

TOWN PLAN
FOR
ARLINGTON, VERMONT

Adopted September 8, 2008

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The Arlington Town Plan was prepared by the Arlington Planning Commission with assistance from the Bennington County Regional Commission.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Vermont's Planning and Development Act places considerable emphasis on local planning. Town plans are to provide a basis for the type, location, and extent of future development in a community. These documents also should address a number of goals ranging from environmental protection to affordable housing, and should be compatible with the Regional Plan and with the plans of other municipalities within the region.

Arlington last prepared an updated Town Plan in 1996. That plan was written to be consistent with the Planning and Development Act and its "Act 200" amendments. An effort was also made to ensure that the plan was compatible with the Regional Plan and with the Town Plans of Sandgate, Sunderland, and Shaftsbury. Town plans are to be updated every five years to reflect changing conditions and focus on current priorities. This Town Plan retains much of the content of the 1991 plan, while incorporating more current data, acknowledging changes that occurred during the previous five years, and adjusting certain policies and objectives to reflect present day priorities.

The Town Plan is intended to serve as a tool to guide local residents in their efforts to control the development of their Town and to ensure that Arlington will continue to be an outstanding community in which to live. The importance of private property rights is recognized by the Plan, as is the need to legally safeguard property values through public actions deemed appropriate by the community. The Plan is to be consulted when making public policy decisions, evaluating public investments, reviewing development proposals, and when considering new or amended bylaws and ordinances. The Plan also should provide clear guidelines to individuals who propose new developments in Arlington. In fact, the Plan serves as a regulatory document in Act 250 proceedings, where conformance of a proposed development with the Plan is one criterion required for project approval. Essentially, this Town Plan will serve as the basic planning document for the Town for the next five years.

II. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Town of Arlington is situated in west-central Bennington County in southwest Vermont. In shape it is nearly square, each side being about 6 1/2 miles long and oriented nearly north-south or east-west. The southern border of the Town lies somewhat north of north latitude 73°00', and the east border a few miles west of west longitude 73°00'. Arlington is bordered on the north by the Town of Sandgate, on the east by Sunderland, and on the south by Shaftsbury. New York State abuts its west side. Its highest elevation, at the summit of Grass Mountain, is 3,109 feet; its lowest elevation is about 525 feet - at the western edge of Town where the Batten Kill leaves Vermont. The five highest peaks - all in the Taconic Range -- are Red Mountain, 2,846 feet; The Ball, 2,755 feet; Spruce Peak, 3,033 feet; Grass Mountain, 3,109 feet; and Big Spruce Mountain, 2,338 feet.

Topography of Arlington is hilly to mountainous. Well over half the Town's area consists of steep-sided cliffy hills and mountains at elevations higher than 1,200 feet. Even where topography is subdued, notably in the east-central part of Town, steep hillocks and ridges compartmentalize the valleys and lowlands into discontinuous segments. Extensive flat or level stretches (slopes flatter than 3%) are few, and mostly occur on floodplains or marshy areas. Slopes are commonly steeper than 8% even in valleys and lowlands, and at higher elevations are more commonly steeper than 25%.

The Batten Kill, a tributary of the Hudson River, is the master stream draining the area. It enters northeast Arlington from Sunderland and for about two miles flows south-southwest. Its course then arcs around to a generally northwest flow direction between Red Mountain and The Ball and Big Spruce Mountain. This orientation is maintained for some three and one-half miles until it assumes the largely westerly course it follows to the New York State border. With one exception, all other streams in Arlington are tributaries of the Batten Kill. Of these streams, Green River, Roaring Branch, Fayville Branch, Warm Brook, and Dry Brook are the largest; only Dry Brook rises in Arlington. A headwater segment of Little White Creek in southwest Arlington is not a tributary of the Batten Kill. Small swamps and marshes are fairly common along stretches of most streams, and are rather sparse elsewhere. The only ponds in Arlington are manmade, and many of these are subject to rapid siltation.

The hard, solid bedrock that underlies all of Arlington is mostly buried a few to many feet, but it crops out at the surface at many places as ledge. It consists entirely of metamorphic rocks; schist is the most abundant rock type, especially in the higher mountains, but quartzite, marble, dolomitic marble, and phyllite predominate in the lowlands. All these rocks are more than 450 million years old. Above them - discontinuous and patchy in extent but commonly thickest in the lowlands - lie a variety of glacial deposits; the glacial deposits are so young - mostly less than 20 thousand years old - that they are loose and unconsolidated. They include till, sand and gravel, and clay. In several parts of the lowlands, glacial sand and gravel deposits are thick enough to form undulating hillocks, ridges, and terraces. Some sand, silt, gravel, and muck are being deposited today on floodplains and in depressions.

Most soils have developed in these unconsolidated materials, and they display a wide range of soil characteristics and soil capabilities. Many soils, especially in the lowlands, are intrinsically of high fertility and satisfactory thickness, but stoniness and slope lessen their potential for crop cultivation with machinery. Areas of prime agricultural soils do occur in parts of the lowlands throughout Arlington. At higher elevations, stoniness, slope, and inconsiderable thickness preclude agricultural use other than as forest for most soils.

Precipitation, as rain or snow depending on the season and temperature, is fairly evenly distributed throughout the year. Average precipitation is 43 inches per year, an amount sufficient for maintenance of a continuous plant cover and for normal human needs. The cool, temperate climate makes for only moderate losses from evaporation.

Almost all the land in Arlington at elevations higher than 1,200 feet is forested, as is a considerable portion of the land at lower elevations. Though none of the forest is primeval, much of it is well grown forest lands of mixed hardwoods and evergreens with interspersed pure stands. In the lower lands, brushy areas are interspersed with open fields. Fields and lawns surround most residences. Much cropland is kept open by cultivation, and considerable expanses are used as pasture, or mowed for hay or for scenic reasons.

III. HISTORY OF ARLINGTON

The settlement of Arlington began in 1763 with the arrival of several families of European descent from Newtown and New Milford, Connecticut. Nathan Canfield came in 1768 and settled along the Batten Kill where he built a saw and grist mill. Abel Hawley settled near Canfield and opened a popular tavern in his house. Later the Canfield family started the quarrying and milling of marble from outcroppings along the Batten Kill. It was one of the first mills in Vermont.

The Town of Arlington had been chartered in 1761 by Benning Wentworth, the Colonial Governor of the Royal Province of New Hampshire. New York claimed that the towns chartered by Wentworth belonged to the Royal Province of New York. The contest over land continued during the Revolution and the years following. In 1777 Vermont formed a government and requested admission to the Union. This was denied, but the citizens of Vermont remained loyal to the cause of American liberty; although as an independent government.

In 1778 Vermont elected its first Governor, Thomas Chittenden, who settled in Arlington in that year. He remained in Arlington for nine years. He was re-elected Governor until 1797. Vermont was admitted to the Union in 1791, the first new state following the Revolution.

This period saw the construction of many frame houses and the development of small water-powered industries in and around the Arlington and East Arlington villages.

The railroad era began about 1850 when the Western Vermont Railroad chose a route through Arlington Village. Businesses at that time included a marble works, blacksmith shop, sash and blind shop, a bending mill, broom handle shop, and various others. Shortly before, Martin Chester Deming, a wealthy merchant and land owner, built his home in Arlington, now the Arlington Inn.

The Town Hall was erected in 1859.

The first large scale industry, a shoe-peg factory, was built in 1863. Much of the plant's output was exported to Germany and Russia. The business operated until 1881. The buildings are now part of Miles Lumber Company.

In the 1870s the Canfields organized the Arlington Car Manufacturing Company to produce railroad cars. The business was not successful and closed in 1877. The manufacture of railroad car wheels followed, but it, too, failed.

The 1880s saw a variety of commercial and industrial enterprises in the area, including a hotel, two general stores, hardware store, wagon shop, chair factory, planing mill, shoe shop, and about 400 inhabitants.

Early in the next century the Arlington Refrigerator Company occupied the car shop buildings and in 1910-11 built the Town's largest industrial

complex to produce ice-boxes. To house employees, due to a shortage of local housing, the company developed the Munn Terrace neighborhood, the first employee housing in Arlington at affordable prices.

The Arlington Water Company was formed in 1895 and water mains were laid along Water Street (Route 313), north and south on Route 7A for short distances, and on Deming Lane (next to the Arlington Inn). The East Arlington Water Company, established in 1902, merged with the Arlington company in 1912 to provide the two villages with a reliable source of water benefiting residents, commerce and industry, including Arlington's principal industry, the refrigerator company.

Farming, confined to the valleys, spread westward along the Batten Kill flood plain and lower slopes and southward from the Village along what is now Route 7A. The higher elevations that dominate the Town provided forestry products and a thriving logging industry.

Early in the 20th century Vermont began to attract summer residents and tourists. Many chose homes in Arlington. Some were artists, musicians, and writers, and a few stayed year-round. The best known were artist Rockwell Kent, composer Carl Ruggles who founded the Arlington Choral Society, the popular artist Norman Rockwell and, of course, author Dorothy Canfield Fisher.

The 1920s brought continued building activity in Arlington, mostly residential; however, the refrigerator company, never very profitable, closed in 1929 and the buildings stood empty for many years. This was disruptive economically and socially to the area.

In 1939 large-scale industry returned when the Mack Molding Company acquired the refrigerator company buildings for the production of custom-molded plastics. Increased local employment and housing construction followed. Mack Molding remains Arlington's principal employer, and has recently expanded in Town.

In the years that followed, Arlington's business district underwent several changes with the demolition of four major nineteenth century buildings, the destruction of the hotel (Flanders Inn) by fire, and the loss of the commercial block at Russell and Main Streets by fire. Also, the altering of several houses for commercial use changed the appearance of the village center. However, the Town continues to convey a rural and historic character to residents and visitors alike. Local interest in preserving that character is overwhelmingly evident.

IV. OVERVIEW - A SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Town of Arlington, located in Bennington County in the southwestern corner of the State of Vermont, was chartered in 1761. As a part of the independent government of Vermont, it joined the United States when Vermont was admitted to the Union in 1791 as the first new state following the Revolution. In the early years, farming, logging, quarrying, and small crafts were the principal occupations in the area. The railroad era began in the mid-nineteenth century and the first large scale industry, a shoe-peg factory, was built in Arlington in 1863. A railroad car factory followed shortly thereafter along with a variety of commercial enterprises.

Various industries have come and gone in Arlington. In 1939 Mack Molding Company acquired several vacant buildings in the village for the production of custom-molded plastics. This company remains Arlington's principal employer and has recently constructed a new corporate headquarters and manufacturing facility on Warm Brook Road near Route 313. A number of smaller businesses are important employers as well. Seasonal residents and tourism also play a significant part in the economy and way of life.

Arlington's architectural heritage reflects its historic past, and some 140 local structures have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Arlington Village Center, East Arlington Village, and the West Arlington Green typify the rural New England pattern that was so prevalent in colonial and early Federal times, and there is a desire by both residents and visitors to retain this setting.

Yet, historic preservation must work hand-in-hand with growth and change. The Town's population has increased in recent years, although the highest growth rate occurred during the 1970s. At the outset of the 21st century, the Town still qualified as a rural community with a population of less than 2,500, but the concentration of development in a relatively small area along Routes 7A and 313 gives a sense of greater density. A healthy, diverse economy exists along with a strong resident workforce. Housing is in good repair and reasonably adequate for current needs. Projects undertaken by affordable housing organizations have resulted in the restoration of numerous existing buildings and the construction of twelve new elderly apartment units in the center of Arlington. Based on conservative straight-line projections (1980-2010, BCRC projection 2007), the population growth rate will remain modest, and is expected to be 2,512 by 2010. Many factors must be taken into account to assure that any future growth is in the best interests of the community and its residents.

One factor which contributes to the Town's appeal is its rich and varied natural resource base. The forested peaks and ridges of the Taconic Range, the Batten Kill, Green River, and the Roaring Branch, the lush valley floor between the mountains, and abundant wildlife typify the scenic beauty of Arlington. From these stem recreational and economic opportunities, aesthetic pleasures, environmental quality, and good public health. Town policies and planning activities must be directed toward the preservation and enhancement of these attributes which are part of daily life in Arlington.

A sustainable position between natural resources preservation and reasonable growth and development should be incorporated in a town's land use regulations. Arlington's zoning and subdivision regulations have been designed to promote preservation of the natural rural, agricultural, and scenic qualities of the countryside while providing for growth in a controlled manner. These regulations should be enforced with an eye toward realizing these objectives, but these regulations alone cannot fully implement the goals of this plan. New creative planning and zoning tools, strategic public investment, economic incentives, and land conservation should all be used together to strike a balance that will sustain the type of community expressly preferred by residents and visitors.

A number of public or quasi-public facilities and services are important to Arlington residents. The most densely populated sections of Arlington are served by the Arlington Water Company system. Because it is unlikely that the Town will have a municipal sewer system at any time in the foreseeable future, it will be particularly important to maintain a safe and reliable public water supply for the village areas. In the problematic area of solid waste management, Arlington must continue to work cooperatively with other area towns to develop long-term disposal solutions. The Town's public buildings and land represent both community assets and limited resources; careful planning is needed to ensure that adequate facilities will be available to support municipal functions in the coming years. Finally, the Arlington Fire Department and Rescue Squad are efficient and relatively low cost (to taxpayers) services that must receive continuing support from the community.

Arlington's transportation system is confined to the valley areas. State Route 7A runs north and south along the east side of the Town, while Route 313 runs east and west from Sunderland to New York. A network of town roads services residential and business locations off the arterial highways. The Vermont Railroad roughly parallels Route 7A to the east. Arlington has made great progress in providing needed pedestrian facilities: sidewalks now connect the village centers of Arlington and East Arlington and safe walking to the schools, Post Office, Town Hall, and public library is now available. The Green Mountain Community Network, the regional public transit provider, operates the Green Mountain Express, which provides medical and demand-response as well as fixed route service. The Batten Kill's lengthy flow through Arlington necessitates a number of bridge crossings requiring State and Town care and expense. Signage and public transit are other transportation concerns. Providing these services involves a substantial capital investment and high operating costs paid largely from tax dollars. Routine maintenance to avoid costly repairs and prudent expansion of the system into new areas are important concerns for the Highway Department, the Select Board, and the property owners.

Arlington, with its kindergarten through twelfth grade school system, is fortunate in being able to provide high quality in-town educational services for all of its children. Extensive improvements to Fisher Elementary School and a new wastewater disposal system for the schools have recently been completed. Recent renovations have been made to the

High School, and a new Happy Days Playschool building has been constructed. The District will continue to work with the Town to ensure that new capital projects will not overburden the Town's taxpayers.

Few towns have the recreational opportunities afforded to those living in Arlington and their friends and guests. The Batten Kill alone is a recreational treasure, to say nothing of the woods, fields, and mountains rising from its banks. Along its banks, too, is the Arlington recreational park for golf, tennis, soccer, swimming, and picnicking. Cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, hunting, and hiking are just "out the backdoor" for most in Arlington. The recreation scene is not trouble-free, however; nor is it without some effort and expense for those who enjoy it. The recreation park, used by many, must be managed and maintained, mostly by volunteers. The Batten Kill is often victim of overuse, and a system of limiting use at times may be necessary. Select Board participation to assure public access to natural areas may involve Town funds and dedication. Citizen interest (i.e. Batten Kill Watershed Alliance, etc.) is a must.

As mentioned previously, Arlington's housing stock is in good repair and reasonably adequate for current needs. As elsewhere, housing costs are high and often beyond the reach of local citizens. State and Federal Governments encourage municipalities to resolve housing shortages, but the lack of funds for subsidizing affordable housing puts the burden on the local taxpayer and remedial actions seldom get off the drawing board. The recent affordable housing projects have made some progress in improving this situation, and there has also been a Habitat for Humanity house in the town, but more can always be done. The Town should continue to cooperate with affordable housing developers to assess the need and potential for developing or rehabilitating additional housing with projects such as the one noted earlier.

Arlington, as any modern community, utilizes many forms of energy - fuel oil, gasoline, electric power, and wood. Few renewable energy sources other than wood are used. In view of rising energy costs and diminishing supplies, it behooves residents and visitors alike to practice energy conservation measures in their modes of transportation, housing, work, and play. Public policy must also reflect this behavioral pattern.

Health care in Arlington is more than adequate. A family medical practice and a general dental practice are located in the village center. A local nursing service and a rescue squad serve the Town, and a full-service hospital is a few miles away in Bennington. Medical and dental specialists are close by, also. Rising health care costs are a concern of the practitioner as well as the patient. Local, State, and Federal governments must come to grips with this problem in due course if the present level of care is to continue. Additionally, community support for current health care services must be sustained.

The Town of Arlington is governed by a five-member Select Board and a number of other elected and appointed officials. Funds for running the Town's affairs are generated largely from local taxes. Additional funds come from the State, from local services provided to residents and to neighboring towns and, in small measure, from the Federal Government.

Local taxes are levied on residential, commercial and industrial property owned by those living in Arlington, and by those living elsewhere. Town expenses involve administrative services, appropriations for support agencies and capital items, fire protection, highway construction and maintenance, Town Hall facilities, and law enforcement. The Select Board is responsible for preparation of an annual operating and capital expense budget for review and approval by the voting public. In a similar fashion, the Arlington School Board is responsible for the school system and the funds required to run it. As with the Town, school budgets are reviewed and approved by the voters. Town and school costs are rising and have been over the recent past. Dependence on property taxes for funds will become increasingly burdensome to property owners. Maintenance of service levels is essential, but costs must be continually scrutinized to ensure economical management of Town affairs.

The principal objective of the Arlington Town Plan is to ensure that the wishes of the majority of Arlington residents are realized.

V. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

5.1 Introduction

The Town of Arlington, with its distinctive villages, contains structures and areas that vividly reflect the Town's rich history and architectural heritage. The preservation of Arlington's historic character has many benefits. The existing rural village character attracts tourists to the Town, thereby providing a valuable revenue and employment base. Arlington's unique character also provides residents of the Town with an important sense of their heritage and a link with the past, thus promoting a sense of identity and cohesiveness within the community.

5.2 Districts

There are three distinct historic areas that have been recognized in Arlington. A brief discussion of each is included below.

1. Arlington Village

Local interest in preserving the historic structures in Arlington Village (Figure 5-A) resulted in the placement of 140 structures in the Village on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Park Service is responsible for administration of the "National Register," with coordination in our State through the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. Designation on the National Register resulted in the generation of a wealth of valuable information, will open the door for some financial benefits for the restoration of historic properties, and will enhance local awareness and pride in the Town's history.

This strong interest in the historic character of Arlington Village is understandable. The Town's first settlers established themselves in the area of the present Arlington Village in 1763. Over the next two centuries Arlington Village remained a center for commerce and civic functions. As the early families became established they built more comfortable and stately dwellings, so that by 1869 most of the historic buildings we see in Arlington Village today had been built. The residences, churches, and commercial buildings in the Village include a variety of architectural styles that together create the area's unique historic character.

2. West Arlington Green

The West Arlington Green area (Figure 5-B), with its classic covered bridge, church, Grange hall, and old farmhouses set against a backdrop of rolling green mountains, is certainly one of the most photographed and painted landscapes in all of Vermont. The oldest structure in the district (a former schoolhouse which burned and was rebuilt in the 1930's and is now a residence) was built around 1800, with the rest of the

buildings constructed over the course of the next 100 years. Consequently, the buildings in the district document changes in prevailing architectural styles which occurred over the course of the 19th Century.

3. East Arlington Village

As one approaches East Arlington Village (Figure 5-C) from Ice Pond Road, there is a definite feeling that the scene before you represents the quintessential rural Vermont village. Indeed, the neat white church buildings and restored residential, commercial, and civic buildings framed around a cascading stream, do form an ideal image of the Town's rural village heritage.

5.3 Policies

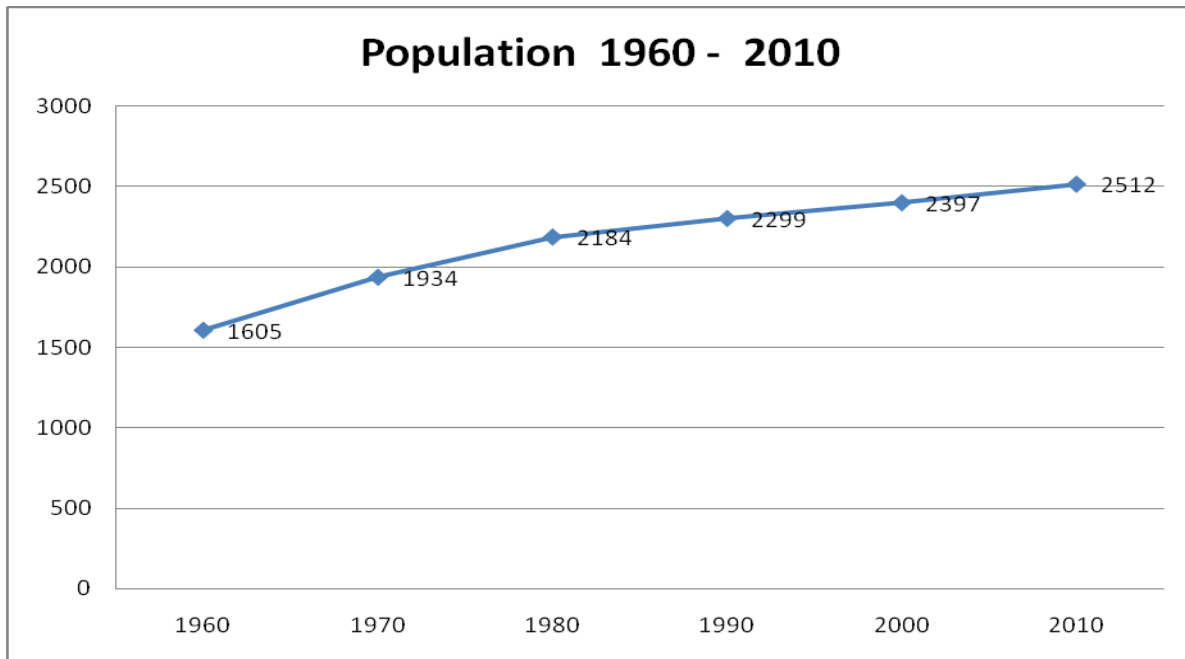
1. Buildings and sites of historical or architectural merit shall be preserved, whenever possible, and new developments shall be compatible with existing historic buildings and development patterns.
2. Encourage the renovation and adaptive re-use of historic structures which might otherwise be lost to deterioration.
3. Developers should incorporate historic sites near proposed developments into their plans and provide compatible architectural designs and/or screening and buffers, as appropriate.

VI. POPULATION, HOUSING, AND THE ECONOMY

6.1 Population Trends, Density, and Distribution

Arlington's population has grown at a fairly steady rate since 1950, although the rate of increase has declined over the past two decades. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population is 2,397. Current straight-line projections estimate that the Town's population will continue to increase moderately over the next 10 years; estimated population for 2010 is 2,512 (at 4.8% growth rate). The growth rate in Arlington was 4.3% between 1990 and 2000, while Bennington County grew at a rate of 3.2% and the State of Vermont at a rate of 8.2%.

Arlington Population Trends



Source: U.S. Census, 2000
 BCRC straight-line population projection, 1980-2010

<u>%Chg1960-70</u>	<u>%Chg1970-80</u>	<u>%Chg1980-90</u>	<u>%Chg1990-2000</u>	<u>%Chg2000-2010</u>
20.5%	12.9%	5.3%	4.3%	4.8%

Historic development patterns in Arlington have been dictated largely by topographic conditions. Existing developed areas are located along Route 7A, in East Arlington, and along the Batten Kill valley through West Arlington. The northwestern portion of the Town is dominated by Red Mountain, and the southwestern portion of the Town by several other mountains in the Taconic Range. Red Mountain has had larger development in the past 10 years. These areas are steep, remote, and contain little soil capable of supporting permanent development. In fact, although the

Town's population is less than 2,500, the population density (on developable land) is relatively high (Table 6-A), because the population is concentrated in a rather small area.

Table 6-A

**Population and Population Density for Arlington
and Surrounding Vermont Towns (2000 U.S. Census data)**

	A	B	
	Population	Sq. Mi. Topographically Suitable for Development	Pop. Density (A/B)
Arlington	2,397	13.6	177
Manchester	4,180	16.4	255
Sandgate	353	4.7	76
Shaftsbury	3,767	24.7	153
Sunderland	850	5.9	145

6.2 Housing

The Town of Arlington contained 1,200 total housing units; 138 of which are considered seasonal, recreational, or occasional use units. (2000 U.S. Census) The average sale price of a home in Arlington in 2006 was approximately \$200,400.00.

Dividing the Town's 2000 population (2,397) by the number of year-round housing units (1,062) yields a figure of 2.26 persons per housing unit. Arlington's population is expected to increase by 115 persons by the year 2010; at 2.26 persons per unit, approximately 51 new housing units would be required to house the expanded population. If the number of seasonal units increases at the same rate as the year-round units, approximately 6 of the total new housing units built will be for seasonal use. These estimates would seem well within the Town's assimilative capacity. However, if a different projection formula is used, i.e., assuming the number of permits issued annually for new housing units remains relatively constant from 2006 on, approximately 56 new units would be created in Arlington by the year 2010. While this number of new homes could be accommodated in Arlington during this time period, it is obviously prudent for the Town to develop policies and guidelines for growth that will limit the impact of any amount of new development on municipal finances and the rural and aesthetic character of the Town.

Table 6-B

Building Permits Issued for New Dwelling Units in Arlington, 1998-2007

<u>Year</u>	<u>Building Permits Issued</u>
1998	7
1999	3
2000	20
2001	14
2002	12
2003	15
2004	13
2005	16
2006	14
<u>2007</u>	<u>12</u>
TOTAL	126

6.3 Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Arlington had a resident labor force of 1,294 persons. Of the total labor force, 1,251 were currently employed in 2000. Of those employed persons, travel patterns indicate that 500 residents (40%) held jobs within the community. Approximately 50% of employed residents held jobs within other Towns in Bennington County, 4% held jobs in other Towns in Vermont, 4% held jobs in New York, and 2% held jobs elsewhere.

594 non-residents held jobs within the community, commuting into Arlington from outside of town. This distribution of employment reflects both Arlington's central location and its significance as a sub-regional job center.

Arlington has a fairly diverse economy for a small rural community with major manufacturing employers such as Mack Molding and Quadra-Tek, together with sizeable employment in the tourism, retail trades, services, and construction sectors. The Town's natural resource base provides some employment opportunities in forestry, recreation, and agriculture.

Figure 6-C shows the distribution of incomes by class, using tax return data, for Arlington relative to Bennington County as a whole. The percentage of incomes in each class is comparable between Arlington and the county. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, median household income (\$40,590) and median family income (\$49,412) for Arlington were both slightly above County levels. Median household income is just slightly below the State level, and median family income is above the State level. 6.4% percent of Arlington's families have incomes below the poverty level, compared to that of the county (7%) and state (6.3%) (2000 U.S. Census).

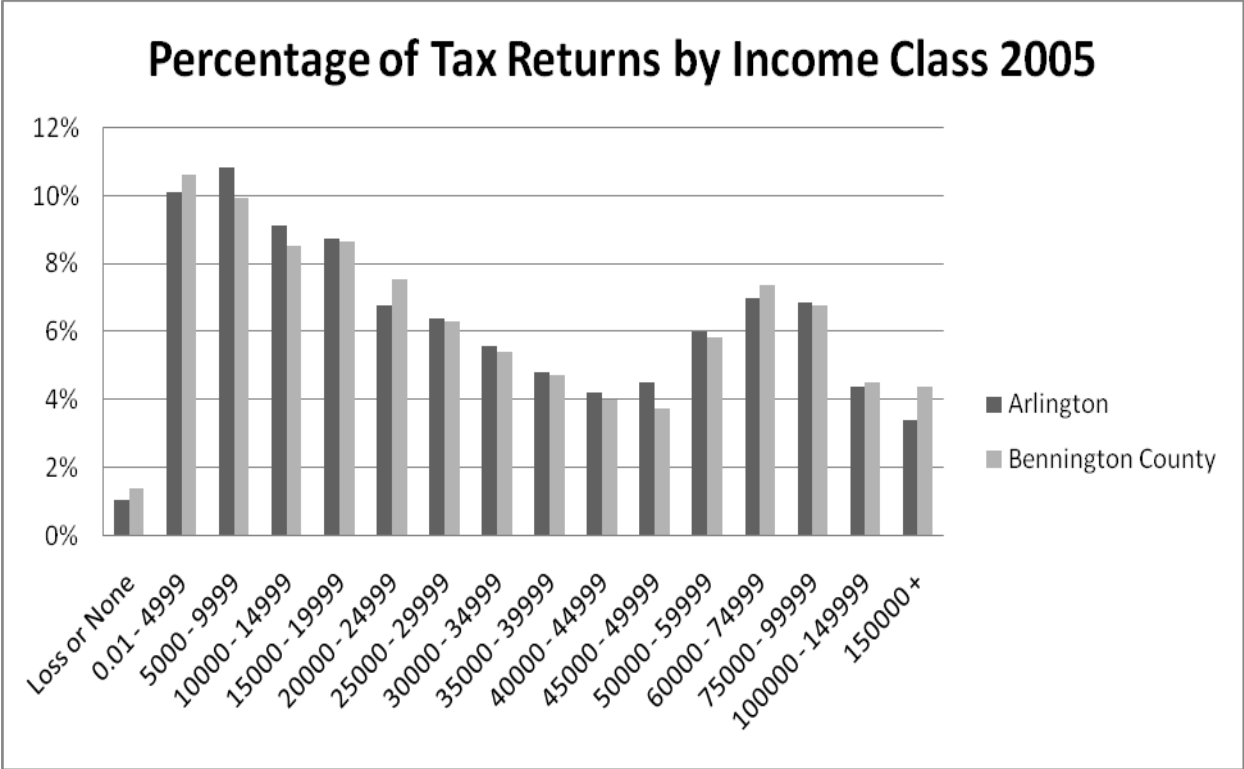


Figure 6-C. 2005 Tax Returns by Income Class for Arlington and Bennington County, Vermont.
 SOURCE: VT Dept of Taxes.

6.4 Policies

1. The Town should continue to support a mix of economic activities, and should seek to attract new businesses which provide rewarding jobs and good wages while not adversely impacting the quality of the natural environment.

Table 6-D

POPULATION AND PROJECTIONS
Bennington County

TOWN	CENSUS			PROJECTION	
	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Arlington	2184	2299	2397	2512	2633
Bennington	15815	16451	15737	15705	15673
Dorset	1648	1918	2036	2265	2520
Glastenbury	3	7	16	18	20
Landgrove	121	134	144	157	171
Manchester	3261	3622	4180	4734	5361
Peru	312	324	416	483	561
Pownal	3269	3485	3560	3715	3876
Readsboro	638	762	809	912	1028
Rupert	605	654	704	759	819
Sandgate	234	278	353	434	533
Searsburg	72	85	96	111	128
Shaftsbury	3001	3368	3767	4219	4725
Stamford	773	773	813	834	856
Sunderland	768	872	850	897	946
Winhall	327	482	702	1028	1507
Woodford	314	331	414	477	550
TOTAL	33345	35845	36994	38973	41058

SOURCE: BCRC Straight-Line Projections utilizing 1980-2000 data.

VII. NATURAL RESOURCES

One of Arlington's greatest assets is its rich and varied natural resource base. The mountains and forests of the Taconic Range, the Batten Kill and its pristine tributaries, valleys, agricultural land, clean air and water, and abundant wildlife all contribute to the Town's appeal. These resources provide recreational opportunities, serve aesthetic values, protect environmental quality and public health, and support a host of economic opportunities. This chapter will identify and briefly describe these resources, and outline strategies to protect their positive values.

7.1 Rivers and Streams

The Batten Kill, a trout stream of national significance, is certainly one of the most prominent and important natural features in the Town (Figure 7-A). Rising in northern Bennington County, the "Kill" bisects the Taconic Range as it flows through the heart of Arlington toward its confluence with the Hudson River in New York State. The river's characteristics in Arlington - a swift current, cool clear water from mountain tributaries, a gravel substrate, and the unspoiled beauty of the surrounding landscape - make it an ideal resource for fishing, swimming, canoeing, "tubing," sightseeing, and other recreational activities. The Green River, Roaring Branch, Fayville Branch, Warm Brook, Dry Brook, and numerous minor streams afford a similar array of opportunities to residents and visitors.

Beginning in the 1980's, the Batten Kill wild trout population suffered a decline whose cause was not clear. The problem was severe enough to cause the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department to impose "catch and release only" rules on the river while they conducted studies to try to determine the sources of the difficulty. After extensive studies of the trout habitat by federal and state scientists, it was concluded that the most likely primary cause is the lack of sufficient cover and shelter for the trout. The fish need overhanging trees, large woody debris in the stream, undercut banks, large rocks, and deep pools. They need these habitat features for protection from predators, from floods, from ice, from hot weather, and from low water.

The local non-profit river group, the Batten Kill Watershed Alliance, has partnered with the state and federal officials in order to engage in habitat restoration projects for the fishery. The goal is to restore the fishery to a level of productivity that will allow sustainable harvesting. Such a recovery would presumably lead to the return of the seasonal influx of anglers that has been an important revenue source for local businesses.

In general, the Town, the community residents, riparian landowners, and all river users should make an effort to be good stewards of the river and its wildlife. This means planting vegetated buffer zones to filter runoff and reduce erosion, allowing streams access to flood plains, picking up trash, respecting both private and public property, and washing equipment and clothing used in the river to avoid spreading aquatic invasive species like didymo algae.

A number of issues must be addressed to ensure that these waterways continue to provide such benefits to the community. First, recognition must be given to the fact that the Batten Kill and its watershed is a regional resource: pollution emanating from Sunderland would affect water quality in Arlington, canoes departing from the river's bank in Arlington may paddle through several towns in New York, and so on. Consequently, regional cooperation in river planning is a must. Second, while direct and indirect pollution sources have been abated in recent years, continued vigilance is needed in enforcing environmental regulations for new and existing development. A third issue deals with recreational use of the Town's rivers and streams. With fishing, canoeing, tubing, and swimming all popular recreational activities for residents and a growing number of visitors, concerns have developed over both potential environmental effects (e.g., litter, stream bank erosion, etc.) and conflicts between the various user groups. The River Steward sponsored by the Batten Kill Watershed Alliance may be useful in this effort.

A number of these problems may be mitigated by providing increased and properly designed public access areas along the Batten Kill and its tributaries; such access could disperse some of the use and thus reduce environmental impacts and conflicts among the different recreational uses. The problem of access has been studied and a way to provide such additional access has not been found, and some do not even think that more access that encourages more use is the right approach. At this time, it appears that better management of existing access is the only option. Of course, regardless of any such efforts, the main channel of the Batten Kill will continue to support intense and varied recreational use. Cooperation among principal users will become increasingly important, as noted in Chapter XII, Recreation.

Finally, the Town must exercise appropriate control over land development near rivers and streams to prevent degradation of recreational and scenic values.

The Town of Arlington has recently purchased a 12-acre property known as Yellow Barn Farm with about 1400 feet of Batten Kill frontage on Route 313W. This property will be used for additional public access for angling. This will take some of the pressure off the Recreation Park access across the river, but it would also be useful to have additional public access further downstream. The Town plans to partner with the Batten Kill Watershed Alliance in order to improve the trout habitat in that reach of the river.

7.2 Wetlands and Floodplains

Wetlands are lands transitional between aquatic and terrestrial systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water. A wetland has one or more of the following three attributes: (1) at least periodically, the land supports predominantly hydrophytic vegetation; (2) the substrate is predominantly undrained hydric soil; and (3) the substrate is nonsoil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year. Benefits provided by wetlands include: flood and storm water control, maintenance of surface and groundwater quality, open

space and aesthetic appreciation, wildlife habitat, ecological research and educational opportunities, and sources of nutrients for freshwater food chains.

As could be predicted by prevailing topographic conditions, wetlands in Arlington are concentrated on the eastern side of the Town and major wetland complexes are found along Warm Brook and the Batten Kill (Figure 7-A). In fact, a majority of Arlington's wetlands lie alongside rivers and streams. Because these wetlands are located in the same lowlands where most of the Town's future development will occur, special attention must be given to the protection of these natural areas.

The Town has adopted a Flood Hazard Bylaw to regulate development in floodplain areas (Figure 7-A). These regulations are designed to protect property and the health and safety of the population against the hazards of flood water inundation, and to protect the community against the costs which may be incurred when unsuitable development occurs in areas prone to flooding.

7.3 Ground Water

A sufficient supply of clean groundwater is crucial to existing homes and businesses in Arlington, and to any future development in the Town. The Villages of Arlington, East Arlington, and the Chiselsville area of Sunderland are served by the Arlington Water Company which obtains its water from groundwater sources near the "Catamount Cobble" area of Sunderland and on Red Mountain. Outlying areas are served primarily by individual wells and springs.

Identification and protection of the recharge areas (Figure 7-A) for the Town's public water supplies are of paramount importance. These areas supply the water for a substantial portion of the Town's population and businesses, and will be relied upon for new growth that will occur in and around existing villages. Cooperative planning with the Town of Sunderland and the Arlington Water Company will obviously be necessary to ensure the protection of these irreplaceable resources. A critical step in this protection effort is to carry out a thorough scientific hydrological study to establish the correct boundaries of the aquifer.

The river valleys and lowlands in Arlington have a relatively high potential for supplying groundwater. Considerable new development will occur in these areas, and will rely on these groundwater resources. Strict enforcement of local and State health ordinances, protection of wetlands, and prevention of hazardous waste contamination in these areas will be necessary to ensure a continued supply of clean groundwater for the Town well into the future.

7.4 Water Quality Policies

1. The Batten Kill is an extraordinarily valuable regional resource that shall be preserved in a natural free-flowing state.
2. An undisturbed buffer of at least 50 feet should be maintained wherever possible between rivers, streams, and wetlands, and any

developed area to ensure that water quality and natural ecosystems are protected. Where a 50 foot buffer is not attainable or where 50 feet is inadequate to protect the resource, site-specific measures to provide protection should be required.

3. Developments located near waterways used by the public should provide for screening of structures from those waters, protection of important ecological areas, and control of erosion.
4. Recreational uses such as fishing, canoeing, kayaking, and hiking are appropriate in natural settings in and along wetlands, rivers, and streams. Development planning should include provisions for public access to these resources. The intensity of use and access points should be limited in particularly fragile ecological areas.
5. Important wetlands must be preserved in their natural state. Any development or activity that would negatively impact any of the wetland values described in this section should not be permitted.
6. Development in flood hazard areas must be carefully controlled in accordance with the Town's flood hazard regulations.
7. Aquifers and groundwater recharge areas must be protected from activities or development that would adversely affect the quantity or quality of available groundwater.
8. The municipal subdivision and health regulations, and the regulations of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources must be strictly enforced to protect individual water supplies.
9. Developments or activities that would adversely affect the quality of the Town's surface or ground waters shall not be permitted.

7.5 Actions

1. Identify, map, and describe important water resources. Document the extent to which each area contributes to: environmental quality, public health, recreational opportunities, fish/wildlife habitat, and aesthetic values. Identify situations that could result in reduced resource values or access, and initiate appropriate protection measures (i.e. regulatory action, acquisition of land or easements, pollution abatement, and so on).
2. Prepare amendments to the zoning bylaw for protection of water resources. Specific amendments should include: river protection regulations (including setback requirements), well head protection area regulations, and wetland protection

regulations (consider Vermont wetland regulations promulgated by the Department of Water Resources).

3. Continue to monitor use of the Batten Kill and work with other interested groups to consider actions that will ensure that the quality of the river environment and of diverse recreational activities are maintained.
4. Cooperate with other municipalities, the Bennington County Regional Commission, and the State in planning for the use and protection of regional water resources such as the Batten Kill. Work with the Towns of Sunderland, Dorset, Manchester, and communities in New York State in the protection of the Batten Kill.
5. Actively participate in local and state regulatory proceedings that could potentially impact important water resources.

7.6 Air Quality

Air is a resource that is critical to our well-being, but receives little public attention until it becomes polluted. The quality of the air in Arlington is generally excellent, and the Town should endeavor to ensure that it remains clear and clean.

Threats to air quality may come at a number of levels. The increasing cost of disposing of solid waste may have the undesired effect of encouraging individuals to burn refuse; if such burning is not prevented, town-wide air quality problems may result. New developments in Arlington - commercial, industrial, or residential - should not emit pollution that would adversely affect air quality. The Town must also be aware of potential sources of air pollution lying outside its municipal boundaries, as air-borne pollutants often exert their most pronounced impacts many miles from their source. At the very least, an effort to educate residents of these facts should be undertaken. Burning trash is illegal and will damage the health of people who breathe the smoke; especially babies and the elderly, and anyone who has pre-existing lung conditions.

7.7 Air Quality Policies

1. Developments or activities that would adversely affect the Town's air quality shall not be permitted.
2. Encourage compliance with the state prohibition on the open burning of trash.
3. Encourage compliance with all state and federal regulations regarding wood-burning stoves and furnaces.

7.8 Agricultural Lands

The best agricultural soils are located along the Batten Kill valley in West Arlington and in the southeastern corner of the Town (Figure 7-C). A substantial percentage of the valley lands were farmed at one time, and

many of the marginally productive upland areas were used to pasture sheep, cattle, and other livestock.

Arlington's remaining agricultural lands and soils offer a variety of values that may warrant preservation. The bucolic scenery of the Town is greatly enhanced by these open fields which contrast with and afford striking views of the surrounding forested mountains. The mix of open fields and woodlands also provides the habitat necessary to sustain a large and diverse wildlife population. Moreover, a forward looking community should strive to preserve its best agricultural soils for some future time when local farming may once again become economically important or necessary. Although some of the Town's agricultural land has been lost, a considerable amount can still be preserved if a thoughtful and effective planning process is undertaken in the near future.

A necessary first step in this planning process is the identification of important agricultural lands. A land evaluation and site assessment (LESA) program can be a most effective tool in the preparation of such an inventory. A LESA program provides a means of assessing the relative significance of parcels of agricultural land. The "land evaluation" is a measure of the productive capability of a parcel of land based on its constituent soil types; the "site assessment" measures other characteristics of the parcel: location, size, quality of structures and equipment, aesthetic appeal, and so on. By ranking parcels in this way it is possible for the Town to focus preservation efforts on its most valuable farm land.

Several means are available for protecting agricultural land in Arlington. Because of the limited number of properties containing active farm land or good agricultural soils, it may be possible, after consultation with the land owners, to identify specific preservation strategies for each. For the most valuable properties, consideration should be given to the acquisition of development rights, through gift or purchase, by a land trust or other conservation organization. Funding opportunities such as those available through the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust may be available to support these efforts.

Participation in Vermont's Use Value Program (tax levy based on the property's use for agricultural rather than development purposes) is an option available to people whose land is in active agricultural use.

Creative development techniques such as transferable development rights and cluster subdivision can provide incentives to preserve agricultural land as part of the land development process. Both of these techniques allow developers to build greater densities in appropriate areas provided that important open lands are preserved. The Town should also carefully assess public investments in roads and other infrastructure to ensure that they do not promote the deleterious development of important agricultural areas.

7.9 Forest Lands

Extensive forests cover much of Arlington, particularly in the mountain areas. Numerous smaller woodlots are found throughout the valley. All of

these woodlands help to prevent soil erosion and flooding, contribute to air and water quality, and provide valuable timber, wildlife, recreational, and aesthetic resources. A number of woodland owners in Town also have active and successful maple sugaring operations. Fortunately, since much of the Town's forest land is located in rugged mountainous areas, relatively little has been lost to development. In fact, with the decline in agricultural land use over the past several decades, the amount of forested land has actually increased. Nonetheless, preservation of this resource, and the public's ability to enjoy its many benefits, is of great importance to the Town.

Many of the preservation strategies for agricultural lands are equally applicable to forest lands. Most of the Town's upland forests are presently zoned to permit only forestry, recreation, and other uses that will preserve the resource; this zoning designation is proper and should be maintained. A regional forest land evaluation and site assessment (FLESA) developed by the BCRC provides some useful information that can be used to help planning for Arlington's forest resources.

7.10 Land Policies

1. Public sector planning and investments should promote growth in village areas and discourage development that would degrade the Town's rural character - particularly along principal approaches to the town - or which would result in the loss or fragmentation of important agricultural or forest lands.
2. Developments on agricultural lands shall be planned so as to conserve, to the extent possible, the viability, or potential viability, of the site for agricultural use. Development shall be planned so as not to significantly diminish the values afforded by woodlands on or near the site.
3. Extractive forestry operations shall take all measures necessary to minimize soil erosion, impacts on streams, and changes to the natural appearance of mountain or ridge tops.
4. Encourage the maintenance of open fields and meadows.

7.11 Earth Resources

The extraction of earth resources is not presently a very major economic activity in Arlington. In the past, a limited amount of mining, especially of marble, occurred in Town. A number of small sand and gravel pits are presently being worked to support the area's construction industry. The Zoning Bylaw contains special regulations designed to minimize the environmental impacts of earth products removal, and to assure restoration of the site once work is completed.

The extraction and processing of earth resources and the disposal of wastes must not have an unduly harmful impact upon the environment or surrounding land uses and development. An extremely high level of scrutiny must be exercised over any operation proposing to extract earth resources from a stream bed.

Upon completion of the extracting or processing operation, the site should be restored, as required by the Zoning Bylaw, and left in a condition suited for an approved alternative use or development.

Amend the Zoning Bylaw to require the posting of a surety bond by applicants for earth products extraction permits to ensure proper and timely site restoration.

7.12 Important Natural Areas

Arlington contains a number of important natural areas that warrant special protection (Figure 7-B). Following is a brief description of several such areas.

1. (A-D) Rare plant habitats. These areas have been identified by the Vermont Natural Heritage Program. The plants in these areas are rare either because they have very particular habitat requirements, because they are at the edge of their range, because they are especially vulnerable to disturbance, or because they have difficulty reproducing for unknown reasons. Preservation of these areas is critical in maintaining valuable ecological diversity.
2. Canfield Pines. An exceptional stand of old-growth white pine, even-aged with diameters mostly 30-40 inches d.b.h., and average heights of 150 feet. The age of the stand has been estimated at 250 years.
3. Kents Cave. A solution cave extending westward approximately 230 feet and averaging eight feet in height and width, but varying to larger rooms and narrower passages. Near the western end of the cave a dome chamber extends upward about 65 feet. A stream flows along and beneath the main passage.
4. Falls on Red Mountain Stream. Several falls ranging to eight feet in height adjacent to rock cliffs located in an interesting mixed oak-hickory stand.
5. Hidden Falls. A waterfall nearly 40 feet high within a three-sided cliff on an unnamed brook.
6. Folds in rock strata. Strong, nearly recumbent folds in the Bascom-Beldens formation of marble-dolomite-phyllite exposed on the face of a highway cut.
7. Site of the State Seal Pine. This tree, destroyed in a violent storm on May 9, 1978, was possibly the largest white pine in the country. The tree supposedly inspired the designer of the Vermont State Seal, which shows a large pine tree in the center. A portion of the tree was made into a large table which sits in the Arlington Town Hall as a commemorative.
8. Cedar Rock. This exposed ledge is a popular destination for day-hikers and offers outstanding views of the Town of Arlington and the Green Mountains to the east.
9. Flag Rock. A dramatic rock ledge on the south face of Red Mountain.
10. (A-B) Deer Yards. These areas are crucial to the survival of deer herds in the region as they provide shelter and browse for deer during winter months.

11. Bear Travel Corridors. These corridors are to be monitored in conjunction with the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife.

* The above list represents an inventory of important natural areas in Arlington, but is not necessarily inclusive of all such areas.

7.13 Natural Areas Policies

1. An activity or development in the vicinity of an important natural area must be carefully planned so that adverse impacts are avoided.
2. Public access to important natural areas should be maintained whenever possible; however, rare plant habitats and other fragile ecological areas need to be protected from human disturbance.

VIII. LAND USE

8.1 General Description

The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act states that a comprehensive plan for a rural town may include "a land use plan consisting of a map and statement of present and prospective land uses indicating those areas proposed for forests, recreation, agricultural, residence, commerce, industry, public and semi-public use, and open spaces reserved for flood plain, wetland protection, or other conservation purposes; setting forth the present and prospective location, amount, intensity, and character of such land uses and the approximate timing or sequence of land development activities in relation to the provision of necessary community facilities and services." The Act also suggests that the Town Plan include other sub plans such as an energy plan, an educational plan, etc., but the land use plan is of overriding importance because virtually all activities within the confines of a municipality take place "on the land."

Often, land use is thought of as where one may build a house or start a business. These, perhaps, are the most common concerns associated with land use, but the full range of land utilization is almost endless. At one end is the fully developed, inner city where the evidence of the land itself is barely noticeable, while at the other end is the wilderness area, such as Lye Brook, where humankind's presence is only to be found in the footprints left on the forest floor. In between these extremes there are the homes and businesses at lesser densities than in the city, the fire houses, landfills, roads and bridges, playgrounds, golf courses, utility lines, libraries, farms, woods and fields, ski areas, public buildings, water and sewer lines, and on and on. All require judgement as to need and placement in the framework of a town's land use plan.

The land itself often dictates what may be placed upon it or how it may be used. Bedrock near the surface or a high water table may restrict construction of certain buildings, especially residences, requiring on-site wastewater disposal systems. Flat, fertile land encourages farming, but is often most prized for commercial development or housing due to lower development costs. Steep slopes and flood plains limit many uses, while scenic vistas are highly valued for the very joy of viewing from them. Environmental concerns have generated an interest in protecting entire ecosystems, thus making it easier to protect wildlife habitat, wetlands and streams, lakes and rivers. To act effectively, these ecosystems must be identified and studied.

The variation found in Arlington's topography makes a good case study for land use planning. The Town's boundaries, much like other Vermont towns, form a six-by-six mile square - approximately thirty-six square miles. To the north is Sandgate, to the east Sunderland, and to the south Shaftsbury. Washington County in New York State forms the western border. The Taconic Mountains dominate the Town and account for more than two-thirds of its area. The Valley of Vermont, coming up through Bennington and Shaftsbury and eventually ending in the Champlain lowlands, runs along the east side of the Town in a relatively narrow strip between the Taconics and the Green Mountains. A third outstanding surface feature is

the Batten Kill, a river which turns westward in Arlington and cuts through the Taconics, forming a narrow valley as it flows toward New York State and the Hudson River.

The Taconic Mountains are a jumble of peaks and ridgelines spanning western Massachusetts, eastern New York, and southwestern Vermont running along Bennington County's west side into the northwestern reaches of Rutland County. They cross Arlington from the southwest corner to the northeast corner at the Sunderland town line. South of the Batten Kill valley the peaks rise to elevations of 3109' on Grass Mountain, 3033' on Spruce Peak, 2755' on The Ball, and 2338' on the great ridge of Big Spruce. The area is entirely wooded, rugged, and generally uninhabited at elevations in excess of 1200'. Two valleys, Black Hole Hollow and Murray Hollow, lie at lower elevations, but are only accessible by car from New York. Topographically, they are entirely separated from the rest of Arlington.

The portion of the Town north of the Batten Kill valley is dominated by Red Mountain which rises steeply above the river to an elevation of 2846 feet. It is bounded in the east by the Valley of Vermont, and continues north past the Arlington town line. Rock formations in the Taconics are predominantly slate, schist, phyllite, shale, and limestone with a thin overburden of soil and forest debris.

The Valley of Vermont, as geographers use the term, is a relatively flat lowland between the Taconics on the west and the Green Mountains on the east. Elevations seldom exceed 800'. The valley runs roughly from Bennington in the south to Brandon in the north and, at most, is only a few miles wide. It is in this valley that most of the agricultural activity and commercial and residential development in Arlington has occurred.

The Batten Kill, with headwaters in Dorset, flows south through Manchester, the northwest corner of Sunderland, and into Arlington where, at Arlington Village, it cuts west to flow through the Taconic Range. On the north side it is bounded by Red Mountain and on the south by The Ball and Big Spruce Mountain. The valley formed in this manner is narrow, and at river level is mostly flood plain suitable only for farming and recreation, although a substantial number of residences were constructed there prior to the enactment of local flood hazard zoning regulations. Above the flood level, homes dot the entire valley and hillsides north and south of the river, approaching the 1200' elevation limit on residential development.

Major tributary streams to the Batten Kill in Arlington include the Green River flowing south from the Taconics in Sandgate, and the Roaring Branch, Fayville Branch, and Warm Brook flowing out of the Green Mountains to join the Batten Kill just north of the village of Arlington. With the mountains and the Vermont Valley, the Batten Kill is a part of a breathtaking landscape that has played a part in Arlington's past and present and will surely have an important role in its future.

8.2 Land Use Regulations

Influenced by topography and other physical limitations, Arlington's land use planning has been fairly conventional to date. The Town is currently divided into seven zoning districts (Figures 8-A and 8-B) with the zoning bylaws providing the purpose for and the permitted and conditionally permitted uses in each district. The districts are Village, Commercial-Industrial, Commercial-Residential, Commercial-Residential-Rural, Planned Industrial, Rural, and Forest and Recreation.

The Village District, occupying most of the Urban Compact on the land use map, encompasses what is commonly called Arlington Village and East Arlington Village. The stated purpose is to provide for compact residential development. The permitted and conditional uses in the Village District do promote compact residential development by permitting a two unit per acre density level and allowing an even greater density for multi-family housing.

A number of areas of varying size within the Village District, and just outside the district along Route 7A, are zoned for commercial and industrial, as well as residential, uses (Figure 7-B). These "CI," "CR," and "CRR" districts are intended to promote sound economic development and to provide convenient shopping and service areas for residents and visitors. The Commercial-Industrial (CI) Districts include the areas around the original Mack Molding facility and Miles Lumber, HBH Prestain, and the site of the former Wilcox Sawmill. The Commercial-Residential (CR) Districts are found in the historical "center of Town" along Route 7A from approximately the Post Office to the Arlington Inn and include a variety of established commercial uses. Many of the buildings in this area are historic structures, making the architectural performance standards which apply to new commercial uses particularly important. Commercial-Residential-Rural Districts allow the same uses as the CR Districts, but require a larger minimum lot size because they are located outside of the Village area. These districts recognize the existing commercial development along Route 7A, and also provide a discrete area for limited commercial uses along Route 313 in West Arlington to serve residents of that area.

The Rural District is extensive, taking in virtually all of the valley floor area outside of the Village District at elevations below 1200'. A broad expanse on either side of Route 7A from the Shaftsbury line to the southwest corner of Manchester is in the district as well as the Batten Kill and Green River Valleys in West Arlington. Its purpose is to ensure the preservation of the natural rural and scenic qualities of areas which are planned to be predominantly residential and agricultural in character. The permitted uses reflect this. This district has experienced substantial growth in the past and will continue to see considerable growth in the future. Regulatory action which serves to improve the planning for this district include clustering incentives for new residential developments in areas where open space protection is deemed important and flood hazard regulations that govern projects in this sensitive area. The Planning Commission now strongly recommends clustered development. The maximum density in conventional subdivisions has been maintained at one acre per lot to avoid legislating sprawl and the

consumption of suitable land in large lots. Where suitable, cluster development may allow greater density to slow the conversion of agricultural and woodland to building lots. Subdivision regulations which encourage the use of residential clustering are relied upon to protect significant natural, scenic, and environmentally sensitive areas. A non-regulatory tool that can be used, and should be encouraged, for open land preservation is the acquisition of development rights by land trusts.

The Forest and Recreation District, located at elevations in excess of 1200 feet and in the two valley areas of Murray Hollow and Black Hole Hollow, is intended to protect the Town's forest resources and watersheds. The purpose also implies that little or no permanent development should occur because of the difficulty of public access and the provision of facilities and services. The uses are confined entirely to forest industry and recreational endeavors. The district is the largest in area in Arlington, and there are very few year-round residences in the district.

The Planned Industrial District is located north of Route 313 between the railway and Warm Brook Road. It provides a suitable location for Mack Molding's world headquarters, expanding the local tax and employment bases while maintaining the Town's rural character. Avoidance of air, water, and noise pollution is stressed to reduce impact on the surrounding residential uses.

8.3 Future Growth in Arlington

The preponderance of the mountain lands and the fairly extensive flood hazard areas along the Batten Kill and its tributaries compress conventional development into a relatively small area in relation to the Town's overall size. Something less than a fourth of the Town's acreage is available for future growth and herein lies a problem for Arlington's residents. Residents and non-resident property owners have expressed the opinion that Arlington should strive to retain its present character as a small New England community centered on a village core (the Village District) surrounded by low density housing, farming, and open space. Moreover, the present mix of local business and industry, tourist activity, and recreational pleasures should be maintained. Future development will be market driven. There has been a tendency in recent years to develop at higher elevations where steep slopes limit safe access for municipal services and the construction may affect water quality at lower levels.

If a planning build-out were drawn for the area, that is, if the full extent of development were shown, the pictorial result would hardly be the community its residents are trying to preserve. Conceivably such development could occur under existing land use regulations. It is, therefore, the policy of the Town of Arlington to be guided by the following principles with respect to the land and its use and development upon it within the municipality.

8.4 Policies

1. Employ the latest planning tools and techniques in arriving at land use decisions, including the utilization of State and Regional Commission services as needed and the engagement of private consulting services when expert advice is required.
2. Work with a land trust to preserve important open lands, protect natural resources, and maintain the Town's rural character.
3. Encourage preservation of important open space areas through regulations or other appropriate methods.
4. Designate critical land areas where development should not occur or where special protective measures should be taken. Areas to be reviewed for this designation are flood plains and floodways, wetlands, stream banks and water courses, steep slopes, special geological and potential archeological sites, important agricultural lands, unique or particularly scenic landscapes and natural areas, productive wildlife habitat, and other areas considered necessary for the maintenance of an important ecosystem.
5. Advocate residential and commercial clustering to preserve farm lands and open space, and to reduce construction costs for roads, land preparation, and public utilities.
6. Espouse a development design process that takes into account the entire area in which the development occurs to produce compatibility with neighboring structures, the terrain and its contours, transportation patterns, traditional usage, and cultural and historic values.
7. Mandate construction phasing and building permit quotas when development activity threatens to exceed the Town's ability to provide essential services.
8. Maintain and enforce the Town's land use regulations which are intended to: (1) support the concept of a village center with rural surroundings, (2) reflect the topography of the land and its suitability for use and development, (3) provide for the availability of goods and services and employment opportunities for residents, (4) satisfy housing needs at all levels, (5) provide recreational opportunities in parks and playgrounds, and in fields, forests, and streams, (6) provide for the safe and economical provision of public services and the maintenance of a transportation system, (7) preserve natural areas in sufficient quantity and quality to be self-sustaining ecosystems, and (8) support farming and forestry and buffer them against conflicts with residential development.
 - a) New residential development should reflect the objectives of this plan, the purpose of the zoning district in which it is located, and the standards set forth in the municipal subdivision regulations.

- b) New commercial and industrial development must conform to all relevant conditions and performance standards enumerated in the municipal zoning bylaw.

Land use planning is an on-going process requiring the support of the Board of Selectmen, the Planning Commission, the Zoning Board of Adjustment, the Land Use Administrator, and residents of the Town. The cooperation of those who build on or use the land for gain is also essential. It is only in this fashion that the desired character of Arlington can be achieved and maintained.

IX. Public Utilities, Facilities, and Services

Arlington residents rely on a number of public and quasi-public facilities and services. These community assets must be properly managed and supported so that they will continue to contribute favorably to the quality of life in Arlington. Separate chapters in this plan are devoted to the Town's educational and recreational facilities, and to the area's health care services. Topics discussed in this chapter include: water supply and wastewater disposal; electric, telephone, wireless cell phone towers, and cable television services; solid waste; public buildings and land; fire, emergency, and public safety services; child care; and certain other facilities (e.g., libraries, community center).

9.1 Water Supply and Wastewater Disposal

The villages of Arlington and East Arlington, and the Chiselsville area of Sunderland, are served by the Arlington Water Company. The Arlington Water Company is a privately owned community water supply regulated by the Vermont Department of Health and the Public Service Board. This system draws most of its supply from a groundwater source located in the "Catamount Cobble" area of Sunderland; the source for the west side of the system is a spring on Red Mountain. The Vermont Department of Health has delineated wellhead protection areas for these sources (figure 7-A).

The Arlington Water Company system was constructed in 1894. A new storage reservoir for fire protection has been completed, and various water mains have been replaced and upgraded, in part to meet the needs of the new affordable housing development. Additional water main upgrades are planned for the near future. The estimated capacity of the system is 684,000 gallons per day (GPD), and with a current usage of 204,000 GPD, the system is capable of accommodating new growth if system improvements proceed on schedule. Such new connections should be encouraged in, but restricted to, designated village areas.

Approximately 1,200 people rely on the Arlington Water Company system for their water supply. Consequently, protection of the quality and quantity of the groundwater which feeds this system is critical. Contamination of the water would result in dangers to public health and would necessitate very costly remediation. The Town must strictly enforce its health regulations to ensure that individual wells and springs are not contaminated.

Through enforcement of the Town health regulations, the Health Officer and Board of Selectmen are responsible for seeing that existing polluting systems are corrected and that all new systems are properly designed and installed. These efforts must be continued to ensure that drinking water supplies are not contaminated and that surface and groundwater pollution is minimized. Innovative wastewater disposal technologies may be necessary in Arlington and East Arlington villages - sites of existing and planned high density development - where soil conditions are often only marginally suitable for wastewater disposal. An example of such a system is the wastewater disposal facility recently constructed to serve the elementary and high schools.

9.2 Solid Waste

Disposal of solid waste has become a difficult and costly problem throughout the country, and the situation in Arlington reflects this national trend. Arlington has become part of an 8-town Solid Waste Implementation Plan (SWIP), which has been completed and approved by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. The SWIP will help guide the Town in the direction of lowering the amount of material that is landfilled by increasing recycling.

Individual households can contribute to solid waste solutions, and save a considerable amount of money, through waste reduction, recycling, and composting. Residents should take advantage of the free recycling center at the transfer station; paper, cardboard, glass, and several types of metal and plastic can be recycled. Consumers should also be careful to purchase products which are packaged in recyclable materials whenever possible. Household Hazardous Waste collection events, which enable residents to dispose of toxic materials in a safe manner, have been held with the support of Arlington and other area towns. In addition, recent Household Hazardous Waste collection events have included free disposal for residents of Freon items, scrap metal, and electronic waste. Finally, backyard composting of certain organic wastes can help reduce the volume of waste which must be landfilled or incinerated.

9.3 Public Buildings and Land

The Town of Arlington owns a number of properties which are used for various purposes. The most visible and widely used properties are located in or near Arlington Village: the Town Hall, the Town garage, and the recreation park. The recreation park is discussed in some detail in Chapter XII.

The Post Office has moved to a new specially-built private building, just south of the center of town; a sidewalk to it has been provided. The Town Hall contains the Town Clerk's office, Selectmen's office, Lister's office, Treasurer's office, a meeting room, and files and work space for other Town officials such as the Land Use Administrator. The Town Hall was recently renovated to move the Listers, Land Use Administrator, and the Treasurer to the first floor of the building for ease of public access. These renovations were mostly done by volunteers.

The following is a list of town-owned properties:

Property	Estimated Value
Town Hall	\$312,100
Town Garage	\$108,100
Schools	\$11,997,900
Library	\$662,800
Recreation Park	\$71,200
Fire Company	\$318,200
Fire Company	\$171,200
Rescue Squad	\$113,300
Food Shelf	\$87,800
Evergreen Cemetery	\$46,800
West Arlington Cemetery	\$52,000
State Seal Tree Lot	\$12,000
Remember Lot	\$200
Mountain Land	\$11,100
Black Hole Hollow School Land	\$52,700
Old West Road - .53 acres	\$6,400
Crow Hill Road - .11 acres	\$8,200
Red Mountain Intersection	\$800
Building (0012-1-22-1)	\$5,700
Parking Area (East Arlington)	\$
Yellow Barn	\$112,500
TOTAL	\$14,162,500

9.4 Arlington Fire Department

The Arlington Volunteer Fire Department responds to an average of 100 calls for assistance per year. Arlington had 54%, Sunderland 31%, Sandgate 11%, and mutual aid to our neighbors 4% of the calls. Throughout last year, our active members spent nearly 2,000 hours responding to these calls and 2,000 hours in training.

As the cost of protecting our communities increases every year, we are faced with the tough job of a balanced and justified budget. This becomes a hard job when the price of emergency equipment continues to rise at a faster rate of speed than our budgets. With several items in our budget out of our control, such as fuel oil, fire hydrants, and insurances, we can only hope for a minimal increase. This in turn keeps us from purchasing equipment that would benefit a department with a manpower issue at 50% of its calls. Remember that it's your lives and property that we are here to protect. In 2006, an SCBA cost \$2,900 - now, that cost is \$4,500; 4" hose x 100' was \$390 - now is \$420; fire nozzles cost \$790 - now that cost is \$890; Bunker Gear was \$1,400 - now it is \$1,800; pagers were \$350 - now they are \$500. To outfit one firefighter, it costs approximately \$2,500; at 30 members, the total cost is \$75,000. We are actively pursuing grants, when we hear about them, for any qualifying equipment. However, with fiscal cutbacks on every level, there are fewer grants that we qualify for, thus sending us to you, the community, for support. We appreciate all you do to help us in our times of need.

In closing, we would like to remind everyone to PLEASE TEST and CHANGE SMOKE DETECTOR BATTERIES TWICE A YEAR. Also practice fire prevention at

home, at work, and have a family meeting spot at the end of your driveway. Also PLEASE POST YOUR 911 NUMBERS CLEARLY at the end of your driveway if you cannot see your home from the road. Please help us help you. Dial 911 for all emergencies or (802) 375-2323 for non-emergencies.

9.5 Arlington Rescue Squad

Arlington Rescue Squad would like to thank all the residents of Arlington, Sunderland, North Shaftsbury, and Sandgate for their continued financial support through appropriations, private donations, and personal bequeaths.

Arlington Rescue responds to an average of 360 emergencies in a given year. Arlington accounted for about half of the calls, with the remainder of the calls to our surrounding towns and mutual aid.

The vast majority of people on the Arlington Rescue Squad volunteer their time to train and respond to calls. In addition to all the hours of class time to become a first responder, and EMT-Basic or EMT-Intermediate, we are training and learning new techniques. With the new procedures, EMT-Intermediates have new treatments and medications for patients with difficulty breathing and cardiac problems, greatly increasing the quality of pre-hospital care for our patients.

Also PLEASE POST YOUR 911 NUMBERS clearly at the end of your driveway when your house cannot be seen easily from the road. If we cannot find your 911 number, we cannot find you, and precious time can be lost. You can purchase the reflective signs at the squad house Monday-Friday from 6:00AM until 6:00PM, or by calling our non-emergency phone number at 375-6589.

9.6 Law Enforcement and Emergencies Plans

An elected constable provides some law enforcement services to the Town. In addition, the Town has contracted with the Bennington County Sheriff's Department to patrol town roads. An animal control officer responds to complaints and picks up loose dogs.

The Town of Arlington maintains a Rapid Response Plan for emergencies, as well as participates in a Regional Emergency Operations Plan. In addition, the Town is represented on the Local Emergency Planning Committee.

9.7 Community House and Libraries

The Arlington Community House, operated by a Board of Trustees as a nonprofit organization, is located on Route 7A in the center of Town, and provides meeting room facilities for a number of groups and organizations.

In addition, a new community facility has been developed in the Community House. This is a meeting place for all ages, and operates programs that focus primarily on youth and the elderly.

A new library building, located adjacent to Fisher Elementary School, opened in May 1996. This attractive facility includes areas for adults, young adults, and children, a meeting room, expanded space for the Russell

Vermontiana Collection, and a reading/study area. Private contributions provided the funds for construction and furnishing. The library continues to serve residents with a good selection of books, tapes, and videos, and offers a number of informative programs throughout the year. The Town of Arlington should continue to support the library with an annual appropriation.

9.8 Electricity, Telephone, Cell Phone, and Cable Television Service

Arlington receives its electrical service through the Central Vermont Public Service transmission lines; telephone service is provided by Fair Point; and cable television is available through Comcast in portions of the Town. This should be expanded to East and West Arlington. Electric service seems adequate to meet existing demands and to accommodate reasonable future growth.

A Zoning Bylaw to govern construction of wireless communication facilities was adopted. A cell phone tower is now located on Red Mountain with three different services and one is located off of Butternut Gutter with one service. While Arlington and East Arlington now have service, West Arlington does not.

9.9 Childcare

The need for high quality and affordable childcare has become very apparent to both employers and employees (or prospective employees) as the number of women in the work force has continued to grow. Arlington Area Childcare (Happy Days Playschool) provides a range of childcare and early education programs, along with activities for school age children and educational programs for parents. The organization has moved into a specially-constructed facility on East Arlington Road near the schools; the facility was financed by the Housing and Conservation Board. A number of home-based daycare providers also serve the community. Expanded and enhanced child care services should be supported through both existing organizations and programs offered by area employers.

X. TRANSPORTATION

10.1 Description

Safe, convenient, and economical transportation is essential to the people and economy of Arlington. A variety of transportation modes exist in the Town. A network of town and state roads and bridges provides access to residential properties and supports the area's various commercial and industrial interests; the Vermont Railway traverses the eastern side of the Town; and sidewalks and pathways allow for pedestrian movement. A public bus service is available to Bennington and Manchester, with connections to Rutland. While each of these elements is important, most of the use (and public expense) is concentrated on the Town's network of roads. Effective and efficient management of these roads and bridges should therefore be a priority for the Town.

The road system in Arlington reflects the Town's topographic conditions. The most level land is found in the southeastern corner of the Town and in the valley of the Batten Kill. The two state highways in Arlington, Route 7A and Route 313, traverse these areas, and a network of town roads reaches out to adjacent lands. With the exception of a few minor roads which snake up into the hollows and stream valleys, no roads are located in Arlington's rugged mountainous regions. The Town is responsible for maintaining 34 miles of roads.

A sidewalk along East Arlington Road has been constructed. The sidewalk connects the Arlington and East Arlington villages, and provides safe pedestrian access to the schools and the new library. A sidewalk also runs to the new Post Office. Re-construction of the sidewalk along Church Street is currently being done, which will serve to substantially improve pedestrian safety in the village center.

The Town's highway department is presently staffed by three full-time employees, a level that is adequate at the present time, although an additional employee (and equipment) may be needed in the future if new road mileage is added and if residents demand more extensive and prompt service during the winter months. The department owns and maintains a considerable inventory of vehicles and equipment including a grader, backhoe-loader, tractor, a small dump truck, and two full size dump trucks that can be outfitted to perform a variety of roadway maintenance functions. These vehicles and equipment are replaced periodically by annually appropriating tax revenues into designated "sinking funds."

The Town highway garage and sand/salt storage area, located on Chittenden Avenue, is already crowded and in need of expansion. Because of the small lot size and other limitations at the existing site, however, the Town may need to consider acquisition of a new parcel. A new garage of adequate size to store all equipment plus the probable need to store sand and salt in a building in the future suggests that a lot of three to five acres will be required. This garage relocation/construction project is expected to be the most substantial municipal capital expenditure over the next several years.

Summary of road mileage in Arlington
by Town/State highway and class

Class 2 town highways ¹	-	7.910 miles
Class 3 town highways ²	-	26.800 miles
Legal Trails	-	4.560 miles
State highways	-	14.047 miles
Total Traveled highways	-	53.317 miles

* The Town also contains 2.700 miles of Class 4 town roads.³

1 "Class 2 town highways are those town highways selected as the most important highways in each town. As far as practicable they shall be selected with the purposes of securing trunk lines of improved highways from town to town and to places which by their nature have more than normal amount of traffic. The selectmen, with the approval of the board, shall determine which highways are to be class 2 highways." (19 VSA section 302(2))

2 "Class 3 town highways:

- (A) Class 3 town highways are all traveled town highways other than class 1 or 2 highways. The selectmen, after conference with a representative of the agency shall determine which highways are Class 3 town highways.
- (B) The minimum standards for class 3 highways are a highway negotiable under normal conditions all seasons of the year by a standard manufactured pleasure car. This would include but not be limited to sufficient surface and base, adequate drainage, and sufficient width capable to provide winter maintenance.
- (C) A highway not meeting these standards may be reclassified as a provisional class 3 highway if within five years of the determination, it will meet all class 3 highway standards." (19 VSA section 302(3))

3 "Class 4 town highways are all other town highways. The selectmen shall determine which highways are Class 4 town highways." (19 VSA section 302(4))

10.2 Capital Project Planning

The highway department and Board of Selectmen, in concert with the Town's effort to prepare a capital budget and plan, identified a priority list of transportation infrastructure improvement projects and an equipment replacement schedule. Funding sources and annual costs were also identified for each item. Section 10.3 is a summary of the highway department's proposed capital projects.

10.3 Transportation Infrastructure

1. The Town's largest capital project over the next several years is expected to be the acquisition of a new lot for the town garage, and construction of the necessary structures on that parcel. The Town should begin looking for a suitable location but it is still premature to determine estimated costs or timetables.
2. Paved roads are resurfaced and upgraded as needed and as funds permit. Major projects are funded with State and Federal monies paying 80% to 90% of the total costs. Smaller projects are funded with local tax revenue.
3. The four town bridges crossing the Batten Kill have all been replaced or extensively repaired in recent years. The two steel bridges at either end of River Road are built to the same specifications as state bridges on major highways and should have a life expectancy of 50 to 75 years with routine maintenance. The two wooden bridges (Benedict Crossing and the Covered Bridge) have been rehabilitated, but will require ongoing work to remain serviceable. At this time, there are no plans to replace these two wooden structures because of their historic value.
4. Gravel roads are maintained regularly each year by adding material as needed and grading. A program with the State will assist in improving signage on gravel roads to make safer highways.
5. The focus of the Town is to maintain and improve the existing Town highways. Future growth in Town should move in such direction that existing roads are utilized and the Town is not put into a position where it has to expand its highway system.
6. Investments that would encourage the inappropriate development of important agricultural, forest, or natural areas should be avoided. The Town should ensure that plans for State-owned roads are not contrary to this or other municipal goals, and that plans of adjacent municipalities are consistent with the objectives outlined in this plan.

10.4 Special Issues

1. Road Reclassification/Downgrading:

In the past, the Town has reclassified or abandoned road segments which had been either Class 4 town roads or road segments with an unclear ownership status. These road segments either were downgraded to trail status, or were discontinued in the event that they did not provide access for any property owner. Such action was necessary to avoid potential municipal liability for maintenance and upkeep of these "roadways." In the future, where access should be

maintained, reclassification of such roads to trails, rather than abandonment, should be the preferred option so that public access can be retained.

The Town is working to identify and locate old Town roads. The "Ancient Road" program throughout the State requires that all roads be identified and mapped prior to the year 2015 or they will be lost as public rights-of-way.

2. Road Permits:

Because the location and design of new driveways, culverts, ditches, and tree removal can affect the physical condition of public roads and traffic safety, a road permit must be obtained from the road commissioner prior to construction of such improvements within the Town highway right-of-way. This includes all Class 2, 3, 4 roads and Legal Trails. Almost all highway rights-of-way are 3 rods or 50 feet wide.

3. Sidewalks and Pathways:

Facilities for pedestrians and young children on bicycles are very limited in Arlington. A sidewalk along East Arlington Road, connecting Arlington and East Arlington villages and providing safe pedestrian access to the schools and the new library is complete. The sidewalk from the Post Office along Route 7A is complete. Sidewalk connections to the recreation park along Rt 313 would be very beneficial for both improved access and safety. The Church Street sidewalk is scheduled to be renovated and extended. The Town should continue to seek state/federal transportation funds for these high priority projects. Other efforts to encourage pedestrian travel should be continued, particularly in village areas. When undertaking new construction or major reconstruction of roads, the Town and State should consider the adequacy of those roads for safe pedestrian and bicycle travel, and include special provisions (e.g., shoulders of sufficient width on paved roads) for bicycle use.

4. Scenic Roads:

The Town of Arlington contains a number of particularly scenic roads which provide pleasant travel routes for both residents and tourists. Although consideration has been given to official "scenic road" designation, the Town has been reluctant to pursue such designation because of a concern over the possibility that official recognition will lead to a dramatic increase in vehicular traffic on these roads. Future road improvements should be planned so as not to degrade their scenic attributes.

5. Parking:

There are some localized parking problems in Town, particularly on busy weekends in East Arlington where there is a concentration of retail stores with limited parking. Overall, however, the sufficiency of parking areas has not proven to be a significant problem. Strict adherence to site plan requirements for on-site parking has been helpful; the planning commission must continue to require adequate on-site parking for new commercial and industrial uses.

6. Route 7A:

In 1996, the BCRC conducted a study of Route 7A, an important regional highway that is currently plagued by a number of deficiencies. Needed improvements were identified, as well as recommended short term, long term, and zoning actions.

Particular attention should be given to the nature of the roadway in the center of Town, where it should reinforce the village character and ensure that vehicle speeds and access/parking are consistent with safety concerns.

7. Railways:

While railroads are not presently used as a major means of transport for either people or materials in the region, the potential for expanded future use of trains should not be diminished. A rail line runs through Arlington in close proximity to commercial and industrial areas. Manufacturers should be encouraged to utilize rail service when feasible. Vermont has recently acquired a section of deficient track between Hoosick, N.Y. and North Bennington; improvements to this section and upgrades throughout the region could lead to significantly more rail freight use and may bring about re-establishment of passenger rail service at some future time. The Town should cooperate in these efforts to improve rail service in the region.

8. Public Transit:

The need for public transportation in Arlington is felt principally by elderly and low income persons. Access to transportation for health care purposes, for shopping and personal business, and for social or recreational purposes is particularly important to elderly residents. There is an apparent need for transportation to health care providers and work and job training sites for some low income residents. These needs are met, to some extent, by several health and human service organizations in the area. The Green Mountain Community Network, operating the Green Mountain Express, provides demand-response service to meet medical and other needs, as well as a fixed-route service used primarily for job access, shopping, and other needs. Arlington has a designated

bus stop along the fixed-route service line from Bennington to Manchester. Transportation for those in need should be available through several means, as identified in the Transportation Plan for the Bennington Region (BCRC, 2002):

- a) A region-wide volunteer transportation program to serve primarily health related trips (currently operated by the Green Mountain Community Network and human service organizations);
- b) Handicap-accessible van services for seniors and disabled persons region-wide on a contractual basis with nursing homes, human service agencies, and towns (through the Green Mountain Community Network);
- c) A ride referral/ride match program to serve mostly regularly scheduled trip needs from outlying areas (State of Vermont Agency of Transportation RideShare Program).

10.5 Policies

1. New roads, driveways, and drainage systems should be designed, constructed, and maintained in accordance with the municipal subdivision regulations, street standards, and any recommendations of the Town's road foreman. When possible, residential development should be designed to avoid direct access to major roads from individual lots. Subdivision roads and driveways should be designed to allow safe access by fire and emergency services.
2. Additions and improvements to the transportation system should be designed to minimize impacts on residential areas and avoid the loss of parks and recreation areas, agricultural land, natural resources, and wildlife habitat.
3. Major transportation improvements and investments should be encouraged to enhance villages and important existing highways, with minimal or no investment for new roads serving remote and mountainous areas.
4. Proposed transportation facilities should, to the degree possible, utilize existing highway alignments.
5. Commercial and industrial developments should provide adequate on-site parking, and include provisions for safe and efficient vehicular ingress and egress. To the extent possible, adjacent commercial or industrial uses should make use of common parking and access drives. Parking in the rear area with buildings closer to the street should be encouraged to reduce multiple access onto local and state highways.
6. Scenic roads should be maintained for their scenic value while providing safe access for residents. Road construction and

maintenance should be consistent with scenic values (width, alignment, roadside vegetation, etc.).

XI. EDUCATION

11.1 General Information

The Arlington School District is part of the Batten Kill Supervisory Union, which also includes the Town of Sandgate. The district is comprised of approximately 350 students spread over two schools: Fisher Elementary School and Arlington Memorial Middle and High School. Fisher Elementary is a K-5 school that houses 150 students and includes a full day Kindergarten program. Arlington Memorial Middle School serves grades 6-8 and is located within Arlington High School, which serves grades 9-12. There are approximately 210 students at Arlington Memorial. The last few years have seen a decline in enrollment along the same lines that have occurred throughout the State of Vermont. It is expected that the declining enrollment will stop in 2009-2010; that basically is the same trend that is being forecast for the State of Vermont. After that point, it is expected that enrollment will level off or increase slightly.

In terms of facilities, a major renovation and addition was completed at Fisher in 1993, and Arlington Memorial Middle/High School had a significant renovation and addition project that was completed in 2001. Those additions and renovation projects were successful in creating the space necessary to support the necessary educational programs and support services for our students.

For the time period 2004 through 2009, there has been significant effort on part of the school system to "raise the bar" and increase educational expectations and performance in an educationally sound and fiscally responsible manner. During that time period, the average annual educational budget increase has been approximately 3.2%. Part of the "raising the bar" initiative includes increasing graduation requirements from 23-26 credits; it provides a community service graduation component consisting of at least 32 hours of community service; it requires nine computer competencies to be demonstrated prior to graduation from high school. In addition, a principal's assistance program has been established at the middle/high school whereby special attention is given before or after school by the principal to those students who did not complete a homework assignment the previous day or are in danger of failing a course. All of these initiatives have paid real dividends for our students and our system. The high school also has consistently had one of the highest graduation rates in the State.

From a curriculum point of view, the high school offers eight advanced placement courses in addition to fourteen honors classes and a number of other academic offerings throughout the curriculum. It also should be noted that the school system is offering Chinese and Spanish at the elementary level for students in grades 1-5, while at the secondary school level, the district offers Chinese, Latin, French, Spanish, and sign language.

There has been significant emphasis on the arts in the last few years, especially with the construction of the Mack Performance Arts Center, Home of the Wes Carlson Theater and dance studio. That project was completed

in January 2007 at a cost of over \$620,000; all funding was provided from corporation, business, and community member donations. No taxpayer dollars were used for this facility. The theater is used extensively by community members, school groups, and area organizations for plays, musicals, public speaking contests, poetry, and dance presentations. This success has led a number of individuals to express interest in having the school and the community partner along with the private sector to build a swimming pool for school and community use. Discussion of this partnership area is in the preliminary stages.

From an athletic point of view, the Arlington Eagles continue to have a strong and rich history of success. The high school has had approximately 50 state championships in the last 25 years. The system offers athletic programs in baseball, basketball, softball, dance, fencing, track and field, snowboarding, cross country, golf, and soccer.

Over the last couple of years, the district has received significant recognition for its success, direction, and achievement. The Vermont State Department of Education visited our high school and was most complimentary of the success that has been achieved for such a small school in terms of rigor, relevance, relationships, curriculum, academic strength, and communications. The system was also cited for the positive culture, climate, and sense of cooperation that exists.

In addition, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges recently completed an accreditation renewal visit; to quote from their report, "*Arlington Memorial high school has an excellent reputation for success in promoting learning for all students and being a strong college preparatory school. It has also had a long standing reputation for providing a safe and secure learning environment and for offering a diverse curriculum.*"

It also should be noted that in January of 2008, US News and World Report released a rating of America's best high schools. This is the first time that US New and World Report, in collaboration with School Evaluation Services, a K-12 data research and analysis operated by Standard and Poors, decided to rank high schools throughout the country (they are famous for rating colleges and universities). With more than 18,000 high schools evaluated and analyzed, there were only six in the State of Vermont that received national recognition. Arlington Memorial High School was one of those six Vermont schools; it was awarded a bronze medal. Throughout the country, only 7% of schools received such honors. AMHS is one of the best in the country. Congratulations to the Town of Arlington, the administrators, the teachers, support personnel, community, students, and alumni.

In the summer of 2005, the school district undertook a significant technology upgrade for all its schools. That project included an upgrade in computers, printers, and peripherals; software and software licenses were upgraded. Internet security was also put in place as new servers were purchased; the schools and central office were connected via fiber network. A system-wide email program and an upgraded website were established to increase communications within the system and with parents and community members. This achievement was a result of being able to develop a comprehensive technology plan that utilized existing funds and

sinking funds over a two-year period. The upgrade of technology was something that was needed in the school district and provides a wonderful resource for our students and staff.

State and Federal requirements and initiatives continue to place burdens on local school districts; many of the requirements come across as unfunded mandates. Special education programs continue to increase in terms of cost and complexity and those students with special needs deserve and educationally strong program as do each and every student in the district. Both Fisher Elementary and Arlington Memorial continue to regularly meet the academic standards and progress necessary under the No Child Left Behind program. The student year has increased to 180 days (5 days above the State requirement).

The district works hard to challenge and "stretch" students at all levels. Along the same lines the school district started for grades 6-8, an Arlington Accelerated Academic Academy moves our brightest middle school students to advanced learning. The Career Development Center in Bennington continues to be an option for students who are interested in exploring a number of vocational and tech programs. Over the next couple of years, increased emphasis will be placed on professional development especially in the areas of technology, curriculum coordination, curriculum writing, and coordination of expectations; K-12 will continue to be a priority.

The Arlington school community can be proud of its schools, its employees, its children, and its commitment to quality education. Working together, much has been achieved, much success has been had, and much will be achieved in the future. The quality of education in the Arlington district continues to grow because of these dedicated groups of individuals who put forth the effort to enhance the system and allow new educational opportunities to cultivate.

XII. RECREATION

Residents of Arlington are fortunate to have ready access to a wealth of recreational opportunities. The Town has an outstanding recreation park, a river renowned for fishing and canoeing, and miles of trails traversing thousands of acres of unbroken forests. Maintenance of the quality of these recreational opportunities for both residents and the visitors who are drawn to the Town by these resources is an important goal of this Town Plan.

12.1 Recreation Park

Arlington's recreation park is situated in the center of Town on approximately 27 acres of land along the Batten Kill. The park contains facilities for a wide variety of sports and activities, including: softball and baseball fields, tennis courts, a basketball court, a one-mile walking path with exercise stations, a swimming pond, a soccer field, volleyball courts, a 9-hole golf course, an ice skating rink, and picnic facilities including a pavilion. In addition, the Lions Club owns and maintains a swimming pond at the park. These facilities are heavily used from early spring through late fall.

A nine person committee is responsible for the operation of the park. Only limited Town funding is required for the park. An endowment fund, donations, and modest user fees (for certain organized leagues, large gatherings, and scholastic sports) support the park. Funding for the operation and maintenance of the swimming pool is provided by the Lions Club. The Masons maintain the ice skating rink on Rt 313W during the winter. Arlington is extremely fortunate to have this fine park available to the public.

The new Yellow Barn Farm property across the river from the Recreation Park will serve to complement the existing facilities. There will be additional trails for hiking and cross country skiing. Public access to the river for angling will be provided. There may be a community garden, and the Town may grow Christmas trees. The barn will be preserved and used for public activities as determined in the future. This property was purchased with funds from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board with assistance from the Vermont Land Trust.

Special mention should be made of the fact that the recreation park is particularly valuable to the local schools because outdoor recreational facilities on the school properties are rather meager. As noted above, the school pays a small fee to cover maintenance costs for the facilities used by its teams. Many children walk from the schools or from their homes to the park. The new sidewalk along East Arlington Road and existing paths cover most of the route to the Rec Park from the schools, but there remains a section along Rt 7A that should be completed.

It should be noted that the programs at the Community House serve to provide recreational facilities for both youth and elderly. In addition, there is now a Seniors Luncheon twice a week at Bailey Hall in East Arlington, and at one point, there was a Seniors exercise class.

12.2 Natural Resources

Arlington's location among the mountains, forests, and streams of southwestern Vermont provides a variety of easily accessible outdoor recreational opportunities. The natural resource that receives the most intensive recreational use, while supporting a wide variety of uses, is the Batten Kill. The Batten Kill has been a nationally known trout fishing stream for many years, but recently there have been declines in trout populations. Studies are ongoing and special temporary regulations are in place, but the problems of the fishery have led to a significant decline in the number of anglers. During the same period, the number of canoes and tubes on the river has increased dramatically. It is possible for the Batten Kill to serve these different activities, but its capacity is not infinite. The increasing intensity of use and the congestion on the river, particularly during summer weekends, has led to conflicts between the various users and between river users and landowners. In addition, there may have been some degradation of the environmental quality of this valued resource.

A number of significant tributaries of the Batten Kill flow out of the Taconic Range and Green Mountains through Arlington. These tributary streams provide recreational opportunities of their own and, of course, contribute to the water quality of the Batten Kill. Maintenance of the recreational opportunities afforded by Arlington's waterways must consider the need for public access to these resources, protection of environmental quality, and the needs and differences of the various user groups.

The forested uplands in Arlington and the surrounding area support a similarly impressive array of recreational uses: hunting, camping, hiking, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, and mountain biking, to name a few of the more popular activities. To maintain the quality of these recreational experiences it will be necessary to ensure the continued existence of the forest resource. Physical conditions and regulatory restrictions are likely to prevent fragmentation and degradation of the resource; however, because most of the forest land in Arlington is in private ownership, continued access to these areas, and the extensive trail systems that traverse them, is a concern. Various options to maintain access are available, and should be pursued (e.g., acquisition of easements, and public land acquisition).

Arlington's serene rural setting has also attracted a growing number of bicyclists. Both road and off-road bicycle touring have become popular among vacationers in organized tour groups and residents of the area. Planning should include consideration of this activity whenever appropriate (e.g., road construction and improvements, trail use designations) to ensure the safety of bicyclists and the environment.

Many of the recreational resources in Arlington are really just a portion of a larger regional resource. Forests, trails, rivers, and watersheds rarely respect municipal (or state) boundaries. Moreover residents of Arlington are just as likely to hunt in Sandgate as residents of Manchester are to canoe in Arlington, and so on. Clearly then, regional cooperation in recreation planning is very important.

Initiatives to address the problems of degradation and overuse of the Batten Kill have been undertaken by various agencies and organizations over the past few years. A new river group is currently planning to again provide a River Steward for the summer months to engage in education and outreach to river users, conduct research, and work with landowners. The town has supported these efforts.

12.3 Policies

1. Developments which include, or potentially affect access to, an important recreational resource shall include provisions to ensure preservation of that resource and continued public access.
2. While public access to streams and other water bodies is encouraged, recognition must be given to the need to protect fragile environmental areas; intensive recreational uses in such areas shall be restricted accordingly.
3. Capital investments that would adversely affect an important recreational resource, or public access to that resource, shall not be pursued.
4. Permanent development shall be severely limited in the forest and recreation areas of Arlington.
5. Stream channels, and lands adjacent to them, shall be preserved in their natural state; in areas of existing or planned development, improvements near such waterways should be limited to those that will improve public recreational access without damaging the natural environment.
6. Highway improvements or new construction should provide adequate space for the construction of bicycle paths, or include shoulders of sufficient width to safely accommodate bicycle use.

12.4 Actions

1. The Arlington Recreation and Park Committee should continue its capable management of the recreation center, and should solicit ideas from users of the park to determine the type of improvements that are most appropriate.
2. Arlington should continue to work with agencies and organizations to facilitate river studies and planning, including planning for management of recreational use. The river group, the Batten Kill Watershed Alliance, should be supported in promoting improved river user behavior and cooperation through increased public education, awareness, and involvement.
3. The Town and/or Batten Kill organization should work to secure and develop environmentally sound public access areas and trails along the Batten Kill and other major streams, and to inform the

public of those access areas. Continued and expanded public access will assure high quality recreational opportunities and reduce environmental damage and user conflicts by dispersing users over a wider area.

4. The Town should consider public acquisition of forest land where such acquisition would preserve access to important resources without posing undue cost to the Town.
5. A continued effort should be made to develop recreation for youth and elderly.

XIII. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

13.1 Introduction

Vermont's Planning and Development Act urges towns to "ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing...particularly for those citizens of low and moderate incomes" (24 VSA §4302(11)). The Act recommends that housing be convenient to growth centers and public utilities, and that sites for multi-family and manufactured housing be available in locations similar to those generally used for conventional single-family dwellings.

Housing is considered affordable when households with incomes at or below the county median income pay no more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs (from "Planning for Affordable Housing," Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs - February, 1990). For rentals, this consists of rent and utilities. For home owners, this consists of the principal and interest on the mortgage, property taxes, and insurance on the house.

13.2 Possible Strategies for Encouraging Affordable Housing

Before taking any specific actions to promote the development of affordable housing, it is helpful to address several basic questions such as: "Is there an adequate supply of housing in Arlington?"; "What groups are most in need?"; "What type of housing do those groups want (rental vs. ownership, single-family vs. multifamily, mobile homes vs. conventional homes)?"; and "What is the gap between income available for housing and current market costs for housing?". Once questions such as these have been answered, it will be much easier to target particular strategies for the Town.

Several strategies would seem potentially effective in Arlington. This plan discusses the value of capital budgeting (see Chapter XVI); by carefully planning future capital projects the Town can minimize tax burdens and direct growth to areas where housing development is most appropriate. Regulatory tools are also available to promote the development of affordable housing. Increased housing density, in areas physically capable of supporting such growth, can allow developers to reduce the per-unit cost of land that must be passed onto home buyers.

Such density increases may be accomplished by reducing minimum lot sizes and providing for clustering and transferable development rights. These density based regulatory programs should serve the dual purposes of providing affordable housing and promoting a village center/open space development pattern. Inclusionary zoning (requiring that a certain percentage of units in a new development be affordable) is another regulatory technique that could be explored for use in Arlington.

The Town should also remain cognizant of possible state or federal funding sources. Grants may be available for the purchase of land or buildings to be used for affordable housing development, or to reduce development of housing payment costs. An important potential funding source, the Vermont

Housing and Conservation Trust Fund, should be continued, supported, and utilized by the Town when possible.

13.3 Policies

1. An adequate supply of safe and sanitary housing should be available to meet the needs of all Arlington's residents. Such housing should be convenient to village centers, public utilities, facilities, and services, and should be developed in accordance with the other policies of this Town Plan.

13.4 Actions

1. The Town should continue to work with the BCRC and affordable housing developers to identify housing needs in the community and develop appropriate strategies and projects to meet those needs.

XIV. ENERGY

14.1 General Information

Homes and businesses in Arlington utilize a variety of energy sources for heating - wood, fuel oil, gas, electricity, and coal. With a heating season that generally lasts for at least seven months, it is evident that home and business energy consumption is a significant issue for everyone residing in this area. The cost of fuel, combined with the local, regional, and global environmental problems caused by fuel extraction, processing, and combustion, suggest strongly that energy conservation measures should be emphasized now more than ever. Subdivisions and buildings should be designed with energy conservation in mind (orientation for solar access, siting buildings in protected rather than exposed locations, etc.), and thermal integrity standards for buildings, such as those specified in the Bennington Regional Energy Plan, should be adhered to. Owners of existing buildings should be urged to retrofit, where necessary, to meet the standards of the Regional Energy Plan; financial assistance may be available to some home owners through State programs and organizations such as the Bennington Rutland Opportunity Council (BROC). In addition, the development and utilization of alternative energy sources should be explored and supported.

It is well established that effective land use planning can promote energy conservation. Development should be concentrated in growth centers, with new residential development convenient to commercial service and employment centers. The land use element of this Plan reflects these principals by prohibiting permanent development in Arlington's remote forest areas, by discouraging scattered development in rural areas, and by providing for more intensive residential and commercial growth in designated village areas. The Plan also discourages capital expenditures on roads or other infrastructure that would tend to lead to scattered development. Compact development patterns will encourage non-motorized modes of transportation, while reducing the number and length of automobile trips, truck deliveries, and the like.

Future public and private investments should be mindful of energy conservation. Facilities that encourage pedestrian and bicycle transportation (e.g., centrally located parking facilities and sidewalks in village areas, and bicycle paths and lanes) should be pursued. Efforts to develop alternative/renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, should be supported.

XV. HEALTH CARE

15.1 General Information

Availability of adequate health care in a rural community like Arlington can often be a problem. There may not be a large enough population to support a local physician or a dentist. There may not be emergency services close enough to assist in case of accidents or life threatening health problems. Hospitals and clinics may be many miles away and getting to them by private or public transportation may pose problems, especially when repeated care is required. Fortunately, such problems do not exist in Arlington.

Residents of Arlington are fortunate in having many in-town health care services and, within neighboring towns only a few miles distant, additional services to meet virtually any medical or dental need. A family medical practice is established in Arlington at a central location on Route 7A across from the Town Hall, and the examining rooms and equipment reflect a state of the art approach to the practice of medicine. The same is true of the dentist's office, located next door to the medical building. This general practice provides a wide range of dental services, and advice and counsel on care that may require the attention of specialists.

The Arlington Nursing Service is another health care benefit enjoyed by the Town's citizenry and by residents of Sandgate and Sunderland. Services include nursing care at local schools, an arrangement with the Manchester Health Services for home health care, a free well-child clinic, dental care for elementary school children, and health screening and flu clinics. These essential benefits are provided regardless of one's ability to pay. Should one not have health insurance or the resources to pay for the services rendered, the Arlington Nursing Service covers the cost.

The Arlington Rescue Squad, serving Arlington, Sandgate, Sunderland, and North Shaftsbury, is staffed by paid staff and volunteers from the community and is funded primarily by donations. The Squad's purpose is to provide the best professional emergency care possible. Squad members are trained and certified as Emergency Medical Technicians, and Emergency Care Attendants. In addition to responding to emergency situations, the members have as an additional goal to train the general public in immediate first aid treatment and CPR. Emergency calls are answered twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

There are other services in Arlington, or close-by, that are beneficial to the Town's residents in the health care area. The Project Against Violent Encounters, Inc. (PAVE) is a nonprofit corporation working to prevent domestic violence and sexual assault, and to assist victims of such crimes. For Arlington and neighboring communities there is a twenty-four hour hotline for crisis calls, private safehomes, and volunteers who will accompany victims to the police, a hospital, or court. This vital need is provided at minimal cost to Arlington residents.

The Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging, partly funded by Arlington taxes, provides many services to elders in the community. Senior meals, senior advocate assistance, Medicaid and food stamp assistance, essential transportation to meet medical/hospital appointments, and food shopping are just a few of the needs filled by this agency.

Arlington residents participating in the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) also fill many other needs in the health care category. RSVP volunteers serve at the Southwestern Vermont Medical Center, United Counseling Service, Social Rehabilitation Service, American Red Cross, Special Olympics, Well-Child Clinics, and on and on.

The Vermont Center for Independent Living, while a State organization, has the grassroots goal of assisting any Vermonter with disabilities, to develop the resources necessary to achieve self-determination and an independent lifestyle.

Beyond Arlington's town limits, but only minutes away, is an array of medical, dental, hospital, and counseling services available to those living in Arlington. In Bennington there is the Southwestern Vermont Medical Center, a 140 bed acute care hospital providing a full range of inpatient and outpatient services to Bennington County residents and those living in neighboring counties and states. Associated with the Medical Center, or sharing space on "hospital hill," are the Wellness Connection, Hospice of the Bennington Area, Bennington Home Health Agency, Planned Parenthood of Vermont, and United Counseling Service.

Additionally, the Bennington County Physician's Care Program, coordinated in part by the Putnam Memorial Health Corporation, provides an initial visit to a physician and referral services at no cost to those in the area who cannot afford it; subsequent visits are charged for, however.

The Northshire Medical Building in Manchester hosts medical associates in primary health care and specialists in many fields of medicine such as neurology, obstetrics, pediatrics, psychiatry and psychology, and nutrition counseling.

While the local dentists provide a wide range of dental care including oral surgery, root canal treatment, gum care and treatment, and the fitting of dentures, there will be occasions when they recommend treatment by a specialist. Bennington provides special dental care in the fields of oral surgery and treatment of gum diseases; Manchester in the fields of orthodontia and root canal procedures; and Rutland for special problems relating to dental work with children.

To provide training for future nurses, Associate and Baccalaureate Degrees in Nursing are offered at Southern Vermont College in Bennington. Also, the Putnam Memorial School of Practical Nursing, funded in part by the State, provides training for those interested in this level of nursing education.

While those living in Arlington are fortunate in having access to very adequate health care services, there are some concerns, both on a local level as well as nationwide. First, the cost of health care has risen

substantially over the past decade, outstripping the cost of most other goods and services. Those without health insurance are suffering the most, but the providers of such insurance coverage are suffering also, as are those paying the premiums. The magnitude of this problem is beyond local solutions, and encouraging State and Federal representatives and officials to come to grips with the problem is essential.

It is essential that the Town make every effort to maintain and extend medical, dental, and auxiliary services. Private donations, commercial and industrial support, and line item expenditures in the Town Budget are to be encouraged when appropriate. Individuals and organizations that serve the community so well must not be allowed to struggle along, or even wither away, because of lack of local support. Arlington is blessed in many respects, but the blessing of health care services cannot be taken for granted, lest it is lost.

XVI. MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION

16.1 Town Government - Structure and Staffing

A five member Board of Selectmen elected by the registered voters of the Town governs the Town of Arlington. Also elected are the Town Clerk, the Town Treasurer, three Liters, three Auditors, three Grand Jurors, seven Justices of the Peace, and several other Town officials. The Board of Selectmen appoints a Health Officer and one Deputy, a seven member Planning Commission, a seven member Zoning Board of Adjustment, and approximately twenty other residents to perform Town functions. Also, the Selectmen hire a Road Commissioner and road crew, a Secretary to the Board, and a Town Attorney. The town contracts with the Bennington County Sheriff's Department for their services. The Planning Commission appoints a Land Use Administrator with the consent of the Selectmen.

In total, some eighty Town residents serve the Town government in one capacity or another. The principal Town officers are paid annual salaries or an hourly wage. Most of the appointed officers serve without pay.

The Select Board is currently evaluating whether or not the existing governing structure is sufficient to meet the complex and growing demands of managing the Town. At some point over the coming years, the townspeople may decide that it is necessary to move to a structure of government that includes a salaried Town Manager or Supervisor, along with the Board.

16.2 Town Services and Related Costs

The services rendered by the Town government and the related costs are generally broken down into six categories - administration, appropriations, fire protection, highway, Town Hall, and Town patrol. Traditionally, the administrative and highway costs are the most substantial, making up about 70% of the Town budget. Appropriations and fire protection follow in that order, with Town Hall and patrol costs.

Administration covers a wide range of services and costs. As such, they represent the "nuts-and-bolts" of running the Town activities from animal control to ZBA reviews. Audits, clerical and listing services, scheduling and conducting elections, issuing licenses and permits, and providing xerox copy service are a few of the Town's administrative functions. The most substantial costs are in the clerical, insurance, street lights, County tax, solid waste, and listing areas.

Appropriations covers funds set aside to support agencies serving the Town or the area in one way or another, such as nursing services for the elderly, childcare, community nursing, libraries, cemeteries, and the Rescue Squad.

Funds for Fire Protection represent a modest allocation in the Town budget. The service rendered is, of course, the protection of the Town and its residents from the destruction of property and loss of life by fire. The major costs are maintenance of equipment, the purchase of new

equipment not provided for through Capital funds, hydrant installation and maintenance, and Personal Protective Equipment for the firemen. The Fire Company owns the firehouses in East Arlington and West Arlington, The Fire Department and the Fire Company are staffed by volunteers from the areas served, which include the neighboring Towns of Sunderland and Sandgate.

The Town Highway Department stands as an equal with administration in terms of costs to taxpayers. The department is responsible for the use and maintenance of the Town garage. Construction and care of town roads, bridges and culverts, roadside maintenance within the right-of-way, winter plowing and salting/ sanding of all town roads and the use and maintenance of Town trucks, plows, graders, loaders, and other capital equipment related to the highway function. Highway maintenance is the largest expenditure in the category, followed by labor costs and employee benefits, including health, pension, and worker's compensation. The town of Arlington has 41.98 miles of highway, made up of 7.91 of class #2, 26.80 of class #3, 2.71 of class #4, and 4.56 of legal trails.

The Town Hall serves as a place for public meetings, Town offices, and a "center" for Town Government. The costs involved are largely for the upkeep of the building, such as repairs and services, fuel, electricity, and janitorial service. The space that was the Post Office has been renovated and now the town official's offices are on the 1st floor.

The constable is now an appointed position and has not been filled for several years. Town patrols are maintained under a contract with the Bennington County Sheriff's Department.

The Town is developing a website that will provide information to the public about town meetings, regulations, and so forth. This is an important step toward giving the Town a presence in the communication media of the Internet that has become central to daily life for many.

16.3 Town and School Expenditure Budgets

Most of the growth in local public expenditures over the past five years is attributable to increases in the school budget, which accounts for over 80% of the total budget annually. Table 16-A shows the changes in the Town Budget, the School Budget, and the combined total for the years 2004 to 2008. The total budget has been growing at about 3% to 5.2% over these years. This is a relatively low rate of growth since the amounts have not been adjusted for the rate of inflation over that period of time.

Table 16-A: Expenditure Budgets 2004-2008

Year	Town	School	Total
2004	\$915,531	\$4,861,970	\$5,777,471
2005	\$958,615	\$5,097,726	\$6,054,341
2006	\$998,003	\$5,341,721	\$6,337,724
2007	\$1,043,919	\$5,512,963	\$6,553,879
2008	\$1,141,419	\$5,630,655	\$6,772,074

Table 16-A Expenditure Budgets for the Town of Arlington and the School District from 2004 - 2008. These dollar amounts have not been adjusted for inflation.

16.4 Sources of Funds to Meet Town and School Expenses

There are various sources of funds to meet Town and School expenses, but the primary source is the property tax. There are two separately set tax rates, one for Town expenses and one for the School. These are combined to determine the total property taxes levied on the appraised fair market value of real estate.

The funds required to meet Town expenses are derived from several sources. Aside from the property tax other major sources are State funds for highway and bridge construction, maintenance, and repair, and fire department services to Sandgate and Sunderland. Grants from many sources are combined with local tax funds to pay for the larger projects throughout the Town. Smaller amounts of income are derived from land use permits, delinquent tax collection interest, and revenue from fines that are issued by the Sheriff's Department, and other minor fees. In a typical year, approximately 70% of the Town budget is raised through the property tax, with the balance coming from the secondary sources mentioned above. Prudent management of funds or unexpected revenue can result in a surplus at year's end which is used in the following year to lower the amount to be raised by taxes.

The funds to meet School expenses are also primarily derived from the education property taxes. Other sources include special education grants and fees, state transportation aid, and tuition from students attending from other towns.

Table 16-B shows the amount of revenue to be raised by taxes for the town, the school, and the combined budgets. Since there are variations in the other sources of funds, these amounts do not necessarily track the changes in the budgets in Table 16-A. The total has been growing at a rate between 6% and 8%, not adjusted for inflation.

Table 16-B: Amount of Revenue to be Raised by Taxes 2004-2008

Year	Town	School	Total
2004	\$708,653	\$3,145,244	\$3,853,897
2005	\$680,830	\$3,484,575	\$4,165,405
2006	\$792,555	\$3,635,476	\$4,428,031
2007	\$823,135	\$3,912,660	\$4,735,795
2008	\$795,670	\$4,236,751	\$5,032,421

Table 16-B Amount of Revenue to be Raised by Taxes for the Town of Arlington and the School District from 2004-2008. The dollar amounts are not adjusted for inflation.

16.5 The Budgeting Process and Determination of the Tax Rate

Preparation of the Town budget is as much based on past events as it is on future forecasts. Over time, a community develops a pattern of needs and

expenditures that are satisfied, in part, by the Town government. The Town budgeting process takes into account this pattern in determining the funds necessary to meet administrative, highway, and other costs. Additional funds may be required to meet needs or expenditures that are unanticipated, emergency, or unforeseeable. Expenditures of funds require careful judgment by Selectmen and other Town officials in managing current budgets, preparing budgets for the next fiscal year, and for short and long term budget planning.

All Town officials involved in the expenditure of Town funds play a part in the budgeting process by projecting the needs and expenditures for their areas of responsibility, both within the normal pattern and outside of it, when necessary. The final budget, based on these projections, is then compiled by the Selectmen and presented for approval to the registered voters of the Town. The voters may approve, modify, or disapprove the budget. In the latter case, a budget reflecting the wishes of the voters is usually resubmitted for approval.

There are several sources of monies to meet Town obligations - local taxes, state and federal funds, license fees, monies received from neighboring towns, etc. Except for taxes, these monies are considered as income to the Town, and are subtracted from the Town budget as approved by the voters. The remaining balance represents the amount to be raised by taxes. The tax, referred to as a property tax, is levied on the appraised fair market value of the real estate in the Town. The responsibility for determining fair market values rests with the Town Listers who are elected by the voters. With some modification, their final product represents the value of the Grand List for tax purposes. This then becomes the basis for determining the tax rate.

The dollar amount to be raised by taxes is divided by the dollar amount of the Town's fair market value, with the result of that calculation the tax rate. The rate is then applied to each one hundred dollars of one's real and personal estate. For example, if the fair market value is \$100,000,000 (one hundred million) and the amount to be raised by taxes is \$400,000 (four hundred thousand), the resultant rate would be \$.40 per \$100 of assessed value:

$$(\$400,000 / \$100,000,000) \times \$100 = \$.40$$

If one's property is valued at \$150,000 (one hundred fifty thousand), the Town property tax would be \$600:

$$(\$150,000 / \$100) \times \$.40 = \$600$$

The School Budget for the Arlington School District is prepared by the Arlington School Board. But the passing of Act 60 and Act 68 by the State of Vermont has changed the way school taxes and the tax rate are handled. All calculations are now done by the tax department in Montpelier and the town uses their numbers when setting the rate.

The education property tax rates set by the state are influenced by a variety of factors, including the number of students, the school budget, and whether the assessment of Town properties reflects fair market value.

There is a separate tax rate for residential property and nonresidential property. Residential property is the primary home of a Vermont resident. Nonresidential property would include commercial and industrial property, property owned by nonresidents, and property owned by Vermonters beyond their residence. For Vermont residents below a certain income level the "income sensitivity" adjustment puts a cap on the total property tax payment as a set percent of their income. This is currently around 2%. This provision only applies to the house and up to 2 acres. In this case the state pays part of the property tax that is due to the Town.

Over the past few years the Town property tax rate has varied between .26 and .39. The School tax rate has varied between 1.30 and 1.94 for Residential property and between 1.17 and 1.83 for Nonresidential property. See Table 16-C for the total property tax rates and taxes for sample Residential property values for 2004 to 2008.

Property Taxes on Sample Residential Properties from 2004-2008

Year	Tax Rate (Combined Town & School)	Home Assessed at \$100,000	Home Assessed at \$200,000
2004	2.0829	\$2,082.90	\$4,165.58
2005	2.3111	\$2,311.10	\$4,622.20
2006	1.4969	\$1,496.90	\$2,993.50
2007	1.5705	\$1,570.50	\$3,141
2008	1.6305	\$1,630.50	\$3,261

Table 16-C Property Taxes Levies on Sample Residential Properties from 2004-2008 using the total combined tax rate for the Town of Arlington and the School. The dollar amounts are not adjusted for inflation.

16.6 Capital Programming

Capital programming provides a method for selecting, scheduling, and financing capital projects. Vermont statute^(a) defines capital projects as:

- a) any physical betterment or improvement including furnishings, machinery, apparatus, or equipment for such physical betterment or improvement when first constructed or acquired; or
- b) any preliminary studies and surveys relating to any physical betterment or improvement; or
- c) land or rights in land; or
- d) any combination of paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) above.

Capital projects are particularly important to a community. Some of the important impacts of capital projects are enumerated here^(b):

^(a) 24 v.s.a. Section 4426.

- (1) As major costs, they place a visible burden on the tax rate and possibly the debt structure of the municipality.
- (2) The operating budget is significantly affected over the long-term by new structures and equipment.
- (3) Capital expenditures typically represent permanent, inflexible investments having an effect over long periods of time.
- (4) Capital facilities can dramatically affect the governmental service patterns of the municipality.
- (5) Through their effect on service patterns, capital expenditures can affect the rate and location of growth.
- (6) Capital projects often exert a direct and immediate impact on the physical environment.

Capital programming requires that a town address such questions as: "Which projects should be undertaken?" "When should they be implemented?" and "How should they be paid for?" By answering these questions a municipality will significantly improve its ability to assure good land development practices, smooth out a fluctuating tax rate, anticipate service problems before crisis conditions develop, coordinate related projects and activities, and assess alternative solutions to service problems.

The Town is updating a Capital budget and Capital plan working with representatives from Town departments, the School District, the Fire Department. This plan will be updated each year as part of the budget process. If needed the amount of funds set aside to meet the Capital Plan can be adjusted. These funds will be under "Reserve Funding" and will now become a part of each department's budget.

^(b) From Evans, R.D. (1974). Capital Programming – A Manual for Vermont Municipalities. State of Vermont Agency of Development and Community Affairs, Vermont League of Cities and Towns.

XVII. GOALS

This chapter summarizes the planning goals which are deemed important for the Town of Arlington. Some goals may be realized by continuing with current policies and directions, others may only be attained with new policies, regulations, investments, or other strategies. Each goal, however, will remain important and relevant for the Town over the coming years.

17.1 Develop an Effective Planning Process

Residents of Arlington should be encouraged to play an active role in planning the future of their Town. Planning activities that include and promote citizen participation should be emphasized.

The intermunicipal impacts of growth and development are particularly evident in Arlington. Issues include the availability of clean groundwater, use and water quality of the Batten Kill, educational facilities, emergency services, and residential development related to area job centers. Cooperation and consultation with neighboring towns and the Bennington County Regional Commission should occur.

17.2 Effectively Manage Future Growth

The new growth that will assuredly occur in Arlington may positively or negatively affect the Town. An effort should be made to influence the type, location, intensity, and rate of new growth, thus ensuring that this growth will result in a net benefit to the Town.

New housing development should occur at densities that are appropriate for the different parts of the Town, and should be planned to protect agricultural land and other important natural resources. New development should also provide a range of housing opportunities for Arlington residents, while minimizing the need for expenditure of public funds.

Commercial and industrial development should provide goods, services, and employment opportunities for residents, with accommodations for the traveling and vacationing public in appropriate areas. Commercial and industrial uses should be planned to minimize any conflicts with nearby residential uses.

Resources should be allocated to encourage a rate of growth which does not exceed the long-term historical rate for the Town. The rate of growth should not outstrip the ability of the Town to pay for the added services necessitated by new development. Future development should bear its fair share of municipal capital and maintenance costs.

New development should reinforce historical development trends, and be compatible with Arlington's rural character.

Growth which will impart an economic benefit to the community, while being consistent with the goals of maintaining historical development patterns and preserving natural resources, should be encouraged.

17.3 Maintain the Rural Character of the Town

Forested mountains, the free-flowing Batten Kill surrounded by open fields and pastures, small rural settlements, and the village centers of Arlington and East Arlington all combine to give the Town its unique rural appeal. Preservation of this rural landscape, with its attendant cultural, historical, recreational, and aesthetic benefits is a priority for the Town. Of particular importance is the maintenance of an open rural landscape outside the villages along the main highway approaches to the Town.

17.4 Protect Important Resources

The Town's natural and cultural resources must be protected to maintain or enhance the quality of life for residents of Arlington. Important resources should be identified and protected, including but not limited to significant natural and fragile ecological areas, important features, scenic roads, streams, wetlands and water bodies, historical sites, wildlife habitat, groundwater recharge areas, and earth and forest.

17.5 Maintain and Enhance Recreational Opportunities

The municipal recreation center is an outstanding resource for Arlington residents. Continued maintenance of this park and all of its facilities is fundamental to the Town's recreation needs. New recreational opportunities and facilities should be provided as deemed appropriate. Mechanisms for maintaining or expanding public access to recreational resources such as streams, trails, and forests should be explored.

17.6 Promote Opportunities for Adequate Housing to Meet the Needs of All Residents of Arlington

The Town should work cooperatively with public and private housing organizations. Existing bylaws should be examined to determine regulatory changes which would encourage affordable housing.

17.7 Support Desirable Economic Growth

Economic development should provide maximum economic benefit to the community with minimal environmental cost. A determination of the adequacy of areas planned for relatively intensive development should be made.

17.8 Provide Outstanding Educational and Childcare Service to the Community

Continued availability of quality educational services for Arlington residents is a fundamental objective of the Town. Access to child day care should be encouraged for working parents.

17.9 Develop Appropriate Plans for Roads, Other Capital Investments, and Necessary Services

Capital investments should be planned to meet significant existing needs and support development in designated growth areas. Roads should be maintained and improved to provide a safe and convenient transportation system. Critical public services such as the fire department and rescue squad must also be supported.

17.10 Wastewater Disposal

Except for the schools, all houses and businesses have their own septic systems. A study of the East Arlington area is in progress at this time.

17.11 Select Board

Due to the increase of both State and Federal required reports, a study of whether the hours worked by the Select Board are enough or if a Town Manager or similar person is required.

XVIII. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

18.1 Direction

This Town Plan will only be effective if it is successfully implemented. A number of specific actions - to be taken by the Planning Commission, Board of Selectmen, and other local officials - are enumerated in the Plan. These actions should be taken, and specific policies followed, or the value of the time and thought that has gone into the preparation of the Plan will have been diminished.

At some places in the Plan further planning studies are called for before final action can be taken. The Planning Commission may undertake such studies on its own, with other local officials, or may work with the BCRC or other towns or groups. Final plans or implementation strategies will need to be presented to the public and approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Very often the most efficient and effective way to implement certain goals of a town plan is through the use of regulations, particularly the municipal zoning and subdivision bylaws. The Town enacted a number of amendments to these bylaws after the Town Plan was completely revised in 1991. Several additional changes should be proposed for discussion following adoption of this Plan. The discussion of land use (Chapter VII) contains several recommendations for guiding future development by utilizing innovative regulations such as cluster subdivision, open space conservation, and phased growth controls. The Planning Commission should work on implementing these ideas at their monthly long-range planning meetings.

Because the expenditure of public funds affects both how a town grows and the quality of life within the community, fiscal issues must be considered in a town plan. Arlington may want to renew its efforts to maintain an ongoing capital budgeting process. Of course, the Arlington School District must be fully involved in this process because a large share of the public's tax burden is used to support the local schools. The Plan also notes the importance of public properties and services and states that funds should be appropriated to support and maintain them, and even to acquire property that is determined to be of particular value to the townspeople.

A final and direct way to see that the Plan is implemented is for the Town and School District to participate in all Act 250 hearings at which the Town is a party and insist that major new developments conform to the policies of the Plan. The Town should also attend hearings on State agency plans and identify any issues that might affect Arlington or be contrary to the Town Plan. The Town should then work with any such agency to develop alternatives that will be acceptable to both parties.

The Planning Commission and Board of Selectmen should report each year on actions taken that are intended to implement the goals of this plan.

Appendix A-1

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

Arlington is a diverse town lying near the center of the Bennington Region. Arlington's village areas coincide with the Regional Plan's Village Districts in location and current and planned use. Relatively low density rural/residential land occupies most of the rest of the valley areas in both the local and regional plans. A majority of the land in Arlington is in the Regional Plan's Upland Forest District, consistent with the Town's Forest and Recreation District; both areas emphasize natural resource protection and uses related to those resources, with little or no permanent development. The type, location, and rate of new development planned by the Town are consistent with the Regional Plan. Both plans also are in agreement on the nature of critical resources and strategies to conserve them.

Similarly, there do not appear to be any significant conflicts with the municipal plans of the surrounding towns of Sandgate, Sunderland, or Shaftsbury. The land use districts in those towns match up well with those in Arlington: forest districts adjacent to forest districts and rural/residential areas next to similarly zoned land. Sunderland does have a commercial zone along Route 7A, a designation similar to Arlington's CRR zoned areas to the south.

A number of specific issues requiring regional or intermunicipal cooperation are identified in the Arlington Town Plan. A principal concern is the use and protection of the Batten Kill. Cooperation with towns from Dorset to Greenwich, New York is called for. Ground water protection and the area's principal public water supply is an issue of concern that must be addressed jointly with Sunderland, as the supply's protection zone is located in that town. Arlington's schools accept students from Sandgate and Sunderland. Solid waste, emergency services, health care, air quality, and recreational resources are among the other issues specifically identified in the Arlington Town Plan as requiring cooperation with people beyond the municipal borders.

In summary, the Town's plan for growth and development is consistent with the Regional Plan and with the plans of neighboring towns. Moreover, the Town has identified a range of issues where cooperation is called for, and has enumerated appropriate actions to address those issues.