the "For Sale / For Rent" signs.
18. Forget municipal wastewater system. Let's keep Valley small. Wastewater can be solved in basic, less expensive ways.
22. Support/improve Skatium. Require property owners to clean property/paint in historic districts. Irasville bike paths/sidewalks. Connect Mad Path.
24. Encourage public transportation and bicycle trails.
27. Would like to see more adult/senior courses offered at Evergreen/Harwood.
31. We seem way behind many (even rural) towns with our clean water supply (instead of spending \$ to fight where water could have been utilized) and septic/wastewater in Irasville. With our high taxes climbing each year, we have received minimal in exchange - other than for our schools. I can't see where "development" downtown could occur.
45. Not a thing.
49. It's OK to think that Irasville should be where development should occur, but I am not aware of much land for sale. Without water and sewer, no more development should occur.
51. Wastewater system - shouldn't that have been done before the water???
54. The library lacks handicap access and is lacking the enthusiastic [illegible] of Warren's. It is dull!!
56. Promote "Why Waitsfield or Why the Mad River Valley" to spark interest in expansion of tourism and light industry.
64. Keep doing what you are doing. It is working well. Thank you.
67. Calm down, slow down, conserve, reduce taxes.
71. Make a decision to do it and stay after it.
76. Build a public water system. Build the sidewalk/bike path as planned. Build a new town hall in the historic village or commercial center. Repair/restore the covered bridge. Assist the MR Path to extend it - especially through Waitsfield.
78. Town management should be more open when working with businesses and therefore more flexible for new ideas keeping the total community's needs in mind.
83. Devote less property taxes to education and more to needs of town infrastructure
85. Get the wastewater and water system figured out and installed. Have a health ordinance in town to help promote cleanup of existing properties.
87. They should create a recreational area with a skateboard park, basketball court and tennis courts all in an area close to walking distance from Town. The town offices should have their own building and the library should be expanded with an elevator and made accessible to individuals in wheelchairs. A community center should be built with a new town hall.
90. I think a teen/family rec center would be a good addition to the town, particularly if it included an indoor pool. The area between the theater and Allen Lumber would be a good site. The current project to install/fix the sidewalks between the Village and Irasville is sorely needed. However, it will need to be maintained. Finally, protecting the riverbanks and ensuring the health of the river is vital for the economic and social life of the town. The riverbanks are eroding badly in many places.
94. There are much less expensive options for wastewater. We don't need to provide an outlandishly expensive municipal system to "promote more business" -- something most people don't want. If a property is having a wastewater problem -- help THEM solve the problem. One at a time... we can't afford a wastewater system no one can afford. Other towns that have installed systems can't pay for them now... then what?
104. Water / wastewater for village and Irasville
111. The mad path would be an invaluable resource if it connected the proposed route and more. It would support and tie together many key aspects of the community - education, retail, recreation etc.
119. By investing in a paved path between Moretown and Warren the Mad River Valley would benefit incredibly. Maybe Waitsfield can work to create the Route 100 paved path within

the Waitsfield town line to spur on interest from Moretown and Warren....it would increase tourism, increase walking, biking to and from town, leave the mad river unpaved path for recreation, and increase clustered development organically due to the attractiveness of living close to the 'paved path'

121. The water/wastewater debate is hugely sensitive, but ultimately we need to cover at least town and Irasville is we area to embrace any form of sustainable commerce while protecting our beautiful river. As mentioned in each of my earlier comments, this is just one aspect of our infrastructure which needs to be addressed. It is just as important to have a longer term vision for to slow cars down, encourage non-car traffic, and develop and town/village that is not just a collection of parking lots off of Rt 100

126. The library has very limited hours.

129. The river is a very important town asset but the banks are eroding badly. The town needs to do more to shore up the river banks and protect them from erosion. Also, fixing the sidewalks in the Village is a great idea but they will need to be maintained. And a path between the Village and Common is essential, as I said.

131. Sidewalks

139. Not be so wishy washy when it comes to regulations.... either say yes or no. not, well I don't know... maybe.... and drag it on for months on end....

141. Library should be expanded in a larger facility. The library is too crowded to be used well. More people would benefit from a larger space to spread the shelves out so you can see the books and have more room for people to read or study in the library.

147. Offer evening opportunities for adults to learn, get exercise, use the library.

150. Create community center for town

160. Communicate in a clear and timely fashion with its residents and out of state property owners. The municipal water issue and this survey arrived hard against the deadlines to respond. Insist that the Haps vehicle graveyard on 'Scenic Route 100' be cleaned up. (This comment probably doesn't go in this section, but should be noted.)

163. None

170. Sidewalks

177. The town should place less emphasis on enforcing speeding laws and more emphasis on night patrols to safeguard the local businesses and homes from break-ins and burglaries. There appears to be a single-minded emphasis by the Washington county sheriff's department to enforce one law only in Waitsfield: the speed limit.

182. Too bad wastewater system didn't pass. The problem is not, and would not be, obtaining potable water on-site if wastewater were properly eliminated off-site. THAT is the problem and issue.

187. I don't live in Waitsfield, so cannot honestly answer all items in 29. Support public transit-not just senior buses, but for daily commuters.

196. Devote less property taxes to education and more to needs of town infrastructure.

197. The town needs a municipal facility that we can have to host events such as job fairs, music, indoor pool, etc. We're without recreation options other than the ski resorts to have these activities and most can't afford to pay the resorts to theirs regularly.

199. Studies have been done and decisions made. Unfortunately not to the benefit of local town water/septic systems. Another vote may not be the answer, rather taking the bull by the horns and making a decisions is.

202. Mass transit for the small town and non-motorized paths. Scale everything down rather than up. Clustered on-site wastewater only. See above.

205. Larger library.

217. Stop talking about sidewalks and put some in already.

219. This is a loaded question. I don't now the extent of what is offered in regards to municipal services.

222. No opinion.

227. Continue to work harder to find solutions and growing in a way we can benefit with change and new ideas and goals for Waitsfield.

232. Road maintenance more of a priority.

234. Density bonuses for affordable (market rate not necessarily low income) housing. Loose the NIMBYs on town boards. Balance the needs of the townspeople with conservation and aesthetics.

237. None! Improving infrastructure will accelerate development and change the beautiful rural nature of Waitsfield. The notion that concentrating growth within the downtown will slow growth in the rural areas fails to appreciate that those with money to buy several acres and who don't want to live in the village are going to buy property where they want to live.

### Question 31

1. I think the density of the development you are proposing in Irasville is way too high. I've looked at the drawings and it feels like a bit of Williston is being stuffed into our community. It is not appealing. The plans also call for parking on 100 which I do not support. What will become of the current farmers market parking? I value the green space that currently exists in Irasville and the unblocked views of the hillside. I'm happy with Waitsfield Village being my town center. Also I do bike and walk around Irasville as it currently exists. If I drive to Irasville I do park and walk to numerous locations unlike your description in 3A of this survey. It's a shame your plan eliminates the Skatium or the creation of soccer fields. If we have lots of development in Irasville how does that stop development from happening elsewhere in Waitsfield?

3. More bike paths everywhere - better for work, play, safe for all ages, traffic.

7. Deep thanks for compiling this data! I suggest we think/plan real hard for a post-carbon/oil community = (1) walking/biking/shuttles; (2) Renewable energy projects; (3) Community/Central Biomass District - Wait House, Fire Station, Health Clinic, W.E.S.

12. We need to get back to common sense and working together. Economic growth is thwarted by the adversarial process of start up here.

16. Thanks!

18. We have a beautiful valley. Address health/obesity issues in low income Vermonters. Get program going that attracts new parents with

obesity problems. ID thru obstetricians and pediatricians. Find agency to run it for the entire valley. Will save \$ in years to come.

20. Please clean up Haps - it is an eyesore as you enter Waitsfield - the cars are stacked. Organize a group of volunteers who can help homeowners who cannot afford to paint their homes in our historic district and beyond. Antique homes and buildings well maintained in quaint villages attract visitors to our shops and restaurants.

23. To the Selectboard/Planning Commission/et al: Most of the questions in this survey pertain to the "hidden" agenda of the municipal water/wastewater projects for Waitsfield Village and Irasville. Why do we need additional businesses/buildings/high density/cluster housing in this area? Are you trying to force a situation upon the residents that we don't really need? If someone wishes to build in areas north or south on Route 100, there are enough state permits, etc., to control what can be done. They would drill their own wells, build septic systems, etc. Thus not affecting the overburdened "downtown area." I had attended all the earlier meetings of the Water/Wastewater Taskforce. There are areas near downtown where community/shared septic systems could be built, thus alleviating the contamination of wells. I would rather see the town use eminent domain to acquire this land for this purpose than for the Mad River Path! These are economic bad times, let's fix what we have now and forget about all this additional spending. There are enough empty properties for sale now and we don't need any more. How about consolidating classrooms so that teachers will have 20 children in a class again, and save on our huge school budget.

26. We appreciate being asked all these questions. Unfortunately, we don't feel we know/understand enough about Waitsfield's zoning and related issues to respond to this level of detail. Important to us: (1) that Waitsfield not become much more developed than it is; (2) that the town works to provide/ensure affordable housing; (3) that the town actively pursues its responsibility to protect our natural resources and environment; (4) that the town encourage energy efficiency for established as well as new developments.

31. This is a beautiful town that many come to visit over their vacation. I worry that we have

done little to let our town grow appropriately. The “downtown” has many issues that don’t change and need to. When someone comes to visit, they see wonderfully maintained homes, but also homes that show no desire for upkeep. I don’t understand why they can let their homes fall apart with trashed front yards along Route 100. Then the local sheriff hides everywhere and stops them as they enter town. Our restaurants are changing [illegible] when they need support to stay afloat. I worry that there is too much inconsistency with the Planning Commission/DRB with too much power. We need more help to build up this town before the taxes push more and more locals to move out. No young couples/singles can hardly afford to live here. It is true that without change (and there is a lot of change from 20 years ago) to maintain this town, it will continue to slowly fail. I certainly hope not because I love living here.

35. I can’t give you any ideas as how to and what to do. I need a lot more information on every subject. I just gave you my druthers.

38. We need more service from the sheriff’s department: more hours for patrolling for speeding and hours for crime prevention in business district at night. We need a safe link between Waitsfield Common and historic Waitsfield - either a much wider road or a path near Joslin Hill that could be walked or biked. Waitsfield is a great place to live, with a wonderful elementary school and dedicated public servants. However, the inability to safely walk/ride from the common to town or even within town is crazy. We need many crosswalks, not just [illegible] and sidewalks, sidewalks, sidewalks. Thank you!

42. Build the wastewater and water system at the same time. Now!! Make sure the state builds bike lanes from Moretown to Warren along Route 100 (not paved shoulders). As our town is sort of a strip mall, we need all the space possible. Remove all the power poles from Waitsfield school to Route 17 before 100 is rebuilt. Do not settle for any partial solution. If we do, Route 100 will never improve.

48. We are VT residents. What Waitsfield does in the future will impact on us as VT taxpayers. Therefore we have completed the form.

56. Historic Waitsfield needs a “make over.” We need to encourage building owners to repair aging facades. Painting would help. Somehow, make it beneficial for a building owner to fix-up or repair their building without impacting their taxes.

61. (1) Money spent for the sheriff is wasted. Funding for a state trooper in the valley would provide better service. Connecticut has a resident state trooper program. (2) Wastewater can be handled by engineered septic systems on an individual basis. (3) The handling of the municipal water system has been a disaster. Understanding how to promote and accomplish programs like this is critical to being successful. (4) Act 250 has created a housing system that drives locals away and results in large lot sizes rather than controlled developments. (5) Act 60 has reduced development and improvements because tax dollars go out of town. Listed to Win Smith.

64. We are very pleased to have become permanent residents in Waitsfield even though we did own our home in Waitsfield as a vacation place for the last 22 years (my family of 5 married children with 10 grandchildren plus ourselves using the home for a combined time of about one year). We have found a completely new way of life and love it. We (my wife and I) were very active for all 48 years in our village of Lynbrook, L.I. where 20,000 people lived in an area of 2 1/2 square miles with a full government with all kinds of services including 50 police personnel, a full village hall staffed by 20 people, a full court system, a recreation department with baseball, hockey, swimming pool, basketball, and numerous adult and senior programs - all on a \$32 million budget. Our homes were mainly on 50 x 120 foot plots. Streets were well paved with sidewalks both sides of all streets. Taxes were double for my small plot compared to the 8 1/2 acres I have here and the population and traffic are like another world - 1900 people in about 10 sq. miles. So you see, we miss Lynbrook and all our friends, but we love this new way of life in Waitsfield, VT. Keep up the good work.

67. More is not better! Bigger is not better! Higher is not better! Growth (i.e., town all aspects) is not necessarily a good thing! Stop making stupid expensive decisions such as “a \$100,000 duck

pond”!! When did the word “natural” become a bad thing around here?

72. Municipal government in the Mad River Valley is the best I’ve experienced in the past 87 years. I’ve spent quality time in at least 25 municipalities including New York, Washington, Chicago, Hollywood, [illegible] and Duluth, Minn., Spring Lake, New Jersey, Eaglesmere, PA, Oconomowak, WI, Taos, NM and others. Thanks very much!

75. We have a beautiful valley and it is important to maintain its charming character!

87. The four towns of the Valley should be merged to consolidate resources. A community center for the Valley may be a necessary emergency gathering if there was an environmental/war emergency. The Town should be serious about establishing renewable resources and raise taxes to achieve it.

90. I have indicated in Recreation Dept. surveys for years about my desire to have a safe path from the Common to the Village but I never hear that discussed in any town meetings. I hope that this issue will be taken seriously this time. Our children need opportunities to walk and bike into town for their health, we all need more exercise, and having a path would reduce road traffic.

93. I really appreciate the opportunity to take this survey online! At first I was surprised the survey we received in the mail was only addressed to my husband, but felt better when I discovered I could take it on-line. I also really appreciate the questions about the Mad River Path! I will be interested to learn what feedback you get on this subject. I’m impressed with our Town Select-board and other Town Committees and staff at the Town Offices... You are all really doing a fantastic job. Sincerely, Laura Brines

95. These survey questions appear to be more leading in nature and made me feel like there was a desire to use the answers to create more regulations. That would seem to me contradictory to the ideals of a Town Plan. I always thought Town Plans should not be created as a means to create more regulation but rather to articulate a community vision. As such a Town Plan should be a celebration of both a community involved process as well as about the end result (the written Plan). Thinking back on past Waitsfield

Town Plan updates, and the last one in particular I feel immediately discouraged. In June of 1994 I participated in a statutorily required public hearing in an number of capacities and as a member of a number of local organizations, as well as a citizen. And I tried to offer many comments at the public hearing. I remember few citizens showed up and there was little dialogue but rather a presentation was made. It was clear the Town Plan had already been re-written by the planning commission. As a result the hearing appeared to really be about the planning commission defending their work. I don’t begrudge they did a lot of work on the Plan. But I remember stopping half way through sharing my prepared remarks and suggesting they were not being very open to my ideas. I remember a tirade back at me that went something like this : ‘We’ve had over 50 public meetings over the past two years and have put countless hours of time an energy into this document and you could have come to any one of those meetings but you instead wait until the very last minute to criticize our work...’ Needless to say I stopped sharing my prepared remarks and tried to make a graceful exit. I don’t wonder why I was one of only a few citizens who even showed up at the public hearing. In my opinion the past and present Waitsfield Town Plan’s are not a reflection of a community vision. They are the reflection of the author, with input from a few others, primarily the planning commission. Is that what a Town Plan is supposed to be? Is Waitsfield doomed to repeat itself? How many want very much to have a say but won’t because of how citizens have been treated in the past? Will citizen opinions be given respect, even if they might not be popular opinions? Or will citizens who try to participate be publicly humiliated as in past years? There is a culture of arrogance that has plagued Waitsfield government for the past 25 years. Perhaps this Town Plan re-write is an opportunity to show a concerted effort is being made to change that culture. Perhaps this survey and the accompanying process is a great step in showing a culture can change.

101. I’ve lived in Waitsfield since 1972. I think it’s a great town, with a Goldilocks sort of charm. Let’s keep it that way! Thanks for the survey.

103. Wow, I realize how much I don't know about what the town does, and supposedly I pay attention-

109. Wish I had got a paper version, this was more like a test, not fun to do online. I didn't put much thought into it, which I would have if it were on my breakfast counter and I could return to it a few time over a few days in stead of during my valued coffee breaks at work.

111. Thanks for asking!

114. This was GREAT!

120. This town is a great place to live. There seems to be a struggle between those who want to build it up (builders, those with large tracts of land and a plan for it, and those in the construction business perhaps?) and those who want to keep it from getting wrecked. I appreciate the time you are taking to gather feedback.

125. No. I have to go to work

140. As you've probably heard time and time again, our taxes are way too high for what we receive in return. There has to be a better way to fund education, other than taxing the property owners out of their homes.

147. I love this place and it is really hard to afford to be here. It is hard to live here without a car. It is much more expensive than Montpelier or Barre to shop and that doesn't seem necessary. There is no healthy and inexpensive produce in the Valley despite our being food conscious. There seems to be no coordinated planning of putting sewer and water before sidewalks, for example, but this may be a wrong impression. It is hard to know how the town is doing on the areas just addressed where we had to rate very good to very bad - an 'I don't know' answer might have given you different survey results. We read what is released to the paper but don't get the inside scoop. Personally, I don't see enough of what meetings are being held, whether or not they are open, what specifically will be addressed, how folks can get involved. No new taxes, please, despite all the groovy things I want, like paths for bikes.

149. I very much appreciate all the thought you are all putting into town planning. It's an incredible effort. Multiple choice survey questions are reductive making it easy for participants to

support/oppose a position without considering all the costs and benefits. Many times while answering yours I've felt that I simply don't know enough to answer a question knowledgeably. In the end I've made a best guess ... on that could easily differ given a real-life scenario. I'm sure you will take the results with a grain of salt.

151. This will give Paul Hartshorn apoplexy: long term plan to set aside rights-of-way for development of alternative routes parallel to Rt. 100. No more development of dead-end roads emptying onto Rt. 100. Over time, the existing pattern offers no alternative to sprawl.

157. Didn't have much time....sorry I couldn't be more thoughtful and thorough.

160. This survey in itself shows that the Village cares about its future and will not, should not, leave the future of the Village to self interest, haphazard development and fluctuating market forces. Glad to participate.

164. The quality of the last property tax revaluation was execrable, worse even than Montpelier's, where citizens forced a re-evaluation. For any future such activity, the town should 1)not use an assessor who is a town resident and 2)have higher level of quality control. There's a reason why Waitsfield is the most litigious town in Vermont (though that may change now that E. Neill is gone), and questionable performance on tax processes is a primary reason. Finally, the town should publicly apologize to Charlie Hosford for the shameful way he was treated, simply for trying to do right by the town in a real emergency.

168. I am proud to be a Waitsfield resident. Keep up the good work.

171. Thanks. Nice work.

182. Yes. Four times within the past week I discussed my frustration with others about trying to obtain a permit to add an addition to my office building. Each said, without exception, 'That's why I left Waitsfield. It's very business unfriendly.' Other comments: 'Waterbury welcomed me with open arms.' 'I'm so glad I left.....never could've made it in that town.' Their successes are Waitsfield's losses because 29 opportunities have vanished with them. Consider, too, that this is only one person's informal survey over one week. I realize town officials bristle at the accusation, but as a businessman who's been here

for 36 years, witnessed others' exasperation, and experienced my own, I must agree. In these difficult economic times, their behavior is especially out of line and in my opinion does not consider our best interests.

187. thanks for seeking out the information.

190. At town meeting in March 2009 I proposed and it was passed (non binding) a resolution to allow up to 8 "nodes" or "enterprise zones" or something like that including existing businesses to be built or expanded along the Rt 100 corridor. You did not ask a single question specifically related to this concept yet many people signed a petition supporting exploring the concept in addition to the vote at town meeting. What good is doing this survey when you don't even listen to what the town has already said?

197. All and all Waitsfield is a fantastic place to live in [illegible] with surrounding towns (Moretown, Fayston, Warren, etc.). I enjoy all of the festivals & recreational resources. However, we're without a place to go if the weather turns bad or can't afford to rent space at the resorts...you get the point? The town is a recreational hot spot that shuts down at 9:00 p.m. and there's nothing to do! Please consider a municipal facility that will make our already awesome town more dynamic. We'll be able to draw more visitors (and give them something to do) with such a facility. More public transportation will also move folks around town safer and will probably promote valley floor business too. We can do it and not lose the rural beauty of our town. Expand public transit routes for mid-December - January and watch what happens! Thanks for the survey!

199. Business signage: When a multi-business property is looking to add/change signage, all businesses within that building plus the building owner should be notified. This allows for better communication and may encourage other businesses that previously could not afford a sign to re-look at their budgets. The rules are too vague and do not consider others.

202. Thanks for this effort. Some questions were a little awkward and consequently difficult to answer. But overall, a good effort.

206. I found this survey extremely difficult to answer because I suspect a whole new level of permitting and unnecessary oversight will follow.

Regarding new development in Irasville, for example, I think the zoning regs should encourage development of multi-story structures (in the village too) and mixed uses, but not require this. I am a fan of incentives rather than directives and believe that in the long term people will do what incentives allow them to do but that directives limit development altogether. There's a long (too long) history of problem permitting in Waitsfield relating to business - this needs to stop. All it's gotten the town is a gas station with a ridiculous access. More change is needed in the make-up of the Planning Commission. There are others who want to serve but they don't want to serve under Russ. I appreciate Russ's long contributions to the town but it's time for a change.

208. How much did this survey cost the town taxpayers? It's much too long and hard to answer.

210. (A) Promoting the economy - Honestly Vermont is too small and underfunded to do economic development. Towns are not equipped at all. Keep it in mind but there really is not much you can do! (B) Higher energy standards are a good idea but you do not have any enforcement mechanism. (C) I won't go into speed limits but there is clearly some resource allocation problem. This past Friday I drove from Boston to Waitsfield and saw one police officer at an accident on 128 in MA. Drove through many towns with 1000s of people going over existing speed limits and of course saw the sheriff on Route 100 running a speed trap in Waitsfield. If I was planning to break into a business in town, I would do it when the sheriff is around running speed traps - then I would know I would not be disturbed. There is a problem of what the goal is with the town's use of the sheriff.

212. Thanks for taking the time to put this all together. I hope a large majority of the town participates.

217. As a second homeowner, I am amused by some of the goings on in town. A feel like I have been reading about a sidewalk put in for ages. Just put one in already, from John Egans/The Den to the community health center would be nice. Contract with someone about getting cell phone coverage along the valley floor from a national provider - why is Unicell able to operate a de facto monopoly? And enough of the petty crime, cars broken into, change purses emptied

- why is this OK? How about a zero tolerance on petty crime? Put in a hot line.

219. Please note that I didn't feel there was enough time to fill this out - even with the deadline extension. This was intense and time consuming to do it correctly. Also many people I know did not receive this survey via mail. Please note my investment in the valley stems from my family owning property here since 1965.

(1) With development comes a lot of unforeseen, irreversible impacts. (2) Development will change the cultural integrity of the town. (3) One of the #1 reasons to bring industry to the town and have people happy about it is by taxing businesses in turn easing the taxes on local townspeople who ultimately feel and pay for the multitude of impacts that development brings! (4) Consider a higher second home tax that also helps locals deal desirably with the influx of "transient people." (5) Why did you move here? Because you couldn't wait to have a traffic light at the corner of Bridge Street and Route 100? Cause that is what it will come to. Ever tried to get through Stowe on a Saturday? (6) We (as in Route 100) were voted the most beautiful scenic drive in New England because it encompassed landscape and the quaintness of the towns. (7) We have most everything we "need" here. If you bring more "stuff" we will ultimately "need" more. Having less accessibility to things will help promote living more simply. (8) People moved here to leave the city and suburbs behind. Please don't create a small city. Quality of life!!

222. (1) People are not actually going to walk in the village unless they have driven there and are walking between stores that are close to each other, or perhaps to a venue such as the Farmers' Market. (2) I could not answer any question regarding affordable housing without a specific definition of what that term means. (3) I believe this survey was constructed in a way to elicit pre-determined responses, rather than to gather information.

225. Waitsfield needs to be more flexible in allowing businesses to expand where they are. Jim Garilli's proposal is a perfect example. Requiring a second floor of apartments is not reasonable in that space with the surroundings. We need a municipal police force before we need municipal wastewater. We need more work on break-ins

and the illegal drug trade in town. Let them build the telephone museum. We do not need municipal septic to primarily develop the west side of Route 100 in Irasville. Too high a price to pay to benefit so few.

227. We can be a special place for many people here. Local and visitors - family. We must be open-minded - be able to make mistakes and then identify ourselves who we can be for the future ahead of us.

231. This survey was sent only to my daughter, who is living in Minnesota. [illegible] and I did not get separate ones. Each resident or registered voter should have received one.

233. Signs like the new "Bourne" sign are totally inappropriate. I am immediately reminded of Stowe's downtown and especially the mountain road.

235. Since my taxes are obscenely high, especially for some who has reduced housing stock in order to have more green space, I cannot recommend the raising of taxes for anything. Thanks for asking.

237. Many people think that "progress" is equitable with development and that "progress" is desirable and development is inevitable. Not true! As a former developer and real estate office owner and valley resident for 15 years and current land owner in the valley, the zoning laws can accelerate or decelerate development if the town would like. The town can totally stop growth if it wants to. The valley still is a remarkably beautiful place that should be treasured. Increased commercial and residential growth flying under the banner of "smart growth," increased density, sewer and water systems, all will degrade the quality of life for both visitors and residents alike and change our beautiful valley to something a lot less than what we were given.



Cover art by Ellen Crafton.