



- FINAL APPLICATION FOR GROWTH CENTER DESIGNATION •
- Waitsfield, Vermont • 25 April 2008 •

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1. The proposed growth center growth cannot reasonably be achieved within an existing designated downtown, village center, or new town center located within the applicant municipality (24 V.S.A. § 2793c(e)(1)(G)(ii)).

1.1. Discuss why a majority of the projected growth cannot reasonably occur within an existing designated downtown, village center or new town center within the municipality, specifically citing the municipality's 20-year projections for population, housing and employment growth and the build-out potential of any designated downtown, village center, or new town center in the municipality.

Waitsfield's village center is a 59-acre area encompassing the historic Waitsfield Village (see Attachment A•14). Most of the land within the village center is developed either at its full potential or in a manner that would make significant amounts of infill development unlikely. While there are opportunities for redevelopment and/or intensification of use of some parcels and buildings, the village center could not reasonably accommodate the majority of population, housing and employment growth projected to occur in Waitsfield over the next 20 years without destroying its historic character.

Waitsfield is projecting the addition of 334 households and 639 jobs town-wide by 2030. A build-out analysis of the village center indicates that the village center could accommodate 14 additional housing units or 38,911 square feet of additional building space (both residential and commercial) under current and proposed zoning. The village center could only accommodate additional development through the more intensive redevelopment of already developed properties, which would require the replacement of many of the village's existing historic buildings.

A. Growth Center Map.

See Attachment A•1: Growth Center Map.

B. Growth Projections.

Table 1: Waitsfield's Growth Projections

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	Change 2005 to 2030		
						#	%	Ave Ann %
Population	1,832	1,945	2,065	2,191	2,323	605	35%	1.2%
Housing	833	896	979	1,038	1,101	334	44%	1.5%
Jobs	1,435	1,540	1,650	1,836	2,042	639	46%	1.5%

Table 2: Central Vermont Region’s Growth Projections

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	Change 2005 to 2030		
						#	%	Ave Ann %
Population	67,296	69,814	73,080					
Housing	28,708	30,622	33,534					
Jobs	50,470	53,627	56,962					

Methodology

Waitsfield’s population to 2030 was projected using regression analysis based on the town’s percentage of the regional population from 1980 to 2005, the same methodology used in the projections prepared for Waitsfield by Economic & Policy Resources (EPR) as part of the Irasville Master Plan in 2001 (Attachment B•2). The housing projection is based on the population projection. The projected population was divided by an average household size (projected by EPR for 2010, 2015 and 2020) to yield households or housing unit demand. The average household size was held constant at the 2020 estimate for 2025 and 2030 based on an assumption that household size will stabilize over time.

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission attached a 2001 growth projection study for the region prepared by EPR as an appendix to its 2003 Regional Plan (Attachment B•1). These are the most recent regional projections prepared by or for CVRPC and their figures extend only to 2020.

Waitsfield’s municipal employment projections are built upon EPR’s 2001 forecast, which was further refined to focus on the Mad River Valley towns of Waitsfield, Fayston, Moretown and Warren as part of the 2001 Irasville Master Plan Project. To extend the projection to 2030, Waitsfield estimated that job creation would continue at an average annual rate of growth as calculated between 1980 and 2020 (2.8%).

Given that Waitsfield’s projections are built upon the same data and analysis as the regional projections, its municipal projections fit well with regional projections. For further discussion of Waitsfield’s projected growth in comparison to regional growth, see the response to Question 3.5 below.

Comparison to Other Growth Projections

The projections of town and regional growth used in this application represent a higher rate of growth than projected by the MISER study prepared in 2003. For Waitsfield, the MISER projection suggests a total population of 1,911 by 2020 - or an average annual growth rate of 0.7 percent between 2000 and 2020. By comparison, Waitsfield grew at an average annual rate of 0.9 percent during the 1980s and 1.6 percent during the ‘90s. Therefore, the town believes the MISER study is too conservative in its long-term projection of Waitsfield’s future growth rate.

Influence of the Ski Industry and Second Home Development in Waitsfield

These projections do not include potential second home development in Waitsfield as it is based on an analysis of the resident population. While the ski industry does affect Waitsfield's housing market and economy, the town does not anticipate that second home development will be the main factor driving demand for housing or job creation over the 20-year planning period.

Currently, the ski industry is struggling to regain the vitality it has lost in recent years. There is a substantial excess supply of vacation properties in the region and no plans for significant new second home development in the foreseeable future. Further, little second home development is anticipated to occur within the growth center. The town's zoning regulations adequately control the potential for further second home development in town and specifically limit growth in environmentally sensitive areas, as described elsewhere in this application. So even if market conditions improve drastically, Waitsfield would not likely experience the rapid construction of second homes and related ski-resort development seen in the region in previous decades.

C. Build-Out Analysis.

See Attachment A•2: Build-Out Analysis Map.

Table 3: Growth Center Build-Out Results (Under Draft Zoning)

District	Acres	Existing			Potential		
		Building (sq ft)	Com Units	Res Units	Res Units	Com (sq ft)	Total (sq ft)
Ag Residential	4.2	-	-	-	1	-	3,484
Arts & Entertainment	13.9	23,470	5	2	-	50,190	50,190
Civic & Recreation	11.8	-	-	-	-	3,000	3,000
Fiddlers Green	16.6	26,960	12	6	19	40,356	84,954
Industrial	9.2	81,260	4	-	-	25,208	25,208
Irasville Business	37.6	197,610	56	34	-	97,262	97,262
Irasville Residential	63.6	85,600	3	52	78	14,151	227,550
Mill Brook	7.5	20,390	9	3	-	26,130	26,130
River & Recreation	16.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Village Business	6.2	63,106	23	8	-	-	-
Village Residential	104.1	143,858	18	65	110	3,000	244,083
TOTAL	291.4	642,254	130	170	208	259,297	761,861

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Methodology

Waitsfield used the mixed-use module of the Community Build-Out software to prepare this build-out analysis. The analysis is based upon largely upon the lot coverage standards of the proposed zoning regulations. The following lands were removed from the model as shown on the Build-Out Map (Attachment A•2):

- Public land
- Class 2 wetlands (as shown on the Vermont Wetland Inventory maps)
- Slopes in excess of 25% grade
- Floodplains (as shown on FEMA FIRMs)
- Developed lots in Waitsfield Village with no potential for further subdivision. (It is recognized that there may be some potential for intensification of use on these properties, but it was determined that significant increases in building square footage would be unlikely given the existing pattern of development on these lots and the standards of Waitsfield's zoning regulations.)

The steps followed in preparing the build-out analysis were:

- An inventory of existing building locations, footprints, uses and number of units within the proposed growth center was completed.
- The amount of existing parking was estimated based on the same assumptions used to project the amount of parking for potential development (see Table 4).
- The “undevelopable” areas identified above were removed from the model.
- The dimensional standards of each zoning district were entered into the software.
- A raw potential number of residential units and commercial building square footage was calculated by the software based on the assumptions listed in Table 4.
- Town staff and officials reviewed the raw build-out analysis results and adjusted them on a parcel-by-parcel basis based on their knowledge of the physical character of the land and intentions of the landowners to ensure that the build-out presented a realistic assessment of development potential within the proposed growth center over the next 20 years.

Table 4: Growth Center Build-Out Assumptions (Based on Draft Zoning)

District	Density ¹	Lot Coverage ²	Max Stories	Use ³	Percent Allocation ⁴	Res Ave Unit (sf)	Com Ave Unit (sf)
Ag Residential	1.000	50%	2	Res	00-80-20-00	3,000	-
Arts & Entertainment	0.125	60%	2	Mix	80-00-10-10	750	2,500
Civic & Recreation	0.250	75%	3	Mix	40-00-50-10	750	1,500
Fiddlers Green	1.000	50%	2	Mix	40-10-10-40	2,000	2,500
Industrial	0.250	50%	2	Com	90-00-10-00	-	5,000
Irasville Business	0.125	50%	2	Mix	80-00-10-10	750	3,000
Irasville Residential	0.500	50%	2	Mix	00-75-10-15	2,500	1,000
Mill Brook	0.250	50%	2	Mix	80-00-10-10	2,000	2,500
River & Recreation	1.000	25%	2	Mix	00-40-50-10	2,500	2,500
Village Business	0.125	60%	3	Mix	00-10-10-80	750	1,000
Village Residential	0.500	50%	3	Mix	00-70-20-10	2,000	1,000

1•Units per acre.

2•Includes building footprint, drives and required parking area. Each parking space was calculated at 400 sf to account for access drives. Parking spaces were required as follows: 1 per 1,000 sf of residential space; 1 per 500 sf of commercial/industrial space; and 1 per 750 square feet of mixed use space.

3•Res = single-family residential; Mix = mixed use structures with commercial on first floor and residential on upper floors; and Com = commercial or industrial.

4•Percent of area allocated to Commercial/Industrial - Residential - Public/Common - Mixed Residential and Commercial.

2. *The proposed growth center is of an appropriate size sufficient to accommodate a majority of the projected population and development over a 20-year planning period. The proposed growth center does not encompass an excessive area of land that would involve the unnecessary extension of infrastructure to service low-density development or result in a scattered or low-density pattern of development at the conclusion of the 20-year period (24 V.S.A. § 2793c(e)(1)(F)).*

The proposed growth center will result in a settlement pattern that, at full build-out, is not characterized by development that is not serviced by municipal infrastructure or that requires the extension of municipal infrastructure across undeveloped lands in a manner that would extend service to lands located outside compact village and urban centers (24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(I)(iv)).

The proposed growth center will result in a settlement pattern that, at full build-out, is not characterized by linear development along well-traveled roads and highways that lacks depth, as measured from the highway (24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(I)(v)).

2.1 Summarize the amount of land included within the proposed growth center and its build-out potential.

The proposed growth center encompasses 313 acres, including Waitsfield's historic 59-acre village center. The build-out potential of the proposed growth center is estimated at 208 additional dwelling units and 259,297 square feet of new commercial/industrial space. This represents a potential increase of approximately 120% in the total building square footage within the proposed growth center. Detailed build-out results are presented in Section One.

2.2 Explain how the municipality arrived at the proposed growth center boundary and determined how much land was needed to meet the requirement of accommodating a majority of projected growth over the 20-year planning period, specifically justifying how the proposed boundary achieves the program goal of a compact center that does not encompass an excessive area of land.

Waitsfield has been engaged in growth center planning for more than 20 years. In the 1970s, the town decided to designate Irasville as the town's growth center and through its plans and regulations has directed most of its non-residential development to that area for the past three decades. For many years, the town's land use plans and regulations have established higher permitted densities and a greater mix of uses in Waitsfield Village and Irasville than in other areas of town. The proposed growth center boundary follows lines that have been in place for many years in the town's land use plan and regulations.

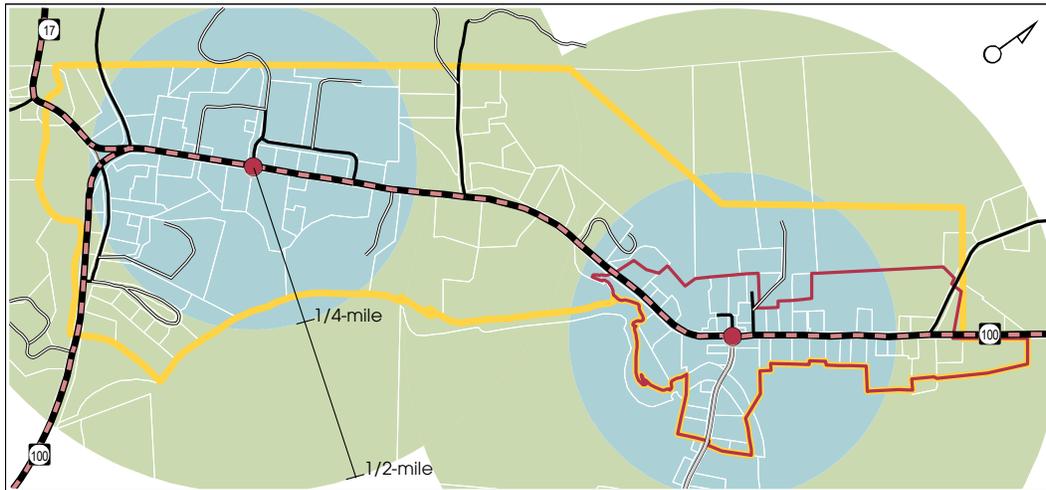
Given the lack of infrastructure and relatively low zoning densities currently allowed in Irasville (1-acre minimum lot size), there is a considerable amount of land available for infill development without expanding the boundaries that have been in place for many years. Provision of infrastructure and adoption of revised zoning for Irasville will support higher densities and infill of previously undeveloped or under-utilized properties.

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The 2002 Irasville Master Plan (Attachment C•3) includes the following discussion of the scale of a town or village center. “How big is a town or village center? The layout of town centers varies dramatically from place to place and there is no clear rule of thumb. Each center is unto itself a unique place. There are also many scales of traditional town and village centers: crossroads, hamlet, village, town, and city. Most villages or moderate size towns like Waitsfield have a core density of residences, commercial businesses, and public buildings. Actual numbers vary but it is not uncommon to have several hundred residences in a village or town center with between 250,000 and 500,000 square feet of other buildings. Generally most town centers can be traversed by a person on foot in ten to fifteen minutes, or a distance of ¼ to ½ mile across.” Waitsfield’s proposed growth center is consistent with that description.

The proposed 313-acre growth center represents less than two percent of Waitsfield’s total land area. The size of the proposed growth center is consistent with other compact, traditional centers in Vermont such as Woodstock, Bristol and Poultney (Figure 2). As shown in Figure 1, much of Waitsfield’s village center is located within a ¼-mile radius of the Main Street – Bridge Street intersection. Most of the commercial development in Irasville is located within a ¼-mile of the Main Street – Slow Road intersection. These two nodes are within a ½-mile of each other.

Figure 1: Illustration of the Pedestrian Scale of Waitsfield’s Growth Center



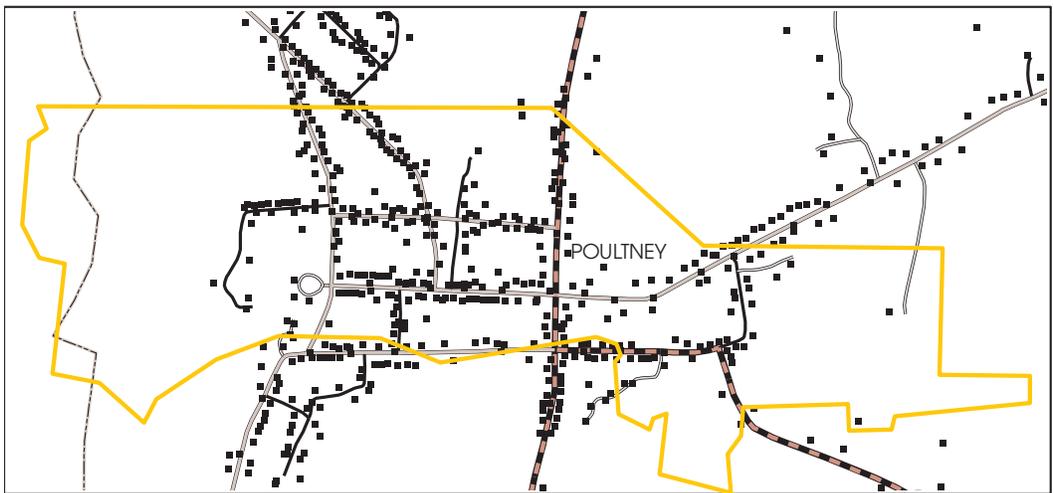
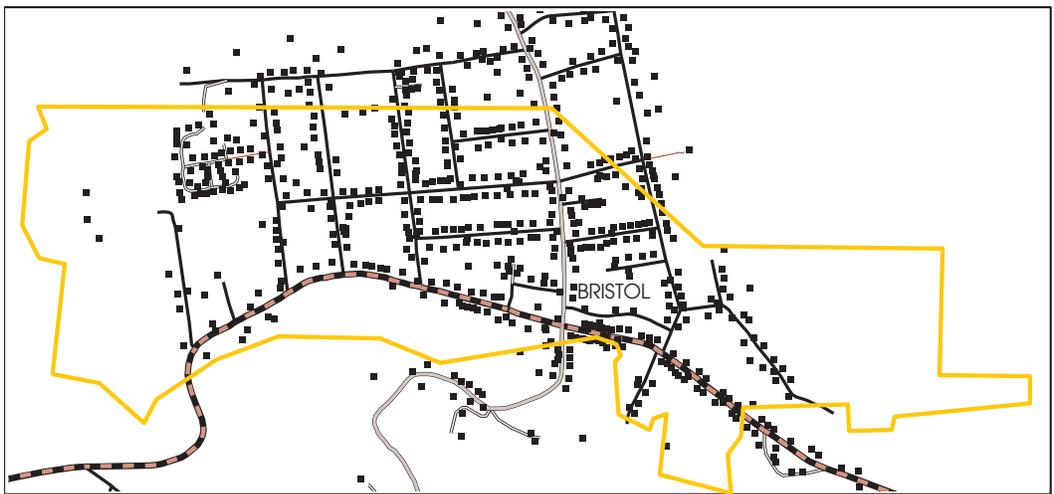
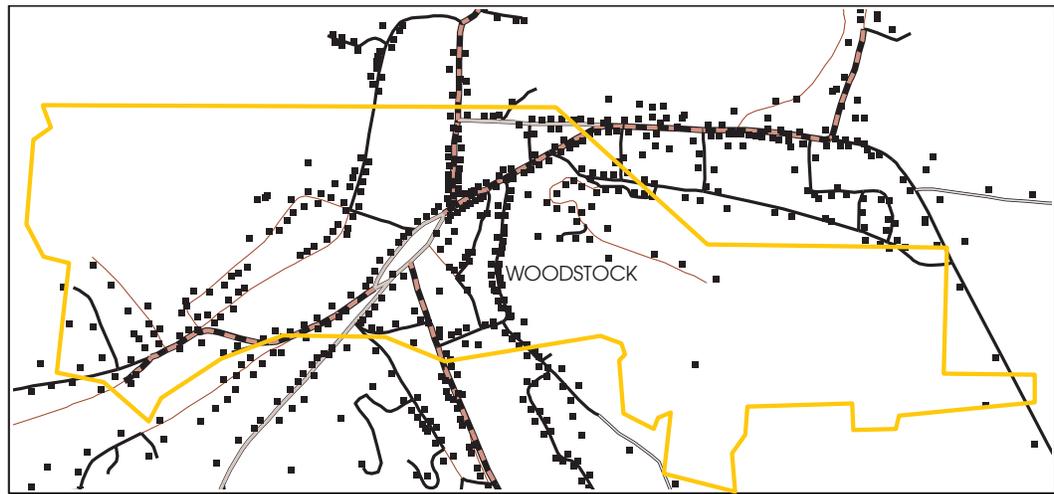
2.3 Identify the steps that the municipality is taking to manage any necessary extensions of infrastructure to parts of the municipality that are currently not served by water or wastewater in a manner that will discourage a scattered or low-density pattern of development.

Waitsfield currently has no municipal water or wastewater infrastructure serving any part of the town. The town has been exploring options for providing water and/or wastewater infrastructure to serve the Irasville and/or Waitsfield Village areas for at least 20 years. The town acquired a wastewater disposal site in 2000 (the so-called Munn site at the intersection

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Figure 2: Size of Waitsfield's Growth Center Compared to Other Traditional Centers



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of Route 100 and Kingsbury Road, shown on maps in Attachments A•6 and A•8). The Town of Waitsfield formed a Water and Sewer Task Force (WSTF) in 2001. The task force oversaw feasibility studies conducted by Phelps Engineering, which sought to identify a source for a public water supply, the location and treatment process for wastewater disposal, and the costs and financing options for the systems. In late 2005, the Selectboard signed a contract for engineering services for final design of the wastewater system. In late 2006, the task force began its current effort to move from the feasibility study to implementation of one or both systems. Several million dollars in grant funds have been secured for these projects. The town is relying on growth center designation to secure TIF funding for a portion of the project. Three bond vote articles related to the water and wastewater projects failed by relatively small margins at Town Meeting in March 2008. The Selectboard subsequently formed another task force to study why the bond votes failed and to develop recommendations for next steps.

Thus far, the town has:

- Updated the survey that was completed in 2002 with current information on the water and wastewater service needs of the properties in the proposed service area.
- Produced preliminary architectural designs of the proposed wastewater tertiary treatment plant.
- Examined a wide range of connection, pricing and management policies for both the water and the wastewater projects and made recommendations to the Selectboard.
- Developed a draft Wastewater Ordinance (Attachment D•5) for the Selectboard's review.
- Developed a draft Water Ordinance (Attachment D•6) for the Selectboard's review.
- Held public information meetings.
- Developed water efficiency measures, which were endorsed by the Selectboard.
- Met with VTrans staff to coordinate the water/wastewater projects, the transportation path project and the Route 100 paving project.
- Held a bond vote in March 2008 on the water and wastewater projects that failed by relatively small margins.
- Conducted extensive community outreach through a new post-bond vote task force to study the failed body vote results.
- Scheduled a new bond vote on just the water project for June 10, 2008, as well as five public forums through May and June prior to the vote to help inform citizens of the project.
- Directed the post-bond vote task force to continue to study alternatives to the wastewater project, which may result in a bond vote on a revised wastewater project in November 2008.

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Water Project

The water system project has moved forward more quickly than the wastewater treatment project. The Waitsfield Town Plan has identified development of a municipal water system to serve Irasville and Waitsfield Village as a priority for at least 10 years, not only to address public health concerns, but also to protect water quality in the Mad River, to provide for economic development, and to reduce the potential for sprawl outside these areas.

A water source in the southeast quadrant of town was identified for a municipal water system and, after further study, a well was drilled at the end of Reed Road (a Class 4 road) in 2006 with an estimated yield of more than 200 gallons per minute (Attachment A•6). This well is sufficient to provide the projected future demands of the proposed service area. Final engineering and permitting are underway for a municipal water system that would begin with approximately 7,000 linear feet of 4-inch water transmission main from the Reed Road wellhead and follow the town's rights-of-way along Long Road, down Bushnell Road to a new 500,000 gallon covered storage tank and treatment control building to be constructed on the town-owned former LeClair gravel pit site (Attachment A•8). From the tank, approximately 11,000 linear feet of new 12-inch transmission main would follow a right-of-way to Tremblay Road, where it would meet Route 100 and continue in to Waitsfield Village and Irasville. Approximately 8,000 linear feet of water distribution mains (mostly 12-inch) and service connections would connect most properties in the Waitsfield Village and Irasville. Hydrants will provide fire protection along the route. An alternative route following Old County Road is currently being explored, primarily for fire protection for the residential neighborhood. Although the project would be paid for entirely by water users through hook-up and annual fees, a bond vote for this \$7.6 million project is scheduled for June 10, 2008 with construction slated for 2008-09.

The feasibility studies have been funded in part through the State Revolving Fund of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. Repayment of the \$327,500, 15-year, no-interest load is delayed until December 1, 2012. The cost estimates in the capital budget and program (Attachment D•4) are estimates only and will be refined as final designs progress. Funding will be sought to reduce the town's level of bonding for the water and sewer projects. It is anticipated that user fees will support most of the local share of project costs. General fund support for debt service was proposed to be 1.5 cents on the tax rate or about \$50,000 per year.

The town has delineated a service area for the proposed water system, which is largely coterminous with the proposed growth center boundary (see Attachment A•6). Page 96 of the Waitsfield Town Plan (Attachment C•1) states, "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."

Stringent state rules have made the permitting of new well and septic sites, as well as replacement of systems, very difficult for most the Irasville and Waitsfield Village areas. A vast majority of the more than 150 properties within the proposed service area are currently served by a well that does not comply with the required isolation distances from their own or neighboring on-site water or wastewater systems. As a commercial center for the Mad River Valley, Irasville and Waitsfield Village need a safe, reliable water supply for residents, business owners, employees,

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students and visitors to the stores, library, school and restaurants. Construction of the municipal water system serving the growth center will allow for a greater density of development, promote further economic development and support the land use goals of the town plan.

Wastewater Project

Prior to the March 4 bond vote, final designs and permitting were at 60 percent completion to construct a phased wastewater system (Attachment A•6). Phase I would provide in-ground treatment for up to 18,000 gallons per day serving only Irasville at an estimated cost of \$5.5 million. Phase I is designed to meet the existing need for wastewater treatment within Irasville and does not include excess capacity that could serve new development. Many of the on-site septic systems within Irasville function properly and it is anticipated that the existing development served by such on-site systems would not immediately connect to the municipal wastewater system.

Phase II would include construction of a tertiary treatment system that would increase disposal capacity to more than 90,000 gallons per day. This would result in reserve capacity that could be allocated to new development in Irasville. In an effort to reduce costs, the wastewater system is proposed to serve only Irasville. A potentially more cost-effective alternative is proposed to be explored to the north to serve Waitsfield Village.

A two-part bond vote held on March 4, 2008, which asked voters to approve Phase I (\$5.5 million) and Phase II (\$5 million) of the wastewater project, failed. A post-bond vote task force was formed to study alternative configurations and funding sources for a revised wastewater project. From the vote and public feedback, the town has realized that it needs to do additional public outreach to inform residents about the costs and benefits of the project. Prior to the March bond vote, Waitsfield prepared and distributed three bulletins on the water project, the wastewater project and the costs of the projects. Since the March bond vote, the newly-formed post-bond vote task force hosted a series of public meetings and is spearheading a renewed public education effort. Successful growth center and TIF district designations could aid the town in its efforts to convince voters that the projects are a wise investment for the future.

3. The proposed growth center will support and reinforce any existing designated downtown, village center, or new town center located in the municipality or adjacent municipality by accommodating concentrated residential neighborhoods and a mix and scale of commercial, civic, and industrial uses consistent with the anticipated demand for those uses within the municipality and region (24 V.S.A. § 2793c(e)(1)(G)(i)).

The proposed growth center is planned to develop compact mixed-use centers at a scale appropriate for the community and the region (24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(B)).

3.1 Identify all designated downtowns, village centers and new town centers in the applicant municipality and adjacent municipalities.

There is a single village center in the Town of Waitsfield as shown on the Regional Map (Attachment A•3). There are no designated downtowns, village centers or new town centers in the adjacent municipalities of Duxbury, Moretown, Northfield, Warren or Fayston. Waitsfield's neighboring towns of Fayston, Moretown and Warren all recognize Irasville as their communities' "downtown" in their respective town plans.

Warren's 2005 Town Plan states on page 10-5, "Before addressing Warren's village centers, it is important to address the Town's relationship with the neighboring Town of Waitsfield and the extent to which Warren residents depend on that town's commercial and employment center, Irasville. Supporting the economic vitality of Waitsfield and Irasville is consistent with continued support for Warren Village and Sugarbush Village/Lincoln Peak as Warren's town centers, providing the scale of development (in the case of Warren Village) and character and type of commercial activities (in both cases) does not duplicate Irasville's commercial role in the Valley."

Moretown's 2008 Town Plan states on page 68, "Moretown is especially reliant on neighboring municipalities, including Northfield Village, Montpelier, Waterbury Village and Waitsfield (Irasville), for many commercial services. In effect, these commercial centers serve as the "downtowns" for Moretown residents."

3.2 Identify all major retail areas (downtowns, shopping centers, malls, big-box stores, etc.) within the applicant municipality and adjacent municipalities, specifically noting which currently function primarily as community-serving retail areas and which serve primarily as destination retail areas.

The proposed growth center encompasses Waitsfield's two retail areas, Waitsfield Village and Irasville. It is estimated that roughly 130 non-residential units or 375,000 square feet of commercial/industrial space currently exists within the proposed growth center.

Waitsfield Village and Irasville are largely community-serving retail centers providing basic goods and services (grocery, hardware, gasoline, banking, etc.) to residents in the Mad River Valley. Some businesses, such as specialty shops and artist galleries, are more dependent on the tourist market. Neither Waitsfield, nor any of its adjacent municipalities, have destination

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retail centers (malls or big box stores) that draw large numbers of shoppers from the greater region.

Retail establishments in Warren are limited to: a gas station/convenience store midway between Waitsfield and Warren Village; a general store and several small specialty shops in Warren Village, which is predominately a residential village; and small-scale retail establishments near Sugarbush Ski area. Warren's Town Plan not only recognizes Irasville as the Valley's "downtown," but includes policy statements that commercial activity at Sugarbush should complement, not compete with, Irasville.

Fayston has no historic village and very limited retail activity. Moretown has a single general store in Moretown Village and some small-scale commercial establishments along Route 2 near Waterbury Village.

3.3 Describe the extent to which any downtowns, village centers or new town centers (designated or non-designated) that are located outside the proposed growth center currently serve as significant employment, retail, service or civic centers for residents in the applicant municipality.

No downtown, village center or new town center located outside the proposed growth center currently serves as a significant employment center for Waitsfield residents. Approximately half of Waitsfield's working residents are employed in town and the other half commute to jobs that are distributed among communities throughout the larger region. Warren is the next largest employment center for Waitsfield residents with around 10% of the town's working residents employed there. (Source: 2000 Census).

No downtown, village center or new town center located outside the proposed growth center currently serves as a significant civic center for Waitsfield residents. Waitsfield's proposed growth center encompasses the town's main civic structures and uses including the town offices, library, post office, school, fire/rescue building, health center and recreation fields.

Most Waitsfield residents shop for basics like groceries and hardware in town and travel to the greater Montpelier or Burlington areas for a wider range of retailers and products. It is anticipated that the revised zoning regulations and provision of infrastructure will spur further retail development within Irasville, thus increasing residents' ability to shop in town and decreasing the need to travel long distances for purchases.

3.4 Describe the extent to which the applicant municipality currently serves as an employment and/or residential center in the region, presenting the best available statistics regarding place of work and residence for people living and working in the applicant municipality.

Waitsfield is a secondary employment center within the Central Vermont Region and a major employment center in the Mad River Valley. Approximately 50% of Waitsfield's employed residents commute to jobs outside of town primarily to other municipalities in the region – Warren, Waterbury, Fayston, Montpelier and Moretown. The town, however, is a net importer of employees, largely from other Central Vermont communities – Warren, Fayston, Barre,

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Moretown, Montpelier and Duxbury. One-third of Fayston workers and one-quarter of Warren workers are employed in Waitsfield. (Source: 2000 Census).

3.5 Summarize the Regional Planning Commission's 20-year projections for population, housing, employment growth for the region and discuss what percentage of regional growth the municipality is planning to accommodate within its growth center by type – residential, commercial (retail and non-retail), and industrial, and how that compares to its current regional share, explaining any significant changes in regional share being planned for by the municipality.

Waitsfield does not anticipate that development within its growth center will substantially change the town's regional share of population, housing or commercial/industrial square footage.

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission attached a 2001 growth projection study for the region prepared by Economic & Policy Resources, Inc. as an appendix to its 2003 Regional Plan (Attachment B•1). These are the most recent regional projections prepared by or for CVRPC. The regional projections extend only to 2020, so that year, rather than 2030, has been used a reference point for the following analysis. Waitsfield's projections are included in Section One.

The Census Bureau estimated Waitsfield's 2006 population to be 1,710 people or 2.6 percent of the regional population of 64,940. Waitsfield projects that it will add 355 people town-wide by 2020 resulting in a population of 2,065, while the Central Vermont region is projected to be home to 73,080 people. Waitsfield's share of the projected regional population is expected to increase only slightly by 2020 to 2.8 percent (from 2.6 percent in 2006). The population increase of 178 people that Waitsfield's growth center is expected to accommodate by 2020 represents 2.2 percent of the regional growth of 8,140 people.

The Census Bureau counted 734 households in Waitsfield in 2000 or 2.8 percent of the regional count of 25,675 households. Waitsfield projects that it will add 245 households town-wide by 2020 resulting in a total of 979 households, while the Central Vermont region is projected to have 33,534 households. Waitsfield's share of the projected regional number of households is expected to increase slightly by 2020 to 2.9 percent (from 2.8 percent in 2000). The household/housing unit increase of 123 Waitsfield's growth center can be expected to accommodate by 2020 represents 1.6 percent of the 7,859 new households/housing units in the region.

The Vermont Department of Labor counted 1,354 payroll jobs in Waitsfield in 2006, which was 4.0 percent of the 33,313 payroll jobs in the Central Vermont region. Waitsfield projects that it will add 296 jobs town-wide by 2020 resulting in a total of 1,650 jobs, while the Central Vermont region is expected to have 56,952 jobs. Waitsfield's share of the projected jobs in the region is expected to decrease by 2020 to 2.9 percent (from 4.0 percent in 2006). The increase of 149 jobs Waitsfield's growth center is expected to accommodate by 2020 represents 0.6 percent of the regional growth of 23,639 jobs. These numbers do not fully reflect employment in the town or region as it is based on covered employment, which excludes sole proprietors and some other workers.

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D. Regional Map.

See Attachment A•3: Regional Map.

4. *The proposed growth center promotes densities of land development that are significantly greater than existing and allowable densities in parts of the municipality that are outside a designated downtown, village center, growth center, or new town center, or, in the case of municipalities characterized predominately by areas of existing dense urban settlement, it encourages infill development and redevelopment of historically developed land (24 V.S.A. § 2791(12)(B)(iv)).*

The proposed growth center results in compact concentrated areas of land development that are served by existing or planned infrastructure and are separated by rural countryside or working landscape (24 V.S.A. § 2791(12)(B)(vi)).

The proposed growth center is planned to maintain the historic development pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside (24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(A)).

The proposed growth center will result in a settlement pattern that, at full build-out, is not characterized by scattered development located outside of compact urban and village centers that is excessively land consumptive (24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(I)(i)).

The approved plan and the implementing bylaws further the goal of retaining a more rural character in the areas surrounding the growth center, to the extent that a more rural character exists (24 V.S.A. § 2793c(e)(1)(D)(iv)).

4.1. Discuss the character, land uses and density of development that currently exists and will be permitted on lands within the designated downtown, village center or new town center associated with the proposed growth center, specifically citing the steps the municipality is taking to encourage infill development, adaptive reuse and/or redevelopment of vacant or under-utilized land within the designated downtown or village center, or to promote development with a 'downtown' character within a new town center.

Waitsfield's designated village center consists of 59 acres as follows:

- 19.7 acres in 7 parcels of public/civic uses including school, town office, library, fire department, church, General Wait House, Masonic hall and the recently acquired 'polo field'.
- 22.3 acres in 28 parcels of commercial and mixed use including home businesses, shops, offices, general store, health center, Waitsfield Telecom Dial Office and the Odd Fellows Hall/Valley Players theater.
- 8.6 acres in 19 residential lots, which average around ½-acre each in size.
- The remaining acreage is open space, including a 1.7-acre lot adjoining the river, the municipal parking lot and the Mad River.

The designated village center, which includes the Waitsfield Village Historic District, is largely comprised of historic structures including approximately 60 structures listed on the State Register of Historic Places; the entire district is listed in the National Register of Historic Places

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(See Attachment A•11). Waitsfield's current (Attachment D•1) and proposed (Attachment D•3) regulations include a Historic Waitsfield Village Overlay District, the stated purpose of which is to "Maintain the historic character and architectural integrity of the Waitsfield Village Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places." The overlay makes demolition of a historic structure a conditional use and establishes a special process and standards that must be met before such demolition may be permitted. The overlay further requires exterior modifications to be reviewed using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures.

The Waitsfield Town Plan (Attachment C•1) describes the desired development pattern on the open lands in the village center on page 131, "Land west of Route 100, surrounding the 'polo field,' provides an exceptional opportunity to expand the Village with the creation of side streets and high density single-family housing configured in a pattern and scale typical of traditional Vermont villages. The presence of the polo field also presents an opportunity to establish a formal 'village green' which could be a powerful organizing feature around which to configure village housing and one or more prominent civic buildings."

The Town Plan sets forth the following three land use policies for Waitsfield's village center on page 137:

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.

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:

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);

b. Support the creation of a new street network and construction of single-family homes and civic buildings, and the establishment of a village green, in a traditional village-pattern west of Route 100. Such development should be connected to Irasville via a road running south from the Old County Road;

c. Maintain the well defined village boundaries and sharp contrast between the compact village and surrounding rural countryside.

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.

With the exception of the school and several small pieces of larger parcels, the properties in the village center are within the Village Business or Village Residential districts in Waitsfield's currently adopted and proposed zoning regulations. Within the Village Business District, the minimum lot size is ¼ acre, structures are required to be between 1½ and 3 stories in height, the front setback is 10 feet from the street-line and the minimum frontage is 50 feet. These

dimensional standards are consistent with the traditional development pattern of Waitsfield Village. A range of residential, commercial and civic uses is allowed within the district.

The zoning regulations for the Village Residential District encourage a mix of residential and limited commercial uses. Retail and office uses are only permitted as conditional uses in a structure located entirely within 200 feet of the Vermont Route 100 right-of-way, and the structure must be a mixed-use building within which not less than 50% of the usable floor space is occupied for residential purposes (e.g., contains one or more dwelling unit). Usable floor space shall include all heated interior space of the building, including basement areas, and shall exclude structures that are accessory to a single-family dwelling. The use of accessory structures for retail or office use, such as the conversion of a carriage barn into office or retail space, may be permitted as a conditional use providing not less than 50% of the total usable floor space of all habitable structures on the parcel is occupied for residential purposes.”

4.2. Discuss the character, land uses and density of development that currently exists and will be permitted on lands within the proposed growth center but outside the designated downtown, village center or new town center associated with the proposed growth center, specifically citing the steps that the municipality is taking to encourage a the settlement pattern resulting from growth center designation that is not be characterized by scattered or excessively land consumptive development.

The 254 acres of land within the proposed growth center, but outside the designated village center, is composed of the following:

- 67.6 acres in 44 parcels developed for mixed-use, commercial, industrial or utility use. This includes shopping centers, a movie theater, a manufacturing facility, banks, offices, gas stations, restaurants and a variety of shops.
- 107.6 acres in 22 residential lots, including one lot of nearly 30 acres and 6 lots of 5 to 10 acres.
- 59.3 acres in parcels with no structures including a 15-acre ball field/rec park, an 11-acre parcel adjacent to the Slow Road currently used for recreation, a 4-acre cemetery, the 2-acre pond and 2 parking lots totaling 3 acres. The remaining 28.4 acres in 11 parcels is undeveloped land

While the proposed growth center outside the designated village center includes approximately 60 acres of undeveloped or large-lot residential properties to the west of the village center. These lands are a mix of forested and open former farmlands heading up the hillside that bounds the western edge of the Mad River Valley. These lands are in the Village Residential zoning district, although natural resource constraints limit the reasonable density at which they could likely be developed.

Most of the land in the growth center outside the village center is part of Irasville. Irasville encompasses approximately 190 acres of land within the Town of Waitsfield bordering Route 100 on the east and west sides, from the Mill Brook, along the southern border of the Fiddlers Green Business Park north to the edge of Waitsfield Village historic district. To the northwest of Route 100, the terrain slopes gently to the east or southeast. Irasville is bounded by the

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Waitsfield-Fayston town line, which runs along the toe of steeper slopes to the northwest. To the southeast of Route 100, Irasville is bounded by the Mad River. A steep 20 to 35-foot high terrace escarpment runs through this portion of the proposed growth center, but above and below the escarpment, slopes are moderate to gentle.

Irasville supports a full range of land uses, including the 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. A majority of this development is located on the west side of Route 100. The town developed a secondary road referred to as the "Slow Road" a number of years ago, parallel to Route 100. A number of businesses are accessed from the Slow Road rather than directly from Route 100.

Irasville is considered by most residents to be the primary village and commercial center of Waitsfield. Since the mid-1970s, many businesses have moved into Irasville. In the early 1980s, commercial development in Irasville occurred primarily on Route 100. Since then, planning policies have directed new development away from Route 100, with service drives, commercial blocks and shared parking lots located away from them. While this has worked well from a traffic standpoint, the development pattern is still automobile dominated. While the town has avoided becoming a classic commercial highway strip development, the current look and feel of Irasville is also not really a village center because people are still dependent on driving between most locations.

The Waitsfield Town Plan (Attachment C•1) points to the expansion of Mad River Green, the construction of the Northfield Savings Bank and associated construction of a new road serving those uses as the first project that shifted away from automobile-oriented development to a denser, more pedestrian oriented pattern reminiscent of traditional Vermont villages. The plan states the following on page 133:

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 stormwater 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 and Commercial-Lodging Districts.*

The Town Plan provides the following additional guidance on the current and desired future development patterns in Irasville on pages 133-34:

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 fifty dwellings are located. Additional in-fill development consisting of commercial, office and residential uses—in a manner that uses land more efficiently than past development -- is appropriate on land with frontage on the Fiddlers Green Road. Land to the north, served by the Dugway and Butcher House Roads, provides another opportunity for residential neighborhood development.

The plan's stated land use goal for Irasville, found on page 137, is to " 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."

To achieve these land use objectives, the town has worked for several years to revise zoning regulations in the Irasville districts. The proposed land use regulations rezone Irasville into eight districts and two overlays. The Irasville rezoning is intended to enable and promote the development of a compact, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented growth center as described in the Town Plan. The proposed amendment is the manifestation of decades of planning efforts to implement the town's vision for Irasville as the social, commercial and cultural heart of Waitsfield and the Mad River Valley. Specific provisions of the proposed Irasville zoning include (Attachment D•3):

- *Irasville Residential District. Minimum lot size of 1/2 acre going to 1/8 acre with bonus if use is single-family or two-family dwelling. Two-story buildings required with three stories allowed with bonus if project meets specified criteria. Setbacks consistent with*

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small lot size – 45’ front, 10’ side and rear. Single- and two-family uses permitted with multi-family and some non-residential uses allowed conditionally including home businesses.

- *Mill Brook District. Minimum lot size of 1/4 acre. Two-story structures required. Setbacks of 35’ front and 10’ rear and side. Variety of conditional uses, mainly residential and commercial.*
- *Fiddlers Green District. Minimum lot size of 1 acre going to 1/24 acre (-1,800 sq. ft.) with bonus if specific criteria including 25% total floor area in residential use are met. Two-story buildings required with three stories allowed with bonus if project meets specified criteria. Setbacks of 15’ front and rear. Variety of conditional uses, mainly residential and commercial.*
- *Irasville Business District. Minimum lot size of 1/8 acre. Two-story buildings required with three stories allowed with bonus if project includes 25% total floor area in residential use. Setbacks of 15’ front and rear. Variety of conditional uses, mainly residential and commercial.*
- *Irasville Business District Overlay. Allows for greater intensity of development going to 1/24 acre (-1,800 sq. ft.) with bonus if specific criteria including providing for residential use are met.*
- *Arts & Entertainment District. Minimum lot size of 1/8 acre going to 1/24 acre with bonus if specific criteria related to including residential uses. Two-story buildings required with three stories allowed with bonus if project meets specified criteria. Minimum front yard setback of 15’ and maximum of 20’. Variety of conditional uses, including public/recreational, residential and commercial.*
- *Irasville Industrial District. Minimum lot size of 1/4 acre. Two story maximum height with flexibility for height of a story. A mix of light industrial, commercial and recreational uses allowed conditionally. Residential uses are not allowed. Dimensional bonuses linked to LEED certification.*
- *River and Recreation District. The purpose of this district is to protect access to and care of the Mad River and to enable recreation opportunities. Minimum lot size of 1 acre. Uses limited to mainly recreational uses with conditional use approval.*
- *Civic and Recreation District. The purpose of this district is to enable the formation and preservation of a dedicated civic realm within Irasville. There are no set dimensional standards for this district. Conditional uses include a variety of public/community, recreational and residential uses with limited commercial uses.*
- *Irasville Route 100 Overlay District. This district allows for a greater variety of commercial uses with conditional use approval within those areas of the Irasville Residential district with frontage on Route 100. The dimensional standards are the same as the underlying district.*

4.3. Discuss the character, land uses and density of development that currently exists and will be permitted on lands outside the proposed growth center, specifically citing the steps the municipality is taking to further the goal of retaining rural character outside the proposed growth center, to the extent that such a character exists.

Ninety-eight percent (~16,300 acres) of Waitsfield's land area is located outside the proposed growth center. Most of this land (88%) is in parcels larger than 10 acres in size and 65% is in tracts of 50 acres or more. This land can be classified by use as follows according to Waitsfield's grand list:

- 38 parcels listed as commercial uses totaling 425 acres
- 550 year-round residential parcels totaling 4,678 acres
- 103 seasonal or vacation parcels totaling 2,215 acres
- 14 parcels listed as utilities totaling 1,958 acres
- 25 farm parcels totaling 1,671 acres
- 24 parcels of woodlands totaling 1,986 acres
- 145 parcels of open space or undeveloped land totaling 2,850 acres

A breakdown of land use/land cover by acreage estimated from infrared satellite-photos for the entire town reveals the following:

- 74% of the town's land area has forest cover
- 20% is agricultural or open land
- There are ~575 acres of developed lands, the majority of which are located within the proposed growth center.

The Waitsfield Town Plan (Attachment C•1) places the majority of the lands outside the proposed growth center into one of two land use districts, which are described as follows:

Page 123 - 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 changes in geography and geology, which make these upland areas poorly suited for development. This is especially true at higher elevations—above 1,700'—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 ridgelines;*
- *Very limited access to maintained roads, with no maintained roads serving land above 1,700 feet;*

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- *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.

Page 124 - 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 open land, including several active farms, significant wildlife habitat (especially deeryards), 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 (including forestry) 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.

The Waitsfield Town Plan sets forth the following goals for those two land use districts on page 136:

- *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.*
- *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.*

The town’s zoning regulations (Attachment D•1) also regulate land based on those two districts.

- *Within the Agricultural-Residential District, the minimum lot size is one acre. Agricultural and natural resource based uses are permitted, along with residential uses. Limited commercial uses are allowed conditionally, most tourism- or resource-based.*
- *The Forest Reserve District has a permitted density of one unit per 25 acres. Permitted uses are limited to agriculture and forestry. Residential uses are only allowed conditionally and at elevations of less than 1,700 feet.*

There are three additional zoning districts in Waitsfield. The Commercial Lodging and Limited Business together account for 1,152 acres along Route 100 south of Irasville. The Commercial Lodging District is identical to the Agricultural-Residential District in its dimensional standards and uses except that it allows for additional lodging facilities. The Limited Business District is intended to “enable the continued operation and limited expansion of existing businesses, and to allow for the establishment of a limited number and type of new small businesses.” There is also an 80-acre Industrial District off Airport Road, which is the location of an industrial park designated by the town for light manufacturing uses.

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Waitsfield's proposed zoning (Attachment D•3) and subdivision (Attachment D•2) regulations also contain other provisions intended to promote the development patterns described in the plan including:

- *Proposed Zoning Regulations, Section 5.03(D)(2)(c).* In the Agricultural-Residential and Commercial Lodging Districts particular consideration shall be given to locating structures off of open farmland or at the periphery of open farmland, and where possible, taking advantage of existing slopes and vegetation to provide a backdrop and screening for the project.
- *Proposed Zoning Regulations, Section 5.04(C)(12).* In the Agricultural-Residential, Commercial-Lodging and Forest Reserve Districts, a minimum of 60% of the total project site shall be set aside as open space. Where a PRD/PUD involves land currently in agricultural or forestry use, or has the potential for agricultural or forestry use due to the presence of primary agricultural or forestry soils, the development should make provisions for the use of such land for agricultural or forestry purposes.
- *Adopted Subdivision Regulations, Section 3.02(B)(3).* Subdivisions within the Agricultural-Residential District and/or Commercial Lodging District shall be designed to reinforce the district's rural character and historic working landscape, characterized by wooded hillsides and hilltops, open fields, and a visual and functional relationship of structures to the surrounding landscape (e.g., cluster of residential and agricultural buildings set close to the road, adjacent to farm and forest land).
- *Adopted Subdivision Regulations, Section 3.02(B)(4).* Subdivisions within the Forest Reserve District shall be designed to preserve existing forest resources and fragile features and to maintain traditional land uses including wildlife habitat, forest management, and limited agriculture, small seasonal camps not served by public utilities, watershed protection and dispersed recreation. The fragmentation of productive forest lands (e.g., lands characterized by forest access and logging roads, productive forest soils as identified by the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service, a history of productivity, and a total acreage suited for long term forest management (i.e. 25 acres or more)) shall be avoided. Lots created in the Forest Reserve District shall not result in the development of natural or cultural resources identified in the Waitsfield Town Plan, or through site investigation, including –significant wildlife habitat, wetlands, and severe and extreme slopes.
- *Adopted Subdivision Regulations, Section 3.03(D).* Protection of Steep Slopes, Prominent Knolls & Ridgelines. Lot boundaries and development envelopes shall be located and configured to minimize undue adverse impacts to slopes greater than 15%, to avoid disturbance to slopes in excess of 25%, and to avoid the placement of structures on prominent knolls and ridgelines.
- *Adopted Subdivision Regulations, Section 3.03(G).* Protection of Farmland. Lot boundaries and development envelopes shall be located and configured to avoid undue adverse impacts to primary agricultural soils and other open farm fields.
- *Adopted Subdivision Regulations, Section 3.03(H).* Protection of Forest Resources. Lot boundaries and development envelopes shall be located and configured to avoid undue adverse impacts to productive forest land, including large (50+ acres) tracts of forest, forest land within the Forest Reserve District as defined by the Waitsfield Zoning

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Bylaw, and forest land that possesses unique or fragile features, including significant wildlife habitat, wildlife travel corridors, headwater streams, aquifer recharge areas.

- *The subdivision regulations also exclude floodplains, wetlands and slopes in excess of 25% from density calculations, resulting in a significant reduction in allowable development.*

Conservation Efforts

Coordinated efforts between the Vermont Land Trust, the Mad River Valley Planning District and the Town of Waitsfield have resulted in thousands of acres of land being conserved in recent decades. Since the early 1990s, private landowners and the Town of Waitsfield have worked with the Vermont Land Trust to complete 15 conservation projects protecting 1,492 acres of farmland, forest, and riparian land. Currently, 8.7% of Waitsfield's total land base is protected through Vermont Land Trust conservation easements, including four parcels which are owned by the Town of Waitsfield and managed for the purposes of habitat protection and public recreation.

Recent Development Patterns

Without the provision of infrastructure and changes to the town's zoning regulations, it would not be feasible for the proposed growth center to accommodate a majority of growth anticipated over the next 20 years. While there has been new development, within the proposed growth center, in recent years the majority of growth has been occurring in the town's outlying lands. In examining 911 data for the past decade, it can be estimated that only around 10 percent of new structures built in Waitsfield were within the proposed growth center.

Fayston

The Irasville portion of Waitsfield's proposed growth center borders the Town of Fayston. Across the town line, Fayston has delineated an Irasville Commercial District to "encourage mixed uses, medium density commercial office and business activities in an area with good road access." While lower in density than Waitsfield's proposed Irasville zoning and despite the presence of wetlands that pose significant development constraints, this district complements Waitsfield's designation of Irasville as a growth center. There is no incompatibility between the land uses planned for either side of the town line in Irasville.

E. Planning and Regulatory Maps.

See:

- Attachment A•4: Adopted Zoning Map.
- Attachment A•5: Proposed Irasville Zoning Map

5. *The proposed growth center incorporates a mix of uses that typically include or have the potential to include the following: retail, office, services, and other commercial, civic, recreational, industrial, and residential uses, including affordable housing and new residential neighborhoods, within a densely developed, compact area (24 V.S.A. § 2791(12)(B)(i)).*

The proposed growth center is planned to support a diversity of viable businesses in downtowns and villages (24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(G)).

The proposed growth center is planned to provide for housing that meets the needs of a diversity of social and income groups in each community (24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(H)).

5.1. Summarize the desired mix of uses within the proposed growth center as envisioned in the municipal plan and allowed under the land use regulations, specifically identifying any steps the municipality is taking to encourage for mixed-use development within the proposed growth center.

The Town Plan (Attachment C•1) describes the desired mix of uses within the proposed growth center in its land use policies on page 137 as follows:

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:

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);

b. Support the creation of a new street network and construction of single-family homes and civic buildings, and the establishment of a village green, in a traditional village-pattern west of Route 100. Such development should be connected to Irasville via a road running south from the Old County Road;

c. Maintain the well defined village boundaries and sharp contrast between the compact village and surrounding rural countryside.

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.

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.

For a detailed list of uses allowed within the proposed growth center, see Tables 2.01 through 2.03 of the proposed Zoning Regulations (Attachment D•3). All the districts allow for a mix of residential, public and commercial uses with the exception of the Irasville Industrial District, which does not include provision for residential uses.

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Within Irasville, the proposed zoning promotes mixed-use development by requiring construction of multi-story structures in most districts and linking density/dimensional bonuses to creating residential space in new buildings. Within the village center, Waitsfield's proposed regulations specifically promote mixed-use development:

- By requiring at least one residential unit in all new structures or major additions to existing structures in the Village Business as specified in Table 2.01 (E)(3).
- By allowing office and retail uses in the Village Residential District only within mixed-use buildings where not less than 50% of the usable floor space is used for residential purposes in Table 2.02(F)(1).

5.2. Discuss the steps the municipality is taking to plan for and encourage residential development that meets the needs of a diverse population, including affordable housing, within the proposed growth center.

The Waitsfield Town Plan (Attachment C•1) includes the following housing policies on pages 65-66:

3) With development of supporting wastewater infrastructure, 50% of anticipated housing growth (total dwelling units) will be targeted to occur in Irasville and in the Waitsfield Village Residential District.

4) When a municipal sewer system is developed, sewer allocation and phasing policies shall 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.

7) New and rehabilitated housing should be safe, sanitary, and located conveniently to employment and commercial centers.

8) Upper story residential apartments are encouraged in both Waitsfield Village and Irasville.

10) Higher densities of residential development, including multi-family dwellings and infill development, will be accommodated in designated village centers and rural hamlets (clusters) supported, to the extent practical, by municipal or community wastewater systems and infrastructure.

11) The conversion of single to multi-family dwellings, including rental units, will be allowed in designated village districts, given that adequate infrastructure and off-street parking are available, and the character of historic structures is maintained or enhanced.

The plan also identifies the following tasks for the town on page 66:

1) Implement a master plan for Irasville, including the development of a municipal wastewater system, to accommodate higher densities of residential and mixed use development that includes housing, in appropriate locations within Irasville. Allocate municipal wastewater reserve capacity specifically to support a mix of housing development in this area.

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4) Review and update current zoning and subdivision regulations as needed to accommodate higher densities of housing, including affordable housing and infill development, within designated village districts.

These policies are being implemented through the proposed zoning regulations (Attachment D•3) for Waitsfield Village and Irasville as described in response to Question 5.1. Additionally, within the Irasville Residential district, a bonus third story may be allowed in a multi-unit residential building if 25% of the units are affordable (Table 2.03a). A provision of both Waitsfield's current and proposed regulations allows the Development Review Board to waive or modify on-site parking, loading and/or service area requirements for affordable/elderly housing projects (Section 3.09(c)). The regulations also offer a 50% density bonus for PUDs that provide affordable housing (Section 5.04(C)(6)(b)).

Waitsfield has acted to provide affordable and elderly housing in town. In 2004-05, the town worked with several non-profit organizations to convert the former Valley Inn to Evergreen Place, a residential facility for seniors in Irasville. The town also worked with CVCLT to purchase the VerdMont Trailer Park, thus maintaining those affordable homes.

The build-out analysis indicates sufficient potential for residential development under the draft zoning regulations in the proposed growth center (see Section One) to meet projected housing demand over the 20-year planning period. The town's efforts to provide municipal water and/or wastewater treatment within the proposed growth center will allow for the high-density development called for in the Town Plan and allowed under the proposed zoning regulations, which will increase the financial viability of affordable housing development. The requirement for multi-story structures will also increase the supply of rental units in the proposed growth center, many of which will likely meet the definition of affordable housing.

5.3. Discuss the steps the municipality is taking to plan for and encourage economic development within the proposed growth center, specifically describing how the growth center will support a healthy business climate in the designated downtown, village center or new town center associated with the growth center.

The Waitsfield Town Plan (Attachment C•1) includes the following economic development policies on page 75:

3) Support sustainable economic development through a future land use plan which supports the following land use policies:

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

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 and sewage treatment facilities.

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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.

The plan also includes the following tasks to implement those policies on page 76:

1) Implement a master plan for Irasville, including the development of municipal water and wastewater systems, to accommodate higher densities of mixed use development that includes housing, in appropriate locations within Irasville. Allocate municipal wastewater reserve capacity specifically to support affordable housing development and businesses which pay employees a livable wage in this area.

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.

8) 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.

These policies are being implemented through the proposed zoning regulations (Attachment D•3) for Waitsfield Village and Irasville, which allow for a wide range of commercial and industrial uses as described in response to Question 5.1. The proposed regulations include two overlay districts in Irasville to promote economic development:

- The purpose of the Irasville Business Overlay District is to enable greater intensity of development along critical pedestrian and vehicular networks. This district is the primary connection to the Civic & Recreation District; pedestrian-oriented mixed-use buildings with residences should provide a clear and safe linkage from the commercial heart of Irasville to its civic center (Table 2.03e).
- The purpose of the Irasville Route 100 Overlay District is to provide appropriate opportunity for commerce along the stretch of Route 100 that serves as the primary relief along the Irasville – historic Waitsfield corridor. This district enables commercial uses consistent and compatible with adjacent districts along Route 100 while respecting the physical form and intensity that preserve the necessary reprieve to avoid strip development (Table 2.03j).

The build-out analysis indicates sufficient potential for non-residential development under the proposed zoning regulations in the proposed growth center (see Section One) to meet projected demand over the 20-year planning period. The town's efforts to provide municipal water and/or wastewater treatment within the proposed growth center will allow for the economic development called for in the Town Plan and allowed under the proposed zoning regulations.

5.4. Describe the extent to which large-scale commercial, industrial or institutional, and automobile-oriented uses currently exist in the proposed growth center, and discuss the municipality's policies and regulations related to such uses, specifically identifying all locations within the municipality where such uses will be accommodated.

There are several large-scale commercial or industrial, and automobile-oriented uses currently located within Irasville. These include shopping centers (Fiddlers Green, Mad River Green, Shaw's), industrial buildings (Mad River Canoe, Irasville Business Park and Valley Rent-All), and several smaller businesses such as gas stations, a movie theater, a repair garage and car wash. As detailed in response to Question 4.2, Irasville developed as a largely automobile-oriented commercial area. Waitsfield has been actively working to change this development pattern and create a more "traditional downtown" character in Irasville.

While designating Irasville as the area of town suited for larger-scale commercial and industrial uses, the proposed regulations include extensive standards to guide site and building design. Throughout most of Irasville, the proposed regulations (Attachment D•3) establish a maximum building footprint of 7,500 square feet (10,000 square feet with bonuses may be allowed in some districts) and require a minimum height of two stories. These provisions will serve to prevent "big box" type development in Irasville. Within the village center districts, the town has set a maximum building footprint of 4,000 square feet. With the exception of the Commercial Lodging, Limited Business and Industrial districts, large-scale commercial, industrial or institutional, and automobile-oriented uses are generally not allowed within the areas outside the proposed growth center.

6. *The applicant has adopted a capital budget and program in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 4426 and the existing and planned infrastructure is adequate to implement the growth center (24 V.S.A. § 2793c(e)(1)(E)).*

The proposed growth center is planned to balance growth with the availability of economic and efficient public utilities and services (24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(F)).

6.1. Describe the capacity of existing community infrastructure, facilities and services (as defined in 24 V.S.A. § 4382(4)), and summarize the municipality's plans to provide and finance the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support projected growth and development within the proposed growth center over the 20-year planning period, citing specific provisions of the municipality's adopted capital budget and program.

A detailed description of Waitsfield's existing community infrastructure, facilities and services can be found in Chapters 9 and 10 of the Waitsfield Town Plan (Attachment C•1). The goals, policies and tasks associated with community infrastructure, facilities and services are identified at the end of each of those chapters.

The town's adopted capital budget and program (Attachment D•4) sets forth Waitsfield's near-term plan for providing and financing the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support projected growth and development within the proposed growth center. The capital budget and program indicates that Waitsfield has allocated nearly \$150,000 for the Route 100 Pedestrian Path project (described in response to Question 9.1). A reserve fund for covered bridge maintenance and street trees is also included in Waitsfield's capital budget and program.

The capital budget and program looks ahead to the need for construction of a municipal building. The Town Office currently located in the lower level of the Joslin Memorial Library building has become increasingly crowded over the past 20 years and is not accessible to those in wheelchairs. It is hoped that a new office can be constructed with a larger vault and town clerk space, separate meeting room for town boards that can accommodate up to 40 people, private offices for town administrator, planning and zoning, and assessor. It is currently believed that an expansion of the Joslin Memorial Library building or a new municipal building at the General Wait House property are the two most likely options for such a new facility.

Currently Waitsfield is focusing its efforts on providing the water and/or wastewater treatment infrastructure necessary to support the density and pattern of development within the proposed growth center called for in the Town Plan as described in response to Question 2.3. The capital budget and program includes funding for the proposed water and sewer projects. Specifically, Waitsfield anticipates seeking bond approval for \$7 million for the municipal water system, \$5.5 million for Phase I of the municipal sewage system and \$5 million for Phase II of the municipal sewage system. Grant funding and up-front connection fees will reduce the amount of money that will need to be borrowed. These costs are shown as occurring in 2009 with a debt service of \$50,000 each year also beginning in 2009.

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6.2. Discuss the steps the municipality is taking to maintain a rate of growth that will not exceed the municipality's ability to provide or finance required community infrastructure, facilities and services over the 20-year planning period.

Waitsfield's Town Plan (Attachment C•1) includes the following policies on page 103:

1) Facilities and services shall be planned to accommodate anticipated future growth (see Chapter 4) to avoid unreasonable burdens on the town's ability to provide one or more facility or service. To this end:

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

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).

As one of its actions to implement these policies, Waitsfield intends to delineate a service area and prepare a wastewater allocation ordinance to govern the allocation of available capacity in accordance with the goals and policies of the town plan in the event a municipal wastewater treatment facility is constructed. The town has prepared a draft Wastewater Ordinance (Attachment D•5) and a draft Water Ordinance (Attachment D•6).

The draft Wastewater Ordinance establishes a Board of Sewer Commissioners, which would have the authority to allocate any uncommitted reserve capacity of the system. As a first priority, the ordinance sets aside 2,450 gallons of capacity for emergency connections from residences within the service area with failed on-site systems. Connecting other existing development within the service area is identified as the second priority and "new flows" are ranked third.

F. Capital Budget and Program.

See Attachment D•4.

7. The proposed growth center incorporates existing or planned public spaces that promote social interaction, such as public parks, civic buildings (e.g., post office, municipal offices), community gardens, and other formal and informal places to gather (24 V.S.A. § 2791(12)(B)(ii)).

7.1. Identify all existing or planned public spaces located within the proposed growth center and summarize the steps the municipality is taking to plan for, provide and/or maintain public spaces, including open space and public recreation facilities, within the proposed growth center.

Existing public spaces within the proposed growth center include (Attachment A•8):

- The Joslin Memorial Library/Town Offices and adjacent small park in Waitsfield Village.
- Waitsfield Elementary School and associated ball fields and recreation facilities, which are available for public use during non-school hours and the summertime in Waitsfield Village.
- Fire station in Waitsfield Village.
- The historic General Wait House—the original home of Waitsfield’s founder, Benjamin Wait—was purchased in 1995. The building accommodates display space for the Historical Society, 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 ‘polo field’ property at the northeast corner of Waitsfield Village, which is in the process of being gifted to the town.
- General Wait and Irasville cemeteries.
- 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 that offers two baseball fields, a small pavilion and river access.
- The Skatium, an outdoor skating facility is located in Irasville and maintained by a not-for-profit organization.

The 2002 Irasville Master Plan (Attachment C•3) includes development of a Town Green, recreation park for future neighborhoods, and a series of connected open spaces. The open space features of the Master Plan are described on pages 21-22 of the report as follows:

An important component of the district will be the village green, an idea supported by 100% of individuals responding to the survey. The green spaces and pathways could be used to link all areas of the growth center, and also provide opportunities for recreation.

With an increase in population of both residents and employees in Irasville, there will need to be larger areas of accessible open space and parkland for the village center. The plan has defined a number of open spaces that should be wonderful neighborhood amenities and also fit well with the other land uses, protected and enhanced wetlands, and recreational trails.

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A central village green has been located at the center of Irasville for relaxation, as a forecourt for the new town offices, and doubling as a large area for stormwater management.

A trail and greenway system has integrated the Mad River Pathway with neighborhood connections with trails to the Mad River corridor. Each neighborhood has the possibility of walking on paths to access places of work or services. These trails should be integral with the residential development and funded by the developed of those projects.

An active recreation center with athletic fields, teen/community center, and other sports and cultural facilities has also been centrally located for soccer, softball, community arts and crafts, and other local activities.

Neighborhood pocket parks have been integrated with paths and the wetlands/stormwater/greenway system. An overall feeling of “green” has been a priority in the design of all aspects of the village center ranging from emphasis on parks, greenways, streetscapes, and neighborhoods.

The Waitsfield Town Plan (Attachment C•1) states on page 132, “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.” The plan also contains the following land use policies on page 137:

10) Development within the Irasville Village District shall reflect the general development concepts outlined on Maps 9 and 10. The resulting development pattern shall be characterized by:

c. formal and informal open spaces, including a village green(s) and greenway network, possibly encompassing “green infrastructure,” such as stormwater facilities;

The Mad River Greenway, which currently exists as a five-mile grass path along the Mad River north of the Tremblay Road, is planned to pass through the growth center (Attachment A•7). The greenway is maintained through a partnership between the town, the Mad River Path Association and landowners. A similar partnerships maintains the 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 provisions of Waitsfield’s Capital Budget and Program (Attachment D•4) related to planned public spaces and amenities are described in response to Question 6.1.

7.2. If existing public buildings/uses (post office, municipal office, school, library, etc.) are not included within the proposed growth center, explain the municipality’s rationale in drawing its growth center boundary to exclude them.

Nearly all of Waitsfield’s major public buildings are located within the proposed growth center including the post office, town office, school, library and fire department (Attachment A•8). The only public facilities/uses located outside the proposed growth center are the town highway

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garage, two cemeteries, the town forest and a number of recreational areas. These facilities/ uses are too distant geographically to be included in a compact area with the nearest being approximately one mile from the center of the proposed growth center. Additionally, several are uses that would not be well-suited to a location within a growth center.

The Waitsfield Town Plan (Attachment C•1) includes a policy to direct most public uses to the proposed growth center on page 103 as follows:

2) The provision of facilities and services will be coordinated with land use and development goals and policies outlined in this plan, including the reinforcement of growth centers. To this end:

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;

G. Infrastructure and Facilities Maps.

See:

- Attachment A•6: Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Map
- Attachment A•7: Transportation and Facilities Map
- Attachment A•8: Public Land Map

8. *The proposed growth center is organized around one or more central places or focal points, such as prominent buildings of civic, cultural, or spiritual significance or a village green, common, or square (24 V.S.A. § 2791(12)(B)(iii)).*

The proposed growth center will result in a settlement pattern that, at full build-out, is not characterized by linear development along well-traveled roads and highways that lacks depth, as measured from the highway (24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(I)(v)).

8.1. Identify the focal point(s) around which the proposed growth center will be organized.

Waitsfield's growth center does not really have a single focal point such as a prominent public building or outdoor space. Instead, there are multiple civic focal points in both Waitsfield Village and Irasville such as the library/town office, town clock on the church, post office, Big Picture Pond, etc. (Attachment A•8). As described in response to Question 7.1, the 2002 Irasville Master Plan (Attachment C•3) includes development of public building(s) and/or space(s) to serve as a focal point around which new development/redevelopment will be organized.

The Irasville Master Plan noted that as the development of Irasville unfolds, the proximity and relationship of Irasville to Waitsfield Village is also an issue to be addressed. Historically speaking, the two should be kept apart as separate unique places, yet there is a sense that the two should or will become one. As development proceeds within the proposed growth center, a new focal point could help link these two existing centers.

8.2. If the growth center is associated with an existing downtown or village center whose form is linear, summarize the steps the municipality is taking to establish a new development pattern that creates depth as opposed to continuing the linear pattern and/or describe any constraints that limit creating greater depth.

Due to the geographic and topographic constraints of the Mad River Valley, Waitsfield Village and Irasville necessarily have some underlying linear characteristics. These centers are bounded to the east by the Mad River and to the west by the steep slopes and the Fayston town line. Waitsfield has taken steps to prevent an entirely linear development pattern within the proposed growth center beginning with construction of the Slow Road and the development of the Mad River Green shopping center in the early 1970s, which avoided many of the characteristics of strip development (e.g. expansive parking between storefronts and the highway and single-story buildings). The 2002 Irasville Master Plan (Attachment C•3) includes further development of an interconnected network of streets. A network of proposed streets is also shown on the Irasville Circulation Map in the Town Plan (Attachment A•7). The Waitsfield Town Plan (Attachment C•1) includes the following policies on page 137:

10) Development within the Irasville Village District shall reflect the general development concepts outlined on Maps 9 and 10. The resulting development pattern shall be characterized by:

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- a. *an interconnected network of roads and pedestrian paths;*
- 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;*

8.3. Describe the extent to which the municipality is planning for and/or requiring development of an interconnected street network within the proposed growth center.

Waitsfield has taken steps to promote development of an interconnected road network as development has proceeded in Irasville (Attachment A•7). Since the construction of the Slow Road, Waitsfield has striven to limit strip development along Route 100. As described in response to Question 8.2, the Irasville Master Plan (Attachment C•3) includes provision for an interconnected street network and such a network is shown in the Town Plan (Attachment C•1).

The Waitsfield Subdivision Regulations (Attachment D•2) include the following standards to promote development of an interconnected street network (the town's Zoning Regulations contain similar provisions):

Section 3.06(D)(1). Within the Irasville Village, Village Business and Village Residential Districts, subdivisions shall provide for the continuation of existing roads and sidewalks, and for the extension of roads, sidewalks and pedestrian paths to connect with adjoining properties, in order to create an interconnected network of village streets and pedestrian facilities, reduce traffic congestion, and promote pedestrian circulation and safety, unless the Board determines that such extension is undesirable or impractical due to topographic conditions, natural resource constraints or other site conditions.

9. The proposed growth center is supported by existing or planned investments in infrastructure and encompasses a circulation system that is conducive to pedestrian and other non-vehicular traffic and that incorporates, accommodates and supports the use of public transit systems (24 V.S.A. § 2791(12)(B)(v)).

The proposed growth center is planned to enable choice in modes of transportation (24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(C)).

The proposed growth center will result in a settlement pattern that, at full build-out, is not characterized by development that limits transportation options, especially for pedestrians (24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(I)(ii)).

9.1. Describe the facilities/provisions that exist and are planned for pedestrian and other non-vehicular traffic within the proposed growth center, specifically identifying the steps the municipality is taking to promote a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment within the growth center in general and specifically within the associated designated downtown, village center or new town center.

Waitsfield has encouraged efficient and safe pedestrian travel within its proposed growth center. The existing pedestrian network within the growth center is shown on the Transportation and Facilities Map (Attachment A•7).

Within the growth center, an existing sidewalk extends on the east side of Route 100 from the General Wait House to the Slow Road in Irasville. This section of sidewalk will be replaced by the Route 100 Transportation Path, as described below. In addition to the sidewalks along each side of Bridge Street and the east side of Route 100, Waitsfield's pedestrian network includes several unique features:

- Alleys that connect the Bridge Street Market Place parking lot to Bridge Street;
- A stairway from the Bridge Street Market Place parking lot to Route 100;
- The covered walkway along the Bridge Street Marketplace buildings that front Route 100;
- The walkway in the covered bridge; and
- The walkway from Bridge Street through the park to the Waitsfield Church.

These features create pleasant and interesting spaces for pedestrians and therefore encourage walking. They support village vitality by providing places for people to interact and places for special events such as sidewalk sales and flea markets.

The town has been 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 for a number of years. In 1993, the Vermont Agency of Transportation selected the Route 100 Transportation Path for funding through the Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Program. The intent of the Route 100 Transportation Path is to provide pedestrian and bicycle connections between Waitsfield Village and Irasville. The identified pathway runs from Bragg Hill Road in Irasville north along Route 100 to the Waitsfield Elementary School. The Transportation

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Path will include a five-foot wide sidewalk along one side of the road, four-foot marked bicycle lanes along both sides of the road, granite curbing, enhanced landscaping and lighting, and new crosswalks across Route 100. This project has been designed and is scheduled for construction in 2009, to be coordinated with the town's infrastructure project and VTrans' planned repaving of Route 100.

Additional enhancements identified for development in conjunction with the pathway project include the following:

- Constructing a gravel pathway connecting the Irasville Common;
- Upgrading the Village Path;
- Sidewalk improvements on the west side of Waitsfield Village;
- Sidewalk improvements on Bridge Street; and
- New sidewalks with development in the growth center of Irasville.

Waitsfield Village Parking and Pedestrian Circulation Study (Attachment C•6) recommends sidewalk, access management, traffic calming, parking, and enhancements in Waitsfield Village along Route 100 and Bridge Street. While not all the study's recommendations have been embraced by the town and has not been formally adopted by the Selectboard, it does provide a comprehensive, long-term plan for pedestrian improvements within Waitsfield Village. All of the plan's improvements are intended to encourage walking by providing a safe, interesting, and pleasant environment for pedestrians. Recommendations for implementation from the study included:

- Farr Lane to Valley Players Theatre. Construct a new sidewalk, green strip, and on-street parking on the west side of Route 100. Improve driveway definition and include street trees where possible and pedestrian scale lighting. The recommended concept plan is coordinated with the cross-section proposed for the Route 100 Transportation Path. Estimated Cost: \$494,000.
- Mid-block pedestrian crossings with bulb-outs on Route 100 just north of the access drive to the Bridge Street Market Place lot; at the Village Grocery; and near the Valley Players Theatre, and Old County Road. Estimated cost: \$47,000.
- Route 100-Bridge Street Intersection. Add curb extensions, raised pedestrian crossings, and improve the definition of Farr Lane. Estimated Cost \$99,000.
- Valley Players Theatre to Old County Road. Construct a new sidewalk, green strip, and on-street parking on the west side of Route 100 with street trees and pedestrian scale lighting. Estimated cost \$376,000.
- Route 100-Bridge Street. Install a traffic signal. Estimated cost: \$175,000.
- Place utilities underground. Estimated costs: \$1.6-3.6 million.
- Purchase the Bridge Street Marketplace parking lot to allow implementation of a plan that reorganizes the lot, provides an opportunity to create a riverside park in Waitsfield Village, and helps improve local circulation. Estimated costs: \$357,000.

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In addition, three studies were completed in 1996 that evaluate the feasibility of improving specific segments along or near Route 100 in Waitsfield, Warren, and Fayston, and along Route 17, with the overall goal of developing a coordinated bikeway system through the three towns. The recommended improvements, which have not been specifically endorsed by the Town of Waitsfield, within Waitsfield's growth center include:

- Segment A: Waitsfield Northern Connector. Extends between the Waitsfield Elementary School (and the northern end of the Route 100 Transportation Path) to a trailhead head for the Mad River Greenway at Tremblay Road. An on-road bicycle facility is recommended. The recommended cross-section consists of 10-foot wide travel lanes and five-foot wide bicycle lanes with appropriate pavement markings and signs. Estimated cost: \$43,000 (1995 dollars).
- Segment B: Warren/Waitsfield Northern Connector. Extends from Irasville to the Warren Town Line (and the northern end of the Warren Northern Connector). An on-road bicycle facility is recommended. The recommended cross-section consists of 11-foot wide travel lanes and four-foot wide bicycle lanes with appropriate pavement markings and signs. Estimated cost: \$15,000 (1995 dollars).
- Segment C: Fayston/Waitsfield Connector at Route 100-Route 17 Intersection. This facility would provide the final connection between the proposed Fayston Transportation Path (which follows Route 17) to Route 100. It assumes that Alternative 5 of the Route 100-Route 17 intersection is constructed. Therefore, the Route 17 bridge over Mill Brook would be available for exclusive use as a bicycle and pedestrian bridge. A short, 10-foot wide bicycle path is proposed from the eastern end of the bridge to Route 100. Because Alternative 5 at the Route 100-Route 17 intersection may not be built, this recommendation is less certain. Estimated cost: \$23,500 (1996 dollars).

The Mad River Greenway, when complete, will provide an alternative to Route 100 for travel on foot and bicycle during warm weather, and by ski and snowmobile during winter months. Plans for the Mad River Greenway were developed more than 20 years ago and implementation is ongoing. The Mad River Greenway (also referred to as the Mad River Path) is being developed by the Mad River Recreation Path Association and will eventually link Moretown, Waitsfield, Irasville, and Warren Villages. Currently, the Mad River Greenway does not extend into the growth center (Attachment A•7). The proposed zoning (Attachment D•3) for Irasville take Greenway plans into consideration with the creation of a riverfront, recreation-oriented district.

The Waitsfield Town Plan (Attachment C•1) states on page 84, "As Irasville develops, pedestrian facilities — including interconnecting sidewalks, and a non-motorized 'greenway,' should serve as dominant organizational elements. To support this, it is important that safe pedestrian crosswalks be installed at appropriate locations along Route 100." The Town Plan also includes the following policies on pages 86-7:

3) Maintenance and reconstruction of state highways' town roads and private roads constructed to accommodate new development shall be designed 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

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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 pedestrian circulation and safety and incorporates traffic calming.

13) Irasville and Waitsfield Village should be served with an interconnected network of sidewalks and other pedestrian and bicycle paths, 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.

14) The creation of an integrated walking path network—through acquisition, easements or use of landowner agreements—linking Waitsfield Village and Irasville with the 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, is part of the transportation and recreation plan for Waitsfield and the Valley. To this end, the efforts of the Mad River Path Association are strongly endorsed.

15) The continued operation of a transit system linking Waitsfield Village and Irasville with the Valley's ski areas and regional population and employment centers should be maintained and expanded. To this end, shelters and designated stops, sidewalks and park & ride facilities within village centers should be created and/or expanded.

16) Safe, well marked bicycle lanes should be installed and maintained along Route 100, Route 17 and, to the extent practical, along paved class 2 town roads.

Page 84 of the Town Plan also calls for traffic calming within the proposed growth center. The Waitsfield Street Tree Master Plan (Attachment C•4), prepared by Broadleaf Design in 2000, 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 Irasville Master Plan (Attachment C•3), which also was not formally adopted by the Waitsfield Selectboard and should be considered a conceptual document. 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.

The Irasville Master Plan (Attachment C•2) includes development of a network of sidewalks, paths and trails to promote pedestrian and bicycle travel described as follows. "A trail and greenway system has integrated the Mad River Pathway with neighborhood connections with trails to the Mad River corridor. Each neighborhood has the possibility of walking on paths to access places of work or services. These trails should be integral with the residential development and funded by the developer of those projects."

The town's current and proposed zoning regulations include conditional use review standards that require developers to provide sidewalk and path connections.

Section 5.03(D)(3). Traffic and Pedestrian Circulation. A coordinated, safe and efficient system for vehicular and pedestrian circulation shall be provided on and off-site in accordance with all applicable municipal and state standards. A traffic and/or pedestrian circulation study may be required.

a. Particular consideration shall be given to the number and location of accesses or curb cuts, visibility at intersections, to traffic flow and control, to pedestrian convenience and safety, and to access in case of emergency.

b. For development located along Route 100 in the Irasville Village, Commercial Lodging, Limited Business and Industrial Districts, particular consideration shall be given to limiting access onto Route 100 in accordance with Section 3.2. Within the Industrial District, access to Route 100 from the site is only permitted from town highways.

c. Conditions may be imposed as appropriate with regard to intersections, pedestrian paths and crossings, and the number, location and size of accesses, including the reduction, consolidation or elimination of noncomplying curbcuts, the limiting of access to side or secondary roads, and/or provisions for shared access with adjoining parcels or uses on the same parcel, in accordance with Section 3.02.

The recent construction of sidewalks along the new street by the Northfield Savings Bank in accordance with the Mad River Green master plan is an example of how the town is working with landowners and developers to implement the plans for a pedestrian-oriented village in Irasville.

9.2. Describe the current level of public transit service/facilities serving the proposed growth center and the extent to which improvements in public transit service/facilities are planned for the proposed growth center, specifically citing any steps the municipality is taking to enable transportation alternatives within the growth center in general and within the associated designated downtown, village center or new town center.

The Green Mountain Transit Agency (GMTA) is the primary public transit provider for the Central Vermont Region. GMTA is a full service public transportation provider offering such services as fixed route, deviated fixed route, demand response, commuter route, shopping shuttle, Medicaid transportation and transportation services for the elderly and disabled. GMTA also provides door-to-door transportation service for those who meet the established criteria for the following programs: Ticket to Ride voucher system, Medicaid, Council on Aging non-Medicaid medical transportation, and institutional reimbursed transit. In compliance with the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), GMTA provides door-to-door transportation services for those who are unable to use the non-commuter fixed route bus service.

GMTA services are operated out of three individual locations, which are referred to as the Capital District, Mad Bus, and Stowe/Lamoille. In the Mad Bus service area of the Central Vermont Region, a number of deviated fixed-route services are provided. These services all operate only during the ski season (December through early April) and are all free services. Ridership levels on these routes are quite weather-dependant as the routes are tied closely to skiing conditions. In addition to serving a number of fixed stops, Mad Bus routes will also pick up passengers who request pickup by flagging down the bus while standing in a safe location or request a deviation in advance.

Two routes of the Mad Bus system serve Waitsfield's growth center:

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- Valley Floor Shuttle operates between Lincoln Peak at the Sugarbush Ski Resort, Warren Village, Waitsfield Village, and the Mad River Park. The route operates with one bus Monday – Sunday, 6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. at 60-minute intervals. Ridership on the Valley Floor Shuttle in FY2007 was 5,850 boardings.
- Saturday Evening Service operates between Lincoln Peak, a portion of Warren near the intersection of Route 100 and the Sugarbush Access Road, and Waitsfield Village. The service operates only on Saturday evenings from December through March, plus New Year’s Eve. Service is provided by one bus on an hourly frequency from 6:00 p.m. through 2:30 a.m, with an on-demand function after 11:00 p.m. Ridership on the Saturday Evening Service in FY2007 was 667 boardings.

The draft CVRPC Public Transit chapter of the Transportation Plan includes a recommendation to “Develop a Mad River Valley public transit connection to Montpelier or Waterbury” and lists several potential locations within Waitsfield’s growth center for a park-n-ride lot.

The Waitsfield Town Plan (Attachment C•1) includes the following policy on page 87, “15) The continued operation of a transit system linking Waitsfield Village and Irasville with the Valley’s ski areas and regional population and employment centers should be maintained and expanded. To this end, shelters and designated stops, sidewalks and park & ride facilities within village centers should be created and/or expanded.”

The planned pedestrian improvements within the growth center are described in response to Question 9.1.

9.3. Present the best available information on the current condition, current level of service, and current and projected traffic on routes that will serve the proposed growth center.

Route 100 is the main traffic corridor within the proposed growth center; a detailed assessment of this travel corridor can be found in the Transportation Management Plan included as Appendix A of the draft Mad River Valley Byway Extension Corridor Management Plan (Attachment C•5). As a minor arterial, the official function of Route 100 is to provide for longer trips at higher speeds. This function is challenged as Route 100 passes through Waitsfield Village and Irasville, where the roadway also provides direct access to adjacent properties and also serves a higher level of pedestrian activity. As noted in response to Questions 9.1 and 9.2, conceptual plans have been completed for Waitsfield Village and Irasville that include traffic calming measures, improved access for pedestrians and cyclists, and enhanced aesthetics and quality of life for residents, employees, and visitors.

The 2006 AADT for Route 100 north of the Route 17 intersection within Waitsfield’s proposed growth center was approximately 7,700 vehicle trips and to the south of the intersection it was 5,300 vehicle trips. Traffic volumes vary by month, as evidenced by the data collected at the continuous traffic counter located just north of Route 17 on Route 100. Weekend traffic at this location, is higher than weekday traffic, underscoring the effect of tourism on the transportation system within the growth center. There are two peaks in average daily traffic during the year. The first peak is during the winter ski season from January to March. During this period weekend traffic volumes are significantly higher than weekday traffic volumes. A

Table 5: Level of Service by Road Segment

	Unacceptable LOS per CVRPC	Average Annual Daily Traffic		Volume to Capacity Ratio		Level of Service	
		2000	2020	2000	2020	2000	2020
Rt. 100 Irasville	E	6,500	9,620	0.27	0.37	C	D
Rt. 100 Waitsfield Vill.	E	8,700	12,876	0.36	0.49	D	D
Route 17	E	3,800	5,624	0.16	0.23	C	D

Source: Page 64, CVRPC Transportation Plan (Attachment C•7)

second peak, although not as pronounced as the winter peak, occurs from midsummer to mid-fall. Causes for this peak include summer recreational activities and fall foliage tourism. During this seasonal peak the weekend traffic volumes are higher than the weekday traffic volumes, but the difference is not as large as during the winter peak.

The Central Vermont Region Transportation Plan (Attachment C•7) points out on page 199, “In general, there is congestion along the corridor at Route 17, at the shopping centers, and during ‘event’ days (i.e. ski area closing time, summer concerts, and Columbus Day weekend)”. This congestion is most acute at the Route 100 intersections with Route 17 and Bridge Street. Table 5 presents level of service data for the segments of state highway within the growth center. Previous studies have documented the congestion issues at these intersections as follows:

- Route 100-Route 17: The Route 17 approach is projected to operate at LOS F (average delay of 235 seconds/vehicle) in 2005 during the PM peak hour. In 2025, the Route 17 approach is projected to operate at LOS F during the AM (89 seconds/vehicle) and PM (2141 seconds/vehicle) peak hours.
- Route 100-Bridge Street Intersection: In 2005, the Bridge Street approach to Route 100 operates at LOS E (average delay of 48 seconds per vehicle) in the AM peak hour and LOS F (average delay of 110 seconds per vehicle) in the PM peak hour. By 2010, vehicle queues on Bridge Street are projected to reach the Covered Bridge. (Attachment C•6: Waitsfield Village Parking and Pedestrian Circulation Study)

The Irasville Master Plan (Attachment C•3) suggests that future development of the village center and the amount of development on the west side of Route 100 will eventually trigger the warrants for signalization for either or both of the Slow Road/Route 100 intersections. As development in Irasville proceeds, the town envisions working with the RPC and VTrans to monitor traffic conditions and plan for improvements as deemed necessary. As described in response to Question 9.1, the town is planning for pedestrian-oriented development in Irasville. It is anticipated that a high-density, compact development pattern will reduce reliance on automobiles by growth center residents and employees. Thus, the non-residential development

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within the proposed growth center will generate less traffic than similar types of development outside a such a growth center.

The projected addition of 123 households within the growth center could be expected to generate up to 1,230 additional trip per day based on the ITE standard of 10 trips per household each day. Waitsfield, however, believes that this trip generation figure significantly overestimates additional traffic generated by residential development within the proposed growth center. Given that many growth center residents will have access to basic goods and services, and potentially employment, within walking distance of their home, it is anticipated that the average trip generation rate for households living in the growth center will be less than for households located outside.

9.4. Address the capacity of the road network to accommodate increased traffic, specifically (a) identifying any infrastructure improvements that might be required by the state, municipality and/or private developers to accommodate increased traffic, and (b) discussing the steps the municipality is taking to plan for a transportation network that will be able to accommodate growth and development in a manner consistent with the goals of the growth center program.

The Irasville Master Plan (Attachment C•3) includes the following summary of transportation issues:

The Irasville plan can integrate the long planned Irasville to Waitsfield village sidewalk project as well as other changes to Route 100 that have been contemplated. These include: the improvements to the Route 100/Route 17 intersection as currently scoped by VTTrans, sidewalks extensions along both sides of the road for pedestrian access, improvements to crosswalks on Route 100. Two prominent improvements to Route 100 are the location of modern roundabouts at the intersections of the Slow Road into Irasville. Public participation defined a wide range of conflicts between speeding traffic on Route 100, and a desire to promote a safer pedestrian environment along the road.

Future development of the village center and the amount of development on the west side of Route 100 will likely trigger the warrants for signalization for either or both of these intersections. Whereas a signal could accommodate the traffic volumes, research has indicated that signals do little to slow speeds when they are green, and the necessary turning lanes for signalized intersections would cause a wider and faster Route 100 and multiple lane pedestrian crossings at the intersections. Alternatively, the roundabouts shown would virtually guarantee consistent speeds of 20 to 25 miles per hour through Irasville and the efficiency of the roundabout would allow for a single lane road to be preserved. Slower speeds, a narrower road, and extremely high safety track records are all aspects of roundabouts that make them ideal for Irasville.

While the Irasville Master Plan is conceptual and has not been officially endorsed by the town, its assessment of transportation issues in light of a higher density of development within Irasville is useful for this stage of the planning process. As the concept illustrated in the master plan is translated to on-the-ground development as guided by the proposed Irasville zoning regulations, the need for transportation infrastructure will need to be assessed in greater detail as part of a coordinated effort between private developers, the town, the RPC and the state.

The Waitsfield Town Plan includes the following transportation policy on page 87, “2) Replacement of Route 17 Bridge #38 over the Mill Brook shall not occur in its present alignment. Rather, replacement of the bridge should occur concurrently with the reconstruction of the Route 100/Route 17 intersection in accordance with alternative 5 contained within the 1999 VTrans scoping report, or a variation of that alternative which results in the relocation of the intersection further to the south.” Waitsfield recognizes that this is not the state’s preferred alternative, but believes it is the option in the best interest of the town. No consensus has emerged since the study was completed in 1999 and the project is not part of VTrans’ program development system at this time.

Waitsfield is actively working to develop an interconnected road network that would allow traffic to move between destinations in Irasville without the need for entering and exiting Route 100. The town believes that when the road network as envisioned is fully completed, providing a parallel road from Bragg Hill Road to Carroll Road, it will decrease congestion on Route 100. Currently, the road is being implemented on a project-by-project basis and the town envisions that this process will continue as development proceeds in Irasville.

The transportation projects and enhancements currently planned to accommodate future traffic within the proposed growth center are described in response to Questions 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3.

9.5 If the municipality has adopted an official map, summarize the planned transportation infrastructure delineated on the map within the proposed growth center.

Waitsfield has not adopted an Official Map, however, the Town Plan calls for the adoption of an official map on page 88. Additionally, the Town Plan includes a map showing the planned circulation pattern for Irasville, which includes proposed roads and specifically calls for completing the linkage between Bragg Hill Road and Carroll Road on the west side of Route 100.

10. The applicant has identified important natural resources and historic resources within the proposed growth center, anticipated impacts on those resources and has proposed mitigation (24 V.S.A. § 2793c(e)(1)(B)).

The approved plan and the implementing bylaws provide reasonable protection for important natural resources and historic resources located outside the proposed growth center (24 V.S.A. § 2793c(e)(1)(D)(iv)).

The proposed growth center is planned to protect the state's important environmental, natural and historic features, including natural areas, water quality, scenic resources, and historic sites and districts (24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(D)).

10.1. Identify the important natural resources (headwaters, streams, shorelines, floodways, rare and irreplaceable natural areas, necessary wildlife habitat, wetlands, endangered species, productive forest lands, and primary agricultural soils) located within the proposed growth center, assess potential impacts on those resources and describe the proposed mitigation.

Important resources located within the proposed growth center include streams, floodways, wetlands, and primary agricultural and forest soils. Detailed information about many of these resources can be found in the 2007 Natural Heritage Element Inventory and Assessment for Waitsfield and Fayston, Vermont prepared by Arrowwood Environmental for the Mad River Planning District (Attachment C•9). The purpose of this inventory was to map and assess the natural heritage elements that are important to the preservation of biological diversity in the Towns of Fayston and Waitsfield. 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 Waitsfield Town Plan (Attachment C•1) and proposed zoning regulations (Attachment D•3) include protection for streams and floodplains including a Flood Hazard Overlay District (Table 2.10), which regulates development within the floodplain based on federal standards. The Irasville River and Recreation District (Table 2.03h) also limits development on the lands adjacent to the Mad River within the proposed growth center. Section 3.12 of Waitsfield's Zoning Regulations provides standards for required stream buffers.

The two natural resources most likely to be impacted by the proposed growth center are wetlands and agricultural/forest soils. The wetlands within Irasville have been well-documented including a 2001 assessment and the 2007 inventory. The Irasville Master Plan (Attachment C•3) includes a summary of wetland character, functions and impacts as follows on page 25:

The wetland functional evaluation prepared in 2001 identified five distinct wetland types in the Irasville Growth Center area. These are 1) Wetland Meadow, 2) Forested Wetland, 3) Riparian Wetland, 4) Intermittent Stream, 5) Marsh/Shrub Swamp, and 6) Detention Pond. The wetland types providing the most functions are the Riparian Wetland/Intermittent Stream and the Detention Pond. The wetland type providing the fewest functions is the Wetland Meadow.

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Although the conceptual Irasville Growth Center Master Plan seeks to minimize wetland impacts, it would still result in the loss of approximately 8 acres out of a total of approximately 25 acres of wetland. This represents both a loss of acreage and a loss of wetland functions and values. Compensatory mitigation is used to replace these losses.

Except for two road crossings of the Riparian Wetland/Intermittent Stream, the wetland impacts proposed by the Master Plan impact only the Wetland Meadows northwest of Route 100. In a wetland functional evaluation prepared last year, these wetlands were felt to provide water quality improvement where they receive runoff from roads or parking lots. However, this function is limited because of sloping topography and the inability of this wetland type to detain water on its way to the river. It was felt that these wetlands could also provide wildlife habitat to a small degree if located near other wetland types more conducive to wildlife, but this is restricted to the area adjacent to the river and the forested wetland and marsh/shrub swamp on the southeast side of Route 100.

To mitigate for the impacts to the Wetland Meadows in the Growth Center area, areas for stormwater structures to treat and detain runoff, as well as provide for groundwater recharge, have been indicated on the plan. These areas may accommodate open water features, marshes, and vegetated drainage swales that will slow the flow of water across the Growth Center area, removing sediments, pollutants, and dissolved nutrients, and allowing water to infiltrate into the soil. To meet both wetland and stormwater permitting requirements, detention and treatment of runoff must occur between the Growth Center and the river. This may require that much of the green space within the Growth Center be wetlands or ponds.

Although stormwater detention and treatment may be provided for in less than the area of proposed wetland impact, compensation will at least need to equal the area of impact. Any shortfalls will require that wetlands be created off-site. It appears that approximately 2 to 3 acres of wetland may be able to be created within the Growth Center area itself.

The stormwater detention and treatment structures for the Growth Center should be designed to maximize the amount and value of wetlands created. While stormwater structures are often designed to be simply functional, there is no reason that they cannot be attractive landscape features as well. This can be accomplished by using natural instead of geometric shapes, providing a variety of water depths that create frequent expanses of permanent open water, keeping concrete control structures out of sight, planting a mix of species that will produce a diversity of foliage and flowers, and accommodating human use by integrating footpaths and park structures.

For additional required wetland compensation that cannot be provided in the Growth Center area, wetlands may be created in hydrologically suitable areas in land along the river. While these can potentially be designed to receive and treat agricultural or urban runoff, they may also be used to create other values such as wildlife habitat.

As the Planning Commission worked to revise zoning for Irasville, a decision was made to restrict development on the area's wetlands to a greater extent than suggested in the Irasville Master Plan. As a result, the Civic and Recreation District was proposed and planners envision significant public open space, natural greenway corridors and recreation lands within this district.

Due to its location in the Mad River Valley, 74% of the land within the proposed growth center has soils classified as primary agricultural or forest soils (Attachment A•9: Natural Resources Map). Many of the properties containing these soils have already been subdivided and developed, thus limiting their potential for productive agricultural use. There are only three parcels 25 acres or larger within or partially within the growth center. The largest areas of undeveloped primary agricultural soils include 22 acres on the polo field parcel, 10 acres north of Carroll Road behind the lumberyard, and a total of 12 acres on two large-lot residential properties adjacent to the Mad River. As described in response to Question 4.3, the town is actively working to conserve farm and forest lands outside the proposed growth center. Significantly more prime agricultural soils have been conserved over the past 15 years in Waitsfield than would be lost if the growth center were developed to its maximum potential.

10.2. Identify the historic resources located within the proposed growth center, assess potential impacts on those resources and describe the proposed mitigation, including any steps the municipality is taking to promote the preservation, restoration and/or adaptive reuse of historic structures within the proposed growth center.

The designated village center, which includes the Waitsfield Village Historic District, is largely composed of historic structures including approximately 60 structures listed on the State Register of Historic Places; the entire district is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (Attachment A•11). Waitsfield's current (Attachment D•1) and proposed (Attachment D•3) zoning regulations include a Historic Waitsfield Village Overlay District, the stated purpose of which is to "Maintain the historic character and architectural integrity of the Waitsfield Village Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places." The overlay makes demolition of a historic structure a conditional use and establishes a special process and standards that must be met before such demolition may be permitted. The overlay further requires exterior modifications to be reviewed using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures.

Historic sites and structures within Irasville are identified on the state historic register maps and inventory (Attachment A•13). That survey included 16 structures, although at least one is documented as being demolished and several others have been significantly renovated in conjunction with conversion to commercial use.

There is limited information about archaeological resources within the proposed growth center. The 1988 Resource Protection Plan prepared for the Mad River Planning District delineated areas of archaeological sensitivity based on information obtained from the state Division of Historic Resources, primary and secondary sources, and the physical characteristics of the valley's lands. That plan identified virtually the entire valley as an area of high archaeological sensitivity. There have been relatively few site investigations that have found evidence of prehistoric resources upon which to base a more detailed assessment.

In 1990, the Resource Protection Plan was supplemented by an archaeological study prepared by John Milner Associates. That effort included some limited field work to examine areas that had not received much attention in the past. Existing archaeological studies within the Mad River Valley have unearthed limited evidence of prehistoric use, but most of the findings to date have been post-colonization when settlements and mills formed around water power sites

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along the river. The 1990 study identifies the known mill sites that dotted the shoreline of the Mad River and Mill Brook within the proposed growth center. Historic maps and business directories survive to document their locations and uses, although little physical evidence of those structures remains above ground (Attachment C•8). The archaeological record has likely been compromised by the river itself. Many of the mill structures still in place were destroyed in the flood of 1927. The river channel has also moved over time, with likely impacts to any evidence of historic industrial activity along the river that might have been buried along its shorelines.

Certainly some interesting artifacts from Waitsfield's early history remain in the ground along the river and brook. These resources are protected from development to some degree through the town's current floodplain regulations (Attachment D•1), as well as by the proposed River and Recreation District within Irasville (Attachment D•3) that limits development along the shoreline. Waitsfield's current zoning also includes surface water setbacks (Section 3.12).

10.3. Explain the municipality's choices in locating the proposed growth center in relation to its potential impacts on important natural and historic resources.

Waitsfield Village has been a focal point of community life for more than 100 years. It flourished from the 1880s to the 1980s, appearing much the same today as it did 100 years ago thanks to careful planning and preservation. It is one of three traditional settlements in Waitsfield and, as home to most of the town's civic buildings and functions, is an obvious choice to serve as the core of the town's proposed growth center. Its lands have been largely developed since the 1880s, thus limiting the potential for additional impacts on natural resources. Its historic resources are well identified and protected through the town plan and implementing bylaws as described in response to Question 4.1.

Irasville has served as Waitsfield's principal growth center for nearly 30 years. 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. So it too, is already characterized by a substantial amount of existing development. Irasville is also one of Waitsfield's traditional centers; it had its own church in the late-1800s, for example. The Waitsfield Town Plan (Attachment C•1) and the Irasville Master Plan (Attachment C•3) both recognize that the development of much of the best, least constrained, land in Irasville has already occurred. Provision of water and/or sewer service in the growth center will make lands currently considered marginal or unsuited for development more attractive for construction. It is recognized that this will result in impacts to natural resources, most notably wetlands, within the proposed growth center as described in response to Question 10.1.

However, the relatively small size, 313 acres, of the proposed growth center is a key component of why these impacts to resources within the designated area are an appropriate trade-off. By directing a majority of growth to occur on two percent of the town's land area, development pressure on the remaining 98%, large areas of which are characterized by the presence of important natural resources such as steep slopes, fragile upland ecosystems, critical wildlife habitat and prime farmland, will be significantly reduced and those resources will be protected.

10.4. Summarize the provisions of the approved municipal plan and implementing bylaws that provide reasonable protection for important natural and historic resources located outside the proposed growth center.

The Waitsfield Town Plan (Attachment C•1) places the majority of the lands outside the proposed growth center into either the Forest Reserve District or the Agricultural-Residential District. The goals of those districts are summarized in response to Question 4.3 and can be found on page 136 of the Town Plan. The town's zoning regulations (Attachment D•1) also regulate land based on those two districts and a number of the provisions that provide reasonable protection for important natural resources are also summarized in response to Question 4.3.

Waitsfield has taken a number of steps to identify and protect historic resources, including those outside the proposed growth center. These efforts and their results are described in Chapter 4 of the Town Plan and summarized below:

- In 1987, the Mad River Valley Planning District and the Vermont Land Trust initiated the Rural Resource Protection Project, with the goal of identifying and developing a strategy to protect the Valley's historic resources within their rural context. This resulted in 1988 in the founding of the district's Rural Resource Commission—the first multi-town “certified local government” created under the National Historic Preservation Act. The Rural Resource Project also resulted in the 1988 publication of the Mad River Valley Resource Protection Plan—the first such resource protection plan in the state. The Valley's historic and archaeological resources were identified as a major element of rural character, along with scenic resources, agricultural and open land, and river and trail resources.
- The Rural Resource Commission recently 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 uses, while retaining their historic integrity—most notably 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 local zoning regulations, may help preserve these historic structures.
- The state sites and structures survey also has been updated to include the designation of two additional historic districts—the Mad River Valley Rural Resource District and the Waitsfield Commons Historic District. All three of the town's historic districts are now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- 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 was the first of three designated rural historic districts in the state, and is noted for its fine collection of well preserved historic farmsteads representing the agricultural history of Vermont. Farm complexes date from the early to mid-1800s, and include a number of late 19th century barns. Land along the river

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has been in farming since the valley was first settled in the 1790s. Farming has kept the valley bottom open, in sharp contrast to the forested slopes of the Green and Northfield mountains, bordering it to the east and west.

- The Waitsfield Common Historic District, listed in 2001, was the first settlement in the Valley by those of European descent, and is considered an important 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—from the loss of structures to fire and as a result of new development—it remains largely intact and could serve as a model for new compact residential developments.

The plan includes the following policies related to historic resources on page 48:

2) Development shall be sited and designed to avoid adverse impacts to Waitsfield's historic sites and structures, and historic architectural styles should be considered when developing within designated historic districts.

3) Changes to historic structures should maintain their historic integrity to the extent feasible. Adaptive reuse shall be allowed where appropriate, including the re-use of historic barns, to preserve structures that no longer serve their original function.

In addition to the provisions summarized in response to Question 4.3, historic resources outside the proposed growth center are protected through the town's zoning regulations as follows:

Table 2.06(E)(4). In addition to landscaping requirements, all development shall be sited, designed and landscaped to be minimally visible from Route 100, and shall not have an undue adverse impact on the visual character of the adjacent Mad River Valley Rural Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Section 4.02 Adaptive Reuse of Historic Barns. A. Purpose. To encourage the viability, reuse, restoration and rehabilitation of historic barns which are no longer associated with an agricultural use, by allowing for specified uses not otherwise allowed in the district in which they are located, within the current dimensions of such barns. Any changes associated with the adaptive reuse shall not significantly alter the facade of the building, and shall be in keeping with the essential character of the neighborhood.

H. Resource Maps.

See:

- Attachment A•9: Natural Resources Map
- Attachment A•10: Historic Resources Map

11. The most recently adopted guidelines of the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets have been used to identify areas proposed for agriculture and the proposed growth center has been designed to avoid the conversion of primary agricultural soils, wherever possible (24 V.S.A. § 2793c(e)(1)(C)).

The proposed growth center serves to strengthen agricultural and forest industries and is planned to minimize conflicts of development with these industries (24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(E)).

The proposed growth center will result in a settlement pattern that, at full build-out, is not characterized by the fragmentation of farm and forest land (24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(I)(iii)).

11.1. Justify the municipality's choices in locating the proposed growth center in relation to the conversion of primary agricultural soils and the fragmentation of farm or forest land.

Due to its location in the Mad River Valley, 74% of the land within the proposed growth center has soils classified as primary agricultural or forest soils (Attachment A•9: Natural Resources Map). Many of the properties containing these soils have already been subdivided and developed, thus limiting their potential for productive agricultural use. There are only three parcels 25 acres or larger within or partially within the growth center. The largest areas of undeveloped primary agricultural soils include 22 acres on the polo field parcel, 10 acres north of Carroll Road behind the lumberyard, and a total of 12 acres on two large-lot residential properties adjacent to the Mad River. As described in response to Question 4.3, the town is actively working to conserve farm and forest lands outside the proposed growth center. Significantly more prime agricultural soils have been conserved over the past 15 years in Waitsfield than would be lost if the growth center were developed to its maximum potential. Directing growth to the 313-acre proposed growth center will help reduce development pressure on active farmland in the valley and upland forests located outside the proposed growth center.

11.2. Identify any ways in which the proposed growth center will serve to strengthen agricultural and forest industries (to the extent that they exist) and discuss the steps the municipality is taking to minimize conflicts between development and agricultural and forest industries (to the extent that they exist).

As stated in response to Question 11.1, the compact size of the proposed growth center serves to strengthen agricultural and forest industries elsewhere in town by reducing development pressure on those lands. The high-density settlement pattern called for in the plan and bylaws may also serve to reduce the amount of low-density residential development on or adjacent to working lands, thus decreasing the potential for conflicts. Additionally, Irasville serves as the location for the Mad River Valley Farmers Market, which takes place every Saturday between mid-May and mid-October. Several local farmers sell produce, meats, cheese and handcrafts directly to valley residents and visitors.

SECTION • ELEVEN

11.3 Describe the provisions of the approved municipal plan and implementing bylaws that limit or discourage the fragmentation of farm and forest land.

In addition to the provisions described in response to Question 4.3, Waitsfield's Town plan and implementing regulations include a number of policies and standards that limit or discourage the fragmentation of farm and forest land. Specifically, the Town Plan (Attachment C•1) includes the following policies on page 39-40:

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:

a. productive agricultural land and working farms;

b. primary agricultural soils, including those not presently in production, unless such soils are located on parcels identified as appropriate areas for future development (e.g., village districts, rural "hamlets"—see Chapter 12);

c. high elevation land (above 1,500 feet MSL) in the Northfield Mountain Range;

d. contiguous wildlife habitat and travel corridors;

e. trail corridors, river accesses and areas for dispersed recreation (e.g., hunting);

f. riparian lands and floodplain;

g. identified scenic viewsheds; and

h. the above features where they serve to characterize and/or support the Valley's historic landscape, including land in the Mad River Valley Rural Agricultural District and land adjacent to designated growth centers which reinforce the contrast between compact village and open countryside.

7) The Green Mountain National Forest proclamation boundary should be expanded to encompass land located in the Forest Reserve District.

10) Outside of designated growth centers (see Chapter 12), land subdivisions and land development shall be designed to prevent development on, and minimize fragmentation of, land characterized by primary agricultural soils.

In addition to the provisions described in response to Question 4.3, Waitsfield's Zoning (Attachment D•3) and Subdivision (Attachment D•2) Regulations implement these planning policies through provisions such as the establishment of development envelopes, promotion of PUDs, cluster subdivisions and development of "rural hamlets." The adoption of the Forest Reserve District in the 1990s changed over 4,000 acres of forestland from having a development density of one unit per five acres to prohibiting residential development.

12. The applicant has a regionally confirmed planning process and an approved municipal plan. The approved plan contains provisions that are appropriate to implement the designated growth center proposal. The applicant has adopted bylaws in conformance with the municipal plan that implement the provisions in the plan that pertain to the designated growth center (24 V.S.A. § 2793c(e)(1)(D)).

The proposed growth center is planned to reinforce the purposes of 10 V.S.A. Chapter 151. The proposed growth center is planned in accordance with the planning and development goals under 24 V.S.A. § 4302 (24 V.S.A. § 2791(12)(B)(vii) and (viii)).

12.1. List the dates of the most recent plan adoption, bylaw amendment(s), and municipal plan approval and confirmation of the municipality's planning process by the regional planning commission.

The Waitsfield Town Plan (Attachment C•1) was most recently adopted by the Selectboard on June 27, 2005. Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission approved the plan and most recently confirmed Waitsfield's planning process on November 14, 2006.

Waitsfield's Zoning Bylaws (Attachment D•1) were most recently amended by a vote of the Selectboard on May 2, 2005. The Subdivision Ordinance (Attachment D•2) was most recently adopted by the Selectboard on January 21, 2008 and ratified by voters at the March 4, 2008 Town meeting by Australian ballot. Proposed revisions (Attachment D•3) to the town's zoning, which would affect the proposed growth center, have been drafted. Their adoption will be completed following conditional approval of this growth center application.

12.2. Highlight any additional steps the municipality is taking to implement the purposes of the growth center program that have not been discussed in previous responses, specifically those that relate to the purposes of 10 V.S.A. Chapter 151 or the goals of 24 V.S.A. § 4302.

The responses to the previous questions have adequately described the steps Waitsfield is taking to implement the purposes of the growth center program.

I. Administrative.

See:

- Attachment E•1: Municipal Resolution
- Attachment E•2: Intent to Apply Letter to CVRPC
- Attachment E•3: Intent to Apply Letter to CVEDC
- Attachment E•4: RPC Letter of Confirmation
- Attachment E•5: Minutes of Public Hearing

• FINAL APPLICATION FOR GROWTH CENTER DESIGNATION •

• Waitsfield, Vermont • 25 April 2008 •